

Understanding Spiritual Warfare



Standing Firm
In the Battle

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A ten-week study in the
Understanding the Bible Series

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.
Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the
schemes of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:10-11)

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Welcome

Welcome to this study entitled UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL WARFARE—STANDING FIRM IN THE BATTLE. As we journey through the Scriptures together for the next ten weeks, I trust that you will find much treasure. You will see that there is indeed a battle going on around us, a battle between the people of God and the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. This battle is territorial; it's about a land that is intimately connected to the Christians' heavenly calling. It is an *unceasing* battle, and a *personal* battle. God has given us everything we need in order to be victorious in it, but we must understand what is at stake if we do not succeed. This study is about just that.

I have made every effort to center each and every day's study on the Scriptures, being careful and diligent to seek the Lord's direction with every keystroke. The Holy Spirit is the Great Teacher, and so it is our responsibility to stay under His care above all. He leads and guides us into all truth.

I am very excited to share this study with you, and I pray that you will hear God's voice throughout, and that His Word transforms you, each and every day.

Study well.

Lesson One – The Line Is Drawn

Day One – Satan's Identity

Day Two – Angelic Beings

Day Three – Satan's Targets, Part I

Day Four – Satan's Targets, Part II

Day Five – Why Us?

There is a battle going on right now between the people of God and the spiritual forces in the heavenly places. The battle is personal and the battle is unceasing because there are presently two forces at work in this world system, and they are at odds with each other. God intends to give His people what Satan currently has and Satan does not want to give it up. The battle is about a land, an inheritance, and the realization of the very purpose for which man was created, as well as the very purpose for man's redemption. The sad thing though, is that most Christians have no idea about this warfare—who is fighting whom and why—and most aren't even engaged in the battle.

The most important element in the battle is *why* we are fighting, and *what is at stake if we lose the battle*. My hope is that this study will not only help you learn more about God's plans and purposes, but that you will truly see why you need to open your eyes, and more importantly your heart, and be on the alert in this world. You have a purpose...and you were redeemed *for a purpose*. God wants you to truly realize your higher calling.

So let's begin our journey together. This week we'll start at the beginning and discover who our enemy really is.

Day One – Satan's Identity

Before we start, please take a moment and spend some time in prayer with the Lord. This week's lesson is full of information regarding our enemy and he does not want you to understand God's plans and purposes for YOU. The good news is that God *most definitely* wants you to know, so pray for protection, and pray for eyes to see and ears to hear just what it is that God wants to show you.

Let's begin by going back to the beginning, where we first see man's adversary in Scripture—

Genesis 3:1-5

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ And the serpent said to the woman, “You surely shall not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

From this passage alone, is there any indication about the identity of the serpent?

Then how do we know who the serpent is? We need to see what other Scriptures say about it:

Revelation 12:9a

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;

Who is the serpent?

What do you learn about the serpent from this verse?

Read Genesis 3:1 again. Who made the serpent?

We can find out more about Satan’s origins from other Scriptures, but it takes a little bit of studying to gather the information. Let’s start with reading a passage out of the Book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 28:1-10

¹ The word of the Lord came again to me [the Prophet Ezekiel] saying, ² “Son of man, say to the leader [this can also be translated “prince”] of Tyre, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Because your heart is lifted up and you have said, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the heart of the seas’; yet you are a man and not God, although you make your heart like the heart of God—³ Behold, you are wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that is a match for you. ⁴ By your wisdom and understanding you have acquired riches for yourself, and have acquired gold and silver for your treasures. ⁵ By your great wisdom, by your trade you have increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches—⁶ Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Because you have made your heart like the heart of God, ⁷ therefore, behold, I will bring strangers upon you, the most ruthless of the nations. And they will draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. ⁸ They will bring you down to the pit, and you will die the death of those who are slain in the heart of the seas. ⁹ Will you still say, “I am a god,” in the presence of your slayer, although you are a man and not God, in the hands of those who wound you? ¹⁰ You will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers, for I have spoken!’ declares the Lord God!””

Ezekiel 28:11-19

¹¹ Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, ¹² “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “You had the

seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created (01254) they were prepared. ¹⁴ You were the anointed (04473) cherub (03742) who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created (01254), until unrighteousness was found in you. ¹⁶ By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you O covering cherub (03742), from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷ Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. ¹⁸ By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. ¹⁹ All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more.”””

This is a continuous lamentation against the city of Tyre from the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a priest and prophet of the Lord who ministered to God’s people during the dark days of exile and Babylonian captivity (around 580 B.C.). His prophecy against this city is one of total destruction because of their stance against God’s people, “...because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, ‘Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste.’” (Ezek. 26:2). Notice the flow of this discourse; in particular, the distinction between vv. 2 and 12 regarding whom it is directed towards: v. 2 says “the leader, or prince, of Tyre,” and v. 12 says “the king of Tyre.”

List the descriptions Ezekiel gives to each:

leader [prince] of Tyre

king of Tyre

Using the Strong’s definitions from your Appendix, write down the definitions of each word below:

1. created (01254)-
2. anointed (04473)-
3. cherub (03742)-

Go back and read Ezekiel 28:1-10 again. Is there any indication from the text that the “leader of Tyre” is a man? What makes you think so? Use portions of the text to support your answer.

Now read Ezekiel 28:11-19 again, keeping in mind the definitions you just supplied to the previous words and the descriptions you wrote. Is there any indication from the text that the “king of Tyre” is a man? What makes you think so? Use portions of the text to support your answer.

This passage directed towards the “king of Tyre” is indeed harsh words spoken against the very king of evil himself, Satan, the one ultimately seen as pulling the puppet-strings of the “prince of Tyre.” There are several reasons we can know this. The “king of Tyre” is described as being “created,” and mankind, aside from Adam & Eve, was essentially *pro-created*. The “king of Tyre” is also called a “cherub,” and that word is only used to describe winged celestial beings—angels. We also read that God placed him in Eden, the garden of God, and we know that Eden does not exist in this present world.

(Note: The last part of the passage describes the destruction that God brings on the “king of Tyre”/Satan. Although this version reads in the past tense as if it has already happened, the King James Version actually writes it in future tense—“he will be cast to the ground...he will be turned into ashes....” Many times the prophets have visions of the future that they describe in the past tense as if they have already happened, but that is simply because they have seen them as already having occurred. This may be similar to watching a video tape and afterwards describing what you saw. Either version would therefore be correct.)

Verse 16 states that Satan did something that caused him to be cast out from the mountain of God. What was it?

Isaiah chapter 14 gives a bit of information regarding Satan’s sin. Read it below.

Isaiah 14:12-15

¹² “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning [Lit., O Lucifer], son of the dawn! You have been cut down to earth, you who have weakened the nations! ¹³ But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ ¹⁵ Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.”

Contextually, Isaiah is speaking regarding the end of the tribulation period when the Antichrist falls. Then Isaiah refers to the power behind that future “king of Babylon” and gives us a glimpse of his past. What was his sin?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson One The Line Is Drawn

According to v. 13, did Satan (Lucifer) have a throne?

Let's read a passage from the New Testament to determine if Satan had lost his throne by the time of Jesus' earthly ministry.

Matthew 12:26

[Jesus speaking] **“And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided among himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?”**

According to Jesus, did Satan have a kingdom?

Here's more from an interchange between Jesus and Satan—

Luke 4:5-8

⁵ And he [Satan] led Him [Jesus] up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

What does Satan show Jesus?

Who does Satan say *the kingdoms of the world* belong to, and how did he get them?

Does Jesus dispute this?

Before we look at some specific verses that describe Satan and his angels, write down the definitions of each word below, using the Strong's definitions from your Appendix.

1. world (2889) –
2. age (165) –
3. eternal (166) –
4. earth (1093) –

The distinctions between these words are very important to understand. There is an article in your Appendix called “Eternal—is it Eternal or is it Age-Lasting” that explains in a bit more detail the distinct differences between these words. Please read it now.

Keeping in mind all that you have read, read what Jesus has to say about Satan to His disciples:

John 14:28-30

²⁸ “You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world (2889) is coming, and he has nothing in Me;”

John 16:10-12

¹⁰ “...and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; ¹¹ and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world (2889) has been judged. ¹² I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”

According to these passages, what does Jesus call Satan?

Now, let’s see what the epistles (which were written *after* Jesus was resurrected) say about Satan’s current position—

II Corinthians 4:3-4

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world (165) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

According to Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth around 56 A.D., who has “blinded the minds of the unbelieving”?

Who is he referencing when he uses the title, “the god of this world”?

And another epistle:

Ephesians 2:1-2

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

According to v. 2, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, what two things did we formerly walk according to?

According to these few passages, did anything regarding Satan’s position appear to change from the time Jesus was on the earth to the post-resurrection letters to the early church?

Is there any indication that his status has changed *in this present day*?

There is one more place we'll look regarding Satan and his "authority." In the Book of Revelation, John records a vision of the future given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. The vision is almost entirely about the future time of tribulation on the earth, when Christ comes back, redeems His inheritance, and establishes His 1,000-year kingdom. We'll look at just one verse:

Revelation 11:15

"The kingdom of the world (Lit., the kingdoms of *this* world (2889)) has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

This event *has not happened yet...*

Therefore, what are the implications of this verse?

We'll end there for today. Think on these things and we'll pick up again tomorrow.

Day Two – Angelic Beings

Yesterday we glimpsed just a bit about the identity, origin, and present position of our adversary, the devil. He is called the "god of this world/age" by the Apostle Paul and the "ruler of this world" by Jesus Himself. Satan has a throne, from which he rules over the kingdoms of this world in this present day. In a time yet future, the kingdom of the Lord will replace the kingdoms of this world.

We know that Satan is not the only angelic being at work in God's universe, and today we will discover a bit more about these other angelic beings. Again, before you begin please ask the Lord to oversee your study time and to teach you His Truth. Remember, there is a battle going on around you!

Let's look at a passage from Revelation that tells of future events surrounding Christ's return. This particular event happens around the mid-part of the Tribulation:

Revelation 12:7-9

⁷And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, ⁸and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

There are two sides warring with each other in this passage. Where is the war and who comprises the sides?

We can see from this passage that there are *bad* angels—Satan's angels—and there are *good* angels—those angels that war with Michael *against* Satan and his angels.

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Lesson One The Line Is Drawn

Let's learn more about these angels by studying a portion of Scripture from the Book of Daniel. Daniel was much like Ezekiel; he was a prophet of the Lord and ministered to God's people during the 70-year period of Babylonian captivity (605 B.C. – 536 B.C.). Most of his prophesies center around prophetic visions and dreams, either his or those around him.

We'll study this particular passage from Daniel in pieces, and then bring it together at the end.

Daniel 10:1-21

¹In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision. ²In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. ³I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all, until the entire three weeks were completed.

How long did Daniel mourn?

Continuing...

⁴And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, ⁵I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. ⁶His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

Describe the "man" that Daniel encounters.

Continuing...

⁷Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. ⁸So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deadly pallor, and I retained no strength. ⁹But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. ¹⁰Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹And he said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

What does Daniel see (v. 7) and who else sees it?

What was Daniel's reaction to seeing this?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson One The Line Is Drawn

Continuing...

¹² Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.

Why did this person come?

From where did he come? (This is not directly stated, but inferred.)

Continuing...

¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”

Going back to v. 2, how long did Daniel mourn? How long was this person delayed from coming to Daniel?

Who was withstanding him and whom had he been “left there with”?

Who came to help him?

What is Michael called?

Let’s stop here for a moment and I’d like you to use the Appendix and look up the definitions of the following words:

1. prince (08269)-

2. king (04428)-

These words indicate *positions of authority only*. Therefore, can we tell from just looking at the definition, whether these words are describing human beings, or angelic beings?

Continuing...

¹⁵ And when he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶ And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, and said to him who was standing before me, “O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷ For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.” ¹⁸ Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!” Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”

²⁰ Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. ²¹ However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.”

Verse 20 states that the man/messenger will “return to fight against the prince of Persia.” To where will he return?

What are the forces referred to in v.21?

Who is the only one standing firmly with this “man” against these forces?

The messenger, with help from Michael the Archangel and Guardian of Israel (*cf.* Dan. 12:1; Jude 1:9), was fighting with the prince of Persia and the kings of Persia in the *heavenly realm*. Meanwhile Cyrus, the earthly king of Persia, was ruling a rather large and powerful kingdom of Persia (which was actually a dual kingdom, the Medo-Persian kingdom, but Persia was the stronger of the two at this point). In v. 20 the messenger states that “the prince of Greece is about to come,” and historically we know that Greece became the next world power, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, after conquering the Persians and the Medes.

It can be seen that there are angels waging war with other angels in the heavenly realm. Their titles, “prince of Persia,” “prince of Greece,” and “kings of Persia” historically coincide with the earthly kingdoms in power. Satan is the leader of them all; his angels must fall under his authority. However, Satan’s rule does not, and cannot, take place outside the sovereign control of the Almighty God, (e.g. in the Book of Job we see Satan coming before God’s throne and getting specific orders on what he *can* and *cannot* do).

So what is God doing? Let’s continue to study—

Daniel 4:24-26

‘...²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king [Nebuchadnezzar]: ²⁵ that you be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes. ²⁶ And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with

the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules [Lit., the heavens do rule]...'

What does the second half of v. 25 say about the Most High?

The Aramaic word used in v. 26 for “Heaven” is *shemayin*. The term, “the heavens” is a more accurate translation of the word in this passage because it is written in its plural form. This same rendering of *shemayin* is seen in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Its meaning can be *either* 1) the physical (atmosphere and universe) heavens, or 2) the location where God lives.

From what you’ve learned so far, what does it mean, “the heavens do rule”?

Combining this with what you have learned from Daniel and Ezekiel, what does it mean that God “bestows *it* on whomever He wishes”? (First, define what “it” is by looking at the context of v. 25.)

This governmental system of authority that is pictured in Scripture is a hierarchy of rulers, emanating down from the Most High to the heavenly rulers to the earthly kings and leaders. Since God is the Perfect Creator, we must understand that this system is perfect in its origin.

Now then, do you think that God has changed His mind about this system? Do you think this system of authority that we see in Daniel (written 2500 years ago) still holds true today? Why or why not?

Think and pray on these things and we’ll continue tomorrow.

Day Three – Satan’s Targets, Part I

We’re beginning to build a picture of who Satan is, what he and his angels do, and their role in God’s system of rulership in the heavens surrounding the earth. Most Christians know that Satan is indeed our enemy and most would say that his purpose is to keep us from living a godly life of fellowship and righteousness with God, and with one another. However, most Christians probably don’t really know *why* he seems so intent on battling with us and what is at stake for us if we *do not succeed* in this battle. Today and tomorrow we’ll explore a bit more specifically about who Satan is targeting, and on Day Five we’ll see *why* he does so.

We’ll go back to the beginning again, to that first incident between the man (actually *the woman*) and the serpent:

Genesis 3:1-5

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ And the serpent said to the woman, “You surely shall not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Have you ever wondered why Satan was in the garden? Why did he want the woman to disobey God? Let’s look at man’s creation, specifically *why* man was created.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

According to v. 26, why was man created?

Then after his creation, God places man in a specific place—

Genesis 2:15

Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Where does God put man? And why does He put him there?

Read Ezekiel 28:13-14 again, remembering that this is talking about Satan:

Ezekiel 28:13-14

¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. ¹⁴ You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there.

Where was Satan placed when he was created?

Remember that Satan has a throne and a kingdom and rules over that kingdom.

Let’s also remember that Satan sinned and was judged (with that judgment yet to play out fully); and, at the very beginning of Scripture, we see a new creation, man, on the scene with very similar descriptions—in the garden of Eden with the position of having dominion over the earth. Satan himself was disqualified by his act of rebellion (disobedience) so it is no coincidence that we would see him at man’s side, tempting man to disobey God. Satan knew all too well from experience that disobedience leads to disqualification of rulership.

The commands given to man were simple and God laid it out at the beginning:

Genesis 2:16-17

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

We then read that the man and the woman *did* eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of the deceptive influence of the serpent, they disobeyed God, and then received the consequences for their act of rebellion (Gen. 3:6; 3:13-24). All three parts of man, spirit *and* soul *and* body (I Thess. 5:23), “died” (which can be better understood as being separated from God) and mankind was banished from the garden. Both man and woman were disqualified from ruling.

But God had a plan which had been formulated from before the foundation of the world. He stated this plan after man’s disobedience:

Genesis 3:14-15

¹⁴ And the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life; ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise (Lit., crush) you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Who will bruise whom, and where? (Insert proper nouns into the pronouns “you,” “he,” and “him” to help you determine this.)

Now fast-forward 4,000 years to see more of God’s revelation concerning this—

Romans 16:20

And the God of peace will soon crush [Lit., bruise] Satan under your feet.

Paul wrote his letter to the Church in Rome in 57 A.D., approximately twenty-four years after Christ was resurrected. From this verse, had Satan been “bruised” yet?

Satan’s end is foretold right at the beginning, isn’t it? But as we’ve learned, Satan remains in the position of power. He remains in this position because the one (mankind) that was created to replace him was disqualified. However, Satan won’t hold this position forever because God has stated that the “seed of the woman” will bruise Satan’s head (deliver a death blow) and ultimately be victorious. Not only would this Seed be the victor over Satan, but this Seed would also bring mankind back into position for which he was created—*rulership*.

Paul tells us how this will happen—

I Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to this verse, what parts of our being need sanctification (Lit., to be made holy)?

This redemption and sanctification would wholly save man and bring him back to the position for which he was created. Since sin brought about man's disqualification, the cleansing of sin would make him "blameless" (Lit., without fault) and again qualify him for the position of rulership over the earth.

From the very beginning, Satan's sights are set on the One who will be victorious over him. He specifically targets the woman whom this Redeemer would be "the seed" of. Look at how this is revealed through Scripture:

In the tenth generation from Adam, Noah was born—

Genesis 5:32

And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Genesis 9:25-27

²⁵ So he (Noah) said, "Cursed by Canaan [son of Ham]; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers." ²⁶ He also said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."

In v. 26, who is the Lord described as being the God of?

What two things are said of Japheth?

What is to become of Canaan, Ham's son?

Make sure you get this. God is the God of Shem *only*. Let's continue—

Genesis chapter 11 gives us a genealogy of the lineage of Shem. In the tenth generation from Noah, a man named Abram was born.

Genesis 17:1-2,4-8

¹ Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. ² And I will establish My covenant between Me and You, and I will multiply you exceedingly." ⁴ "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. ⁷ And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Genesis 22:17

"...indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies."

Note that it is only through Abraham and his descendants (*through Shem*) the God would establish His covenant.

List, in brief, the promises in the covenant God made with Abraham.

There are two realms mentioned in Genesis 22:17. What are they?

Abraham's seed will "possess the gate of their enemies." Historically speaking, the gate of a city was the location where all governmental activity took place. Therefore, to possess the gate of one's enemy meant to possess the governmental control over them and their city. Because there are two realms mentioned, heavenly and earthly, we can see this to be a promise that Abraham's descendants will rule over their enemies in the heavenly realm, and over their enemies in the earthly realm.

Going back to Abraham's genealogy—

Genesis 17:21

"[God speaking to Abraham] **But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.**"

Whom will Abraham's covenantal promises come through?

Isaac then has two sons, Esau and Jacob, but only Jacob got Isaac's blessing—

Genesis 27:28-29

²⁸ "Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine; ²⁹ may peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; be master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you."

Then Jacob had twelve sons and his name was changed to Israel. The twelve sons had many children and increased greatly in number. They ended up in Egypt, enslaved, until God sent Moses to deliver them out of slavery. When the people of Israel were removed from Egypt, they passed through the Red Sea and then headed towards the land that was promised to them through Abraham. God then spoke to Moses with a further revelation of these promises.

Exodus 19:3-6

³ And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have

seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

According to v. 5, to whom will the sons of Israel belong?

What is it conditioned upon?

Israel goes through a tumultuous three hundred-year period where, even though they end up in the Promised Land, their life there is far from perfect due to their continued disobedience. However, God's plan is steadfast and true and Nathan, a prophet of God, reveals to King David (a descendant of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob) that his heir will be this promised Redeemer. Let's read what God said to King David, through Nathan, the prophet:

II Samuel 7:12-14a

¹² "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me..."

II Samuel 7:19a (David speaking)

"And yet this was insignificant in Thine eyes, O Lord God, for Thou hast spoken also of the house of Thy servant concerning the distant future."

Rewrite vv. 12-14 in your own words.

Who will be a father to whom?

What will God do for His Son?

According to v. 19, when will this Descendant come?

Whom is God talking about?

Let's end right here for today, and we'll pick right back up tomorrow. We are laying a lot of foundation now as we seek to learn more about Satan and the warfare that is all around us, so continue to study hard and ask God to help you not only *understand* His truths, but to *remember* them as well.

See you tomorrow.

Day Four — Satan's Targets, part II

Pray first!

We are building a genealogical picture of the “seed of the woman” from Genesis 3:15 in order to understand why Satan perceives us, the Christian, as his enemy, and why he targets us as he does. Let's continue from where we left off yesterday, with a bit more information concerning the promised Son of David, whose throne would be established forever, whom David knew would come in the *distant* future. This Son, whom God promised He would be a Father to, is Jesus the Christ.

Isaiah prophesies concerning this Son. His words were to a (still) disobedient and divided nation of Israel a few hundred years after the promise was given to David—

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore.

Describe the promises surrounding this Son that is to be given to Israel.

There *will be no end* to the increase of this Son's government, or of peace, on the throne of David and over the kingdom He establishes. This kingdom will be one of justice and righteousness *forever*.

Now think about something. Satan is following all of this, and is quite aware of what is happening—*he is the ruler of this world*. He sees God's plan unfold and you can bet that he is paying close attention to this nation of Israel and this promised Son that is to come. Remember, Satan has already heard from God about his demise, and he would most certainly stop at nothing in trying to prevent it from happening. He wreaks havoc throughout the nation of Israel and is successful in distracting the nation and keeping them from being faithfully obedient.

Now we come to the New Testament, and the birth of this Son, Jesus. Note what Scripture calls Him—

Matthew 1:1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Luke 23:3

And Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He answered him and said, “It is as you say.”

Matthew 2:1-2

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.”

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What are the different titles used to describe Jesus in these passages?

From what you have learned so far, what do these titles mean?

What do you think Satan was thinking about this Man?

We know the story of what happens to Jesus, the King of Jews. His message of repentance, with respect to deliverance into the heavenly kingdom, given to His brethren is rejected. The rejection reaches its peak with the persecution and crucifixion of their King, God's Son, Jesus the Christ. However, that was exactly what God purposed to happen in order to bring the Gentiles into the fold of Abraham's promises.

Galatians 3:26, 29

²⁶ For you are all sons (Lit., children) of God through faith in Christ Jesus... ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

How did we become a child of God?

And if we belong to Christ, what are we?

It all centers around Abraham, and the covenant that God made with him concerning His promises.

Romans 4:13

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

What are Abraham and his descendants to be heir of?

And since we are now considered Abraham's descendants, what are we heirs of?

The word "heir" is the Greek word *kleronomos*, which literally means "to have what is allotted." The connotation is as the word is used today, which means "a person who is first in the line of succession to an estate, crown, etc."

Therefore, we Christians are heirs of the world through Christ the Redeemer and with Christ the Redeemer, the One who will dethrone the current ruler, Satan.

Now, let's look at Christ's inheritance--

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Psalm 2:8 (A Psalm of David)

“Ask of Me [God speaking to His Son], and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.”

According to this verse, what is God’s Son’s inheritance?

What will be His possession?

One more verse to tie it together—

Romans 8:16-17

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...

We are to inherit the same things as Christ, aren’t we? Do you see how this fits together?

But, since we are *heirs* and not *owners of*, we are not in possession of the inheritance yet. Read on—

Colossians 3:23-24

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

I Peter 1:3-4

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

I Corinthians 15:50

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Notice that Paul, in his letter to the Church in Colossae, refers to the inheritance as a “reward.” Where does Peter say the inheritance is (I Pet. 1:4)?

According to I Corinthians 15:50, what is the inheritance?

Here’s a little more information regarding the inheritance, from Jesus Himself—

Matthew 5:5

“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth (1093).”

Again, what is the inheritance?

Jesus tells us when this reward will come—

Revelation 22:12

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

Now let's put all of this together. Jesus is the Promised Redeemer, sent to restore man back to his created position as ruler over the earth. He is also *King* and when He returns with His kingdom, He and His co-heirs will replace the current ruler, Satan. That is what Jesus was offering to the nation of Israel when He came to the earth the first time, “Repent, for the kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is at hand.” If they had repented, then Jesus would have taken His rightful place in Satan's stead, with man by His side—this is the kingdom of heaven. And with the institution of the kingdom of the heavens, the earthly kingdom would have been established as well. We know this because Daniel 4:29 tells us “the heavens do rule.”

Satan wages war with us because we are now the current recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. We are now in line to be co-heirs with Christ in that Coming Day.

And Satan does not want to lose what he has.

That's it for today. Stay in prayer and we'll pick back up tomorrow.

Day Five – Why Us?

We've covered a lot of information so far; today we'll continue to lay down more foundation about this present system of rulership because it is directly related to our purpose and our goal. As we've learned yesterday, Satan does not want to give up his position of authority in the kingdom of the heavens, and he *knows* Christ and His co-heirs are set to take it from him one day. He will do whatever it takes to stop that from happening. At this time you may be asking yourself, “Why does Satan bother if he knows that we are to take it from him one day? What's the point?” The point is simple and it is a premise set forth at the very beginning. In fact, we've already studied it:

Disobedience leads to disqualification of rulership!

If we are disobedient then we will be disqualified from ruling with Christ. If Satan can achieve this with each one of us, then he wins. *He doesn't win the war*, he simply wins the battle over our souls. And he thinks that if he can disqualify enough of us, then there won't be enough “heirs” left to take over the position that he and his rebel angels currently hold.

One thing needs to be made very clear at this point: *this is not about spending eternity with God!* This is not talking about losing one's salvation. This is about our reward *of* the inheritance *of* the kingdom of God *in* the heavens.

The whole focus of this warfare is NOT eternal; the focus is on the seventh day—the future kingdom age when Christ will rule. Let's go over some key points necessary to put this warfare into perspective.

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3 and become familiar with the timeline labeled “7 Days” in your Appendix.

There was an original creation of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), followed by a ruin of that creation (cf. Gen.1:2a; Is.45:18). This was due to Satan's sin and the desecration of his sanctuaries (Ezek. 28:18). God then restores His ruined creation, taking six days to do it; He rests on the seventh day (Gen. 1:2b-2:3).

The six days of restoration, followed by a seventh day rest sets an unchangeable pattern of restoration. Therefore, when man comes into a ruined state, God sets in motion the same process of restoration.

However, we know this is not seven 24-hour days, but seven 1,000-year days, as proclaimed by Peter in his second epistle—

II Peter 3:8

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

This verse is not a poetic concept that simply expresses how timeless God is! This verse from Peter is written within the context of dealing with the timing of the promise of Jesus' second coming (vv. 3:4, 9).

Let's briefly see how this idea unfolds throughout Scripture—

Genesis 2:3

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

The word “sanctified” is the Hebrew word *qadhash* which means to be made clean and consecrated to God. This verb captures the idea of being pure and devoted to God.

Then God spoke to Israel with a commandment to keep holy the seventh day, the Sabbath—

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ **Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** ⁹ **Six days you shall labor and do all your work,** ¹⁰ **but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.** ¹¹ **For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**

According to vv. 8 and 10, what was Israel supposed to do?

Then God told them why—

Exodus 31:13

But as for you [Moses], speak to the sons of Israel, saying, “You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

What is the Sabbath?

Why do they have to observe it?

How long will it remain a “sign”?

God then goes on to say, through Moses, as he leads the Israelites to the land promised to Abraham—

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Exodus 31:14

“Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death...”

What would happen to the person who profaned the Sabbath?

Now for a silly question, but an important one. If a person was killed for profaning the Sabbath, would they have any part in the establishment of the Theocratic Kingdom in the land that Moses was leading them to?

Let’s follow the definitions of “the Sabbath,” “the seventh day,” throughout Scripture—

Isaiah 58:13

If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable...”

What does Isaiah call “the Sabbath”?

Read on—

II Thessalonians 2:1-2

¹ Now we [Paul and Silvanus and Timothy] request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, ² that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed wither by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come...

According to this passage, is the Day of the Lord past, present, or future? How do you know?

List those two things that will occur when the Day of the Lord comes.

Remember that Jesus comes back and establishes His kingdom at a future time. Notice how His coming back is connected with the coming of “the day of the Lord” and the Sabbath is called “the day of the Lord.”

The Sabbath is also called the “rest”—

Exodus 16:23a

(KJV) And he said unto them, “This is that which the Lord hath said, ‘Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord...”

Hebrews 4:9

There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

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According to Hebrews 4:9, is there still yet a *future* rest?

In the Old Testament, God (through Moses) led the first generation of Israel to a land that was promised to them through Abraham. His intention was to establish a Theocratic Kingdom in the land, but it depended on the people's obedience (Ex.19:5-6). The first generation did not receive the land as an inheritance, but the second generation was allowed to go in. However, the nation as a whole never maintained faithfulness/obedience for any length of time and the kingdom never manifested in the full way that God intended. However, God always had plenty to say concerning their behavior and gave them many opportunities to repent and receive what was promised to them.

Look at the connection God draws with the land and their “rest” in the land—

Deuteronomy 12:8-10

⁸ You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; ⁹ for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. ¹⁰ When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security...

What is another term used here for the “resting place,” the “land” (v. 9)?

Remember what you've learned about *our* inheritance from Day Three? Write it down.

Now one last thing before we put all of this together—

How long will Jesus' kingdom last? Read it below.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

How long will Jesus and His fellow heirs (also known as “priests of God” [I Pet.2:9]) reign?

Let's tie this together.

The future Sabbath rest is the inheritance, which is the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also called the Day of the Lord. The kingdom will last 1,000 years and so this “day” will last 1,000 years. Now look at the “7 Days” timeline in your Appendix again. Do you see it?

Here's a very important question. Does this *at all* pertain to the eternal ages beyond the seventh day?

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All of Scripture moves towards and puts emphasis on the coming age. Eternity beyond that is not really an issue because life for the eternal ages is settled when we receive the free gift of salvation. We can *never* lose that! All Christians are currently battling for a position in the *coming age*, the Coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, *not eternity*.

And the crux of the matter is: *Disobedience leads to disqualification of rulership!*

We cannot lose the free gift of life in eternity, but we CAN lose our individual participation in the Seventh Day Rest. This is what the spiritual warfare is all about.

Disobedience is not looked upon lightly in Scripture—

Romans 8:7

...because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;

What is considered “hostile toward God”?

More on disobedience from Paul—

Ephesians 5:1-6

¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; ² and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. ³ But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴ and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

What are the things that we are told NOT to do?

Why?

What are those saints called who practice these immoral things (v. 6)?

(Notice the word “saints” in v. 3. Paul is talking to *saved* people. The whole of Scripture is written to the saved—those who are spiritually alive and have the ability to comprehend spiritual matters. That is *not* to say that an unredeemed person cannot find the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ within the written Word, he most certainly can. God’s Word is salvation. However, the original intent in penning and distributing the books and letters contained within the whole of the Bible was for the people of God. Understanding and remembering this is the key to opening up much about the meaning of Scripture.)

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More from Paul on the same subject—

Galatians 5:13,16-21

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brethren, only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another... ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

According to v. 13, to whom is Paul speaking?

Would this be saved or non-saved people?

What are the deeds of the flesh?

What does v.21 say about the person who practices such things?

According to this passage, do Christians have a choice as to whether they walk according to the flesh or the Spirit?

I'd like you to stop just a moment and really think about what God is saying...

There are serious consequences for disobedience.

And Satan would LOVE to have you continue in disobedience, wouldn't he?

We'll stop here for the week. Please take what you've learned to God and ask Him to solidify His truth within you. Study and accept His truth as He has revealed it in His Word. Don't let Satan overwhelm you with guilt or confusion or condemnation. We're all sinners and we're all disobedient at times. However, we have Jesus, our High Priest, who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins as we confess them. We have so much freedom in that! Listen to God with an attentive ear and let Him teach you about His deeper things.

Let's end with words from the Lord that He spoke to His children, the nation of Israel, 3,000 years ago—

II Chronicles 20:15-17

¹⁵ Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the Lord to you, "Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up

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by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you.”

Now ask yourself, are you ready to go to the battlefield and stand?

See you next week!

Lesson Two – Do Not Be Deceived

Day One – Testing

Day Two – Past Success of Deception

Day Three – Present Success of Deception-Leaven

Day Four – Present Success of Deception-Balaam

Day Five – Future Success of Deception

Last week we laid down some foundation regarding our adversary, Satan. We learned much about his position of authority—past, present, and future—and why he is so determined to see God’s people be disobedient. There are two main points to carry with you into this week:

- Satan does not want to lose what he currently has, which Christians are currently in line to inherit, and
- Disobedience leads to disqualification from rulership.

This week we will be focusing mainly on Satan’s *tactics* as he battles against us. His weapon of choice is deception, and it is a deception focused around God’s Word. Last week we briefly looked at the incident in the garden between the woman and the serpent, and we saw that Satan was successful in getting the woman, and the man, to disobey God, thus disqualifying them from ruling over God’s newly restored creation.

The key to Satan’s success at this time was in his deception surrounding God’s Word—he questioned the woman, saying, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” Satan also said to her, “You surely shall not die!” (a blatant contradiction to what God had said *would* happen to them if they disobeyed). Satan’s tactic from the very beginning has been deception. And, it is *deception with a purpose*. Since that day, he has continued in the same manner: deception in relation to God’s Word, with a purpose—to disqualify *us* from ruling with Christ in the heavens, in that coming Seventh Day.

As we continue to look at the overall picture of spiritual warfare, we will continue to lay more and more foundation. Some of this material should be review for you, but there is nothing more useful in the study of the Scriptures than REVIEW, REVIEW, and more REVIEW! Before we get started, let me reiterate the importance of praying each and every day, especially each time you dig into the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is your teacher, not any man, and your reliance should be on Him and God’s Word. Daily prayer needs to be a desire of your heart! I encourage you to humble yourself to the leading and teaching of the Spirit.

Day One — Testing

Begin today with prayer.

First, we must understand that nothing that Satan does happens outside of God's Supreme rule. The battle ensues, yes, but with the difficulties of our struggle come countless opportunities to overcome and succeed, and thus to be transformed into the image of Christ. Let's see how James says it—

James 1:2-4, 12

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing...

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ DO NOT BE DECEIVED, my beloved brethren.

The word "endurance" in vv. 3 and 4 is the same word translated "perseveres" in v. 12; only the grammatical construction is different [noun vs. verb]. Underline those three words.

What is being *tested* by the various trials we encounter?

What does *the testing of our faith* produce?

What does *endurance* do for us?

If we *persevere under the trial/testing*, what will we receive?

Now reread the James passage, and then answer the following question—

If someone does *not* endure through the trials/tests, and does *not* persevere under the trial/test, what does *not* happen and what does he *not* get?

When you think of a crown, what is the picture you get?

In order to get this into the proper context, *when* do you think those who endure will be shown to be "perfect and complete" (v. 4)? (The word "perfect" means "brought to maturity.")

Read about the timing of this below—

I Peter 4:12-13

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing (same word translated “trials” in James 1:2 and 12), as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us [Lit., the glory which shall be revealed in us].

According to I Pet. 4:13, if you share the sufferings of Christ, when will you “rejoice with exultation”?

Sum up why we are tested, and the results that occur because of it.

Notice what James says about the origins of this testing, and the view we are to have concerning these tests.

James 1:13-16

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ DO NOT BE DECEIVED, my beloved brethren.

What are we told NOT to say when we are tempted?

Why?

How do temptations start and what is the potential result?

Regardless of the origin of the ordeal that we find ourselves in, we must always look to the Lord and look at it as an opportunity to be faithful, to be obedient, and to overcome.

Let’s briefly look at the testing of two Old Testament patriarchs. Let’s begin with David, who writes—

Psalms 26:1-3

¹ Vindicate (08199) me, O Lord; for I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. ² Examine (0974) me, O Lord, and try (05254) me; test (06884) my mind and my heart. ³ For thy lovingkindness is before my eyes: and I have walked in Thy truth.

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Using your Appendix, look up the definitions for the following words:

1. judge (08199) –
2. examine (0974) –
3. try (05254) –
4. test (06884) –

Now using these definitions, rewrite what David is saying to the Lord in this passage.

David states that he has walked in God's truth, he has trusted in the Lord, and he has been obedient. He tells God to judge him by examining, trying, and testing his heart and mind to see if this is true. We can read of David's life, his trials and his battles, and *his sins*; but he most definitely overcame it all with an attitude of repentance and humility. David never ceased to seek after God.

Oh, that we would have a heart like David!

Let's now look specifically at how Abraham was tested.

Genesis 22:1-2

¹ Now it came about after these things, that God tested (05254) Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

This test required that Abraham respond, *through action*, with faith. It was not enough that Abraham simply believed God—in order for Abraham to pass this test he needed to *do something*; he needed to *obey*. AND HE OBEYED. And as a result of his faithful obedience, God responded—

Genesis 22:16-18

¹⁶ "By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

According to v. 18, why will all the nations of the earth be blessed?

In order to bring Abraham's faith (Gen. 15:1-6) to maturity, he had to be tested. This point of faith needed to be brought to its goal. Thus, the test—to offer up your son (Gen. 22:1-2). The result is not only seen here in Genesis 22:16-18, but also in James 2:21-23 and Hebrews 11:17-19.

Genesis 22:16-18 speaks of the very promises that *we* inherit through our faith in Jesus. We shall “possess the gate of [our] enemies.”

Sum up what you have learned about testing, and why it is necessary in your walk with the Lord.

Do you see why Satan wants you to fail these tests?

Think on these things and we'll meet again tomorrow!

Day Two – Past Success of Deception

Yesterday we read about the testing that we all must go through, and the hope that we will be victorious through each circumstance. In upcoming lessons we will study this more in-depth, and hopefully come into an understanding of what this looks like in our life. We also looked at David and his attitude about the various trials that we come up against. Take a minute before you begin your study today and read the following verse about David, and ask the Lord to give you a heart like this man.

I Kings 9:4

“And as for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances...”

Today we'll be taking a closer look at the past success of deception, and the lessons we can learn from studying other people's mistakes.

Let's first take a closer look at the definitions of “deception”:

- The Hebrew words for “deception” are *pathah* (06601), *nasha* (05377), *shagag* (07686), *ramah* (07411), and *'ashaq* (06231). All of these words mean essentially the same thing: to delude, entice, lead astray, beguile, defraud, flatter, or persuade.
- The two Greek words translated as “deception” are *planao* (4105) and *exapatao* (1818). These words mean to cause one to roam or go astray, to cause one to wander, to beguile, or seduce wholly.
- The word “deception” in our English language means a fraud or illusion; it can also mean a false impression.

Let's also look at what can be seen as the flip side of deception—FAITH:

- The word “faith” in Hebrew comes from the word *aman*, which means to trust or to believe.

- The word “faith” in Greek comes from the word *peitho*, which means to be persuaded or to believe.
- In the English language, the word “faith” means to believe, to trust, or to rely on.

Scripturally speaking, being faithful means simply believing what God has said about a matter. Being deceived, on the other hand, means believing something *contrary* to what God has said about a matter.

Let’s see how this deception played out in times past, with the first generation of Israel. It is SO important to study this group of people! As Paul writes—

I Corinthians 10:1-13

¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ and all ate the same spiritual food; ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. ⁷ And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.” ⁸ Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. ⁹ Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. ¹⁰ Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

The nation of Israel was redeemed out of slavery in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lambs. After they left Egypt, they went through the Red Sea and they all came up on the other side to begin their new life.

All of this was *for a purpose*. Moses was to lead them into the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, in which was to be established a theocratic kingdom, with Israel being for God a kingdom of priests.

(Note: Israel was a saved (redeemed) nation when they left Egypt. They satisfied God’s requirement for a substitutionary death of a firstborn by killing an animal and appropriating the blood. At this point, the nation of Israel gained spiritual life—they were now capable of spiritual discernment and able to be in a position where they could obey God.)

The people, however, began to grumble and complain almost immediately. The Lord, though, continued to lead them toward the land and patiently taught them rules on how to live in this soon-to-be established theocracy. At this point, God not only assured Israel that He would give them the land, He also told them that they would be victorious against its inhabitants. He then promised them that *if* they would obey His commandments, *then* He would make His dwelling among them and would walk among them (Ex.19:4-6).

About eighteen months later, this first generation of Israel arrived at Kadesh, on the precipice of their land and all the blessings God would have for them there. Then, there was a test. Let’s read about it—

Numbers 13:17-20

¹⁷ When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, “Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. ¹⁸ And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. ¹⁹ And

how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? ²⁰ And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.”

The twelve spies came back—

Numbers 13:27-33

²⁷ Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.” ³⁰ Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.” ³¹ But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.” ³² So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. ³³ There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

Then the nation of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron—

Numbers 14:2b-4

^{2b} “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ And why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.”

But Joshua and Caleb stepped in—

Numbers 14:7b-9

^{7b} “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”

However, the nation of Israel refused to believe (*have faith in*) what God had said about their certain victory in the land. The nation responded by saying that Joshua and Caleb should be killed with stones.

This was a test to see if Israel would believe what God had said about the land. In this last passage, what did Joshua and Caleb say that the Lord would do?

Write down what the other ten spies said about the land.

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This entire generation of Israel knew what the Lord said about this land, but instead of believing what the Lord said about it, whom did they choose to believe?

According to Number 14:3-5, what did they want to do?

Do you see the deception involved here? On the brink of inheriting a land *promised*, BY GOD, to them, the majority of God's people chose to listen to ten leaders instead of the two voices reminding them what God had said about it. It is hard to believe that they were that deceived, isn't it? It is really no different than what Satan did in the Garden of Eden, asking the question, "Has God indeed said...?"

Satan, through others doing his bidding, only needed to plant doubt concerning what God had really said about the matter. And the people had two choices: they could either have believed what God had said or believed something contrary to God's Word. It's that simple.

And the consequences at Kadesh were the same as in the Garden—

Numbers 14:30

"Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Num."

This first generation of Israel was to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in this land, ruling over all other nations with God in their midst, ruling among them. Adam and Eve were to rule over the earth. Neither got to realize this, due to their disobedience.

Let's look at what the author of Hebrews says about this first generation—

Hebrews 3:7-13

⁷ Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹ where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways'; ¹¹ As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest." ¹² Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Verse 11 states again the consequence of the failure at Kadesh. What did they not get to enter?

According to v. 12, what did that generation (a *redeemed* generation) have?

Can a Christian possess that also?

What can we be hardened by?

Do you remember what the *rest* was for Israel (from Lesson One)?

Christians are now being warned of this very same thing. The author goes on to say—

Hebrews 4:11

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.

Do you remember what “the rest” is for us?

The message here is clear. That generation was disobedient. They are called “evil” and “unbelieving.” It is possible to be deceived to such a degree that we, Christians, can miss out on the future Sabbath rest. It happened to that first generation of Israel and it CAN happen to us.

God says, “*if* you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:29). He promises that we will possess the gates of our enemies in the heavenly realm (*cf.* Matt. 21:43). God says that we *can* stand firm against the devil and we *can* overcome. If we were to see those heavenly spirit beings that we battle against I am sure that they, as in Canaan, would appear as giants to us! But that shouldn’t matter—God has already said that we can take their land. The question is, do you believe it?

See you tomorrow.

Day Three – Present Success of Deception- Leaven

Begin with prayer!

We’ve seen how Satan deceives—he questions God’s Word, “Did God *really* say...?” Many of us would like to think that we have a good knowledge of God’s Word and wouldn’t be easily deceived in this way. However, consider these questions: Do you know what you believe and why you believe it? Do you know, without doubt, what God has to say about any given matter? When asked, “Has God indeed said...?” would you be able to answer, “Yes, He says...” or “No, He didn’t say...” And does your knowledge come from God’s Word, or man’s words?

Today and tomorrow, we will be dealing with two different aspects of the present success of deception. Both have ramifications for the Christian *today*. Both are rampant deceptions that have permeated Christianity, and we will have to study them to get a bigger view of the deception that confronts us.

Leaven is present within the Church today in regards to the message of the kingdom. This is a truth that Christians today need to know; Jesus spoke prophetically concerning the “word of the kingdom”—

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven [Lit., the kingdom of the heavens] is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

Let’s first gain some understanding as to what leaven is. The Lord spoke about it to Moses, immediately prior to the first Passover in Egypt. This is the first time leaven is mentioned in Scripture, which establishes a pattern for its use throughout God’s Word—

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Exodus 12:15

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

This is the establishment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread for Israel, to be celebrated directly after the Feast of Passover. What are the children of Israel to do with the leaven?

What are they told NOT to do?

What happens if they do eat leaven?

(Note: the command of ridding themselves of leaven is given numerous times in the Old Testament hereafter. Check Leviticus 2:11; 6:17; 10:12; Num. 28:17; Deut. 16:3; II Chron. 30:21, to name a few.)

Let's read more about leaven in the New Testament—

Matthew 16:6-8,11-12

⁶ And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ⁷ And they [the disciples] began to discuss among themselves, saying, “It is because we took no bread.” ⁸ But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?” ¹¹ How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹² Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Luke 12:1

He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

I Corinthians 5:6-8

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? ⁷ Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Using the above verses, how would you describe leaven?

Let's look again at what Jesus said concerning leaven, and how it is impacting us today.

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

The word “parable” is the Greek word *parabole* (3850), which means, “to put near or close to something.” It is a compilation of the words, *para* and *bole*. *Para* literally means “near,” and *bole* comes from the word *ballo* which literally means, “throw” or “lay.” A parable, therefore, is a truth that is laid alongside other truths, thereby painting a more complete picture of the subject at hand.

This parable of the leaven is *laid alongside* three previous parables, and is followed by another three parables. It is essential to understand the progression of the other parables in order to understand the meaning of this particular one.

But first, let’s understand *why* Jesus speaks in parables—

Matthew 13:11-13

¹¹ And He answered and said to them [His disciples], “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹² For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore, I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”

Why did Jesus begin to speak in parables?

Jesus begins speaking in parables because the leaders of Israel—the ones who should have understood who He was and what He was doing—were blind and deaf to what Jesus was saying to them *concerning the kingdom*. Jesus’ stated purpose was for this very thing—

Luke 4:43

But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.”

The leaders had attributed the signs and wonders that Jesus was performing *to Satan* (Matt. 12:23-24), thus sealing their fate in relation to His offer (Matt. 21:43). Jesus then told them what the consequence for this stiff-necked refusal would be—

Matthew 12:31-32

³¹ “Therefore, I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³² And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.”

This sin of unbelief would not be forgiven them in this “age” (Man’s Day, 6,000 years of time). It also would not be forgiven them in the “age to come” (the kingdom age, the future 1,000-year age). The implication is that it *will* be forgiven them for the eternal ages beyond that. Take a moment to reference the timeline labeled “Ages,” found in the Appendix. This will help you see this a bit more clearly.

This particular incident with the leaders of Israel marked the point at which this offer of the kingdom of the heavens was taken from the nation of Israel. Jesus later stated that the heavenly portion of the kingdom would be given to someone else—

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”

As we begin to understand more about this offer of the kingdom of the heavens, we must also understand at this point that the “church,” the new nation that is to be the recipient of the offer that Israel forfeited, had not come into being yet. This “church” would be built after Jesus’ death and resurrection; and His “church” is still being built today. This offer—the word of the kingdom of the heavens—is still being offered to Christians *today*. Therefore, we can study the parable of the leaven and know that Jesus is speaking prophetically, even though contextually He is speaking to His disciples.

With that in mind, please go to your Bible and read the first four parables found in Matthew 13:3-33.

Progressively speaking, we see that many hear “the word of the kingdom,” but very few respond in such a way as to produce fruit. The “good seed” are the ones who hear the word of the kingdom of heaven and produce the fruit of it (i.e. wheat). The “good seed” are then put in a field, where the enemy sows in tares among them. Tares look exactly like wheat, but don’t produce fruit. According to Jesus in His explanation of the parable, the tares stay among the wheat until harvest time, which is the end of the age. It is at this time that the separation of the wheat and tares occurs.

Then, this offer of the kingdom of heaven continues like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is planted and it grows, until eventually the mustard seed becomes a “tree.” It is important to note that a mustard plant only gets about six feet tall; it is a thin plant with a base no thicker around than a thumb. Its branches are no longer than a man’s arm and no thicker than your average straw. It moves and sways in the wind and is easily toppled by stepping on it. The mustard plant, at full maturity, is not even comparable to a tree. What we see described in the parable is an *unnatural growth* of the mustard seed that was planted—due in part to these tares that settle in among the good seed. A mustard plant is never meant to become a tree, and when it does, the “birds of the air” (which, from our first parable, are the evil one or those who do his bidding) come in and nest in its branches.

With these parables in place, we then come to the parable of the leaven.

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

A woman takes the leaven and places it in “three pecks of meal.” Three is the number of *Divine Perfection*. “Three measures of meal” is three measures of ground grain, used to make bread.

What does the meal symbolize? Read on—

Matthew 4:4

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life...”

Who is the “bread of life”?

John 1:1-2

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

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John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...

Jesus, the “bread of life,” is also what?

This meal that is used to make bread is referencing the Word of God, though not the Word in a general sense. Rather, the reference *contextually* is to that “word of the kingdom” that is mentioned in the first parable.

According to our parable of the leaven, what happens to the meal after the woman hid the leaven in it? (Notice that she “hid” it, literally “concealed” it. It was done *secretly*.)

Let’s review what’s been laid out for us in these parables. Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus spoke prophetically about the chronology of events concerning the “word of the kingdom.” This word would be given to many, but only a few would hear it, *understand it*, and produce the fruit of it. Then, amongst this “good seed,” tares would appear (resembling the wheat in every way, but fruitless) and stay in close proximity to the wheat until the harvest time at the end of the age. Because of these tares, there would be an unnatural growth of the word (of the kingdom), in which the evil one would find a place to nest. Then the leaven, a corrupting agent (doctrine contrary to God’s truth) that was secretly concealed in the word of the kingdom, would stay within the word until it was ALL leavened.

Here are a few personal questions: Do you see the effects of the leaven today in Christianity? Do you see this offer of the kingdom of the heavens being talked about, taught, or even understood in the Church-at-large today?

Satan has been successful. Christians have been deceived and most don’t even know it. I hope that you are beginning to get a grasp on some of these things, for the more you understand about the present condition of Christianity the more prepared you will be to take up your armor and stand firm against your enemy.

Pray on these things and continue to study hard! See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Present Success of Deception—Balaam

Be sure to begin your study time in prayer!

Balaam was a man that God used in a most interesting way. He is called a “soothsayer” (Josh. 13:22) and a “prophet” (II Pet. 2:16). We first read about Balaam in the book of Numbers in relation to the first generation of Israel. He is then mentioned many more times throughout the Bible in a *negative* way, and God saw fit to record several warnings for us about him. Let’s read about him—

Numbers 22:4-6

⁴ And Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. ⁵ So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, “Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite

me. ⁶ Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

What did Balak, king of Moab, want Balaam, the prophet, to do to Israel?

Balaam responded by telling these messengers to stay the night while he checked with God about it. Balaam asked God, and God responded—

Numbers 22:12

And God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people; for they are blessed.”

Balaam smartly refused to go and sent the messengers back. However, Balak sent “more numerous and more distinguished” leaders the second time with an offer of honoring Balaam “richly” if he would curse the people of Israel. Balaam went back to God a second time with the same request.

This time, Balaam went to Balak with the messengers, because God had told him to go and to speak the words that God would put in his mouth. So Balaam went:

Numbers 22:22

But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.

The donkey started acting strangely, and Balaam reacted by hitting it and striking it. The donkey then *spoke* and brought attention to the angel trying to stop Balaam. Balaam asked if he should turn around, but the angel said to go, but told him to “speak only the word which I shall tell you.”

When Balaam arrived at Moab, he told Balak to build some altars to God and offer up some sacrifices. Three times Balaam tried to curse Israel, and three times God put blessings in his mouth. Then—

Numbers 24:10

Balak’s anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!”

And then seemingly the story ends, with Balaam going his way and Balak going another.

But the next thing revealed in Scripture is this—

Numbers 25:1-3

¹ While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. ² For they [the Moabites] invited the people [Israel] to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people [Israel] ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel.

What did the people of Israel do?

God's response is quick, and quite serious—

Numbers 25:5-9

⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor. ⁶ Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ⁷ When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand; ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. ⁹ And those who died by the plague were 24,000.

Then God told Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites and kill every male, burn their cities, plunder their goods, and capture the women, children, and flocks.

What happened in Moab and Midian? What was Israel thinking, intermingling with other nations? The Lord had expressly commanded Israel not to involve themselves in any way with other nations (*cf.* Lev. 18:24; Num. 23:9).

Read on—

Numbers 31:15-16

¹⁵ And Moses said to them, “Have you spared all the women? ¹⁶ Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord.

Who caused the sons of Israel to trespass against the Lord?

Who counseled them to do this?

What Balaam did is considered such a serious matter to God that we see him mentioned three times in the New Testament.

II Peter 2:13-16

¹³ ...[false teachers] count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, ¹⁴ having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; ¹⁵ forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, ¹⁶ but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

According to this passage, what do false teachers do?

In case there is any doubt that Peter is talking about Christians, v. 14 calls them “children.” This is the Greek word *teknon* (5043), which is referencing a birth, both in the natural and figurative sense. All people who put faith in the blood of Jesus Christ become children of God—born from above (*cf.* Gal. 3:7; Rom.

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8:17). And even more specifically, II Peter 2:13-16 is dealing with teachers who bring false teaching to God's people; teachers who "deny the Master who *bought them*" (II Pet. 2:1).

What does Peter mean when he says that they "followed the way of Balaam"?

According to v. 15, what did Balaam love?

Verse 15 begins with "forsaking the right way they have gone astray." This is clearly saying that these false teachers *once knew* the right way. And, the word here for "gone astray" is the Greek word *planao* (4105), which is the same word used for "deceived." With this in mind, in your own words describe these false teachers.

There's more on false teachers in relation to Balaam in the Book of Jude—

Jude 1:3-4,10-12

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴ For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Jude's intention in writing this letter to his fellow Christians was to write "about our common salvation." However, he felt "the necessity" to write to them concerning their "contending earnestly for *the faith*." According to the text, why did Jude change his mind?

Are these "ungodly persons" Christians? What makes you think so?

According to v. 11, what did these "ungodly persons" do for pay?

We have read about false teachers/ungodly persons following the “way of Balaam” (II Pet. 2:15) and rushing into the “error of Balaam” (Jude 1:11). Now look at what Jesus says in the Book of Revelation—

Revelation 2:14

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.”

According to this verse, what did Balaam teach Balak to do?

Now focus on what you have read and learned about Balaam and his influence on the first generation of Israel. Can you sum up what the warnings are to us regarding Balaam? What does the “error” and “way” and “the teaching of Balaam” represent for the Church today? What does it look like? (This may take some thinking, but it is important to spend some time on this question.)

Every one of the references to Balaam in the New Testament are used in passages referring to Christians entering into a state of affairs *within the world* that not only defiles them in the Lord’s eyes, but also causes them to influence and defile others within the Body.

This defilement comes, as it did to the sons of Israel, by becoming enmeshed in the behaviors and world systems surrounding us that we have been *expressly* told NOT to emulate nor be a part of (I John 2:15-17). As Balaam taught, so these people too sacrifice to idols and commit acts of immorality. They become completely immersed in the world around them.

The deception that presently exists regarding our *purpose* (to rule and reign with Christ in the coming age) is a direct result of the leaven (false doctrine) introduced in the very beginning, and the teaching of Balaam. It is taught that it’s all right for God’s people to behave in any way they want, and they can do so with impunity.

Let’s not forget what Paul writes to the church in Galatia—

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Good job today. Keep it up and we’ll start again tomorrow

Day Five – Future Success of Deception

We have covered a lot of ground this week! Deception is such a rampant problem since it is the number one tactic of our enemy, as it always has been. We need to be aware of this! It is not something to be taken lightly, nor is it something to be ignored. Deception is out there and deception will come to you, personally. It is your job to be on your guard and to study God's Word in order to combat it. Remember, faith is the opposite of deception. And faith, brought to its goal, results in the salvation of your soul. Do not forget Romans 10:17:

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

So please continue to pray for God's leading and teaching in His Word. Pray that you are attentive to His Spirit, for He will lead you into all truth.

Today we will be looking at the final outcome of this deception. We'll focus primarily on the end of this age, with what awaits the Church as she stands before Her Lord and Judge. We've studied the leaven and its deceptive work—and since Jesus spoke the words regarding the word of the kingdom being "all" leavened, we can know for sure that it will happen just that way.

Let's read again the verse from Galatians—

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

Note what Jesus says in Luke—

Luke 18:7-8

⁷ ...now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith [Lit., *the* faith] on the earth?

This is an interesting question that Jesus posed. The way it is structured in the Greek is actually more like, "However, when the Son of Man comes, he won't find the faith on the earth, will he?" The answer expected is a negative one—*no*.

We know Jesus will come back sometime in the future, and we can know from our timeline that it will not be too much longer. Jesus states that when He comes back He will *not* find THE faith (which is another way of speaking of the word of the kingdom—Paul used this expression quite a bit. We'll study this a bit more in depth in later weeks).

Let's look again at the passage from James we studied on Day One—

James 1:2-4, 12

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing... ¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres

under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

We need to encounter various trials in order to test our faith. The testing of our faith produces endurance. Endurance, *if we let it*, will result in us being “perfect” (Lit., fully grown) and “complete” (Lit., whole, having all parts—it expresses the perfection of man before the fall).

In v. 12, the man that does these things is called blessed, and he will receive “the crown of life.”

The Book of Revelation also mentions this crown:

Revelation 2:10

[Jesus speaking] **“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**

This passage in Revelation is giving us a glimpse into the judgment seat of Christ, yet future. Let’s learn more about the judgment seat.

Romans 14:10-12

¹⁰ **But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.** ¹¹ **For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”** ¹² **So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God.**

Who will stand before the judgment seat of God?

What will we do there?

Paul mentions the judgment seat to the Church at Corinth also—

II Corinthians 5:9-10

⁹ **Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.** ¹⁰ **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

According to v. 10, who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ? (Note: we can see the terms “judgment seat of God” and “judgment seat of Christ” used interchangeably here.)

What will we be “recompensed” for?

The very next verse in this passage is interesting—

II Corinthians 5:11

Therefore, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

Do you get a warm and fuzzy picture of this judgment seat? Do you think we might need to be concerned about our deeds, *especially the bad ones*?

What do we do, now, with our bad deeds? Simple—

1 John 1:4-2:2

⁴ And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. ⁵ And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us [Lit., *keeps on* cleansing us] from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

What must we do with our sins?

What will Jesus do?

Do you think that God means it? (In other words, should we worry about our confessed sins?)

Paul tells us more about God's system of justice—

I Corinthians 3:10-15

¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. ¹² Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

What is the *only* foundation that can be laid?

What can a man build upon this foundation?

How will it be revealed?

What does the fire do?

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If a man's work remains, what will he receive?

What do the Scriptures say about the "reward" (cf. Col. 3:24)?

If any man's work is burned up, what happens?

Does the man burn up also?

Verse 13 says, "each man's work will become evident." What will show it?

What day? Take a quick look at your timeline in the back marked "Ages." Find the 1,000 years at the end of Man's Day. Notice that it's called the "day of the Lord." Paul is saying that this future "day of the Lord" is going to show every man's work. We can then go to the Book of Revelation and read about John's vision of this "day"—

Revelation 1:10

I [John, the apostle] was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...

The "Lord's Day" is that future 1,000-year "day"—the Seventh Day. John is getting a vision of future events and is told to record them and send it to the seven churches as a warning.

This Book of Revelation is completely about a future time, and we can understand all of what John writes in that respect.

The first thing John sees is Jesus. He is described in this way—

Revelation 1:13

...one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle...

This Man, Jesus, was standing amidst seven lampstands, which are "the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20). Seven is a number of completion, used quite often throughout Scripture.

Jesus speaks—

Revelation 1:17b-19

^{17b} "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

John saw a vision of Jesus, dressed as a Judge (He is girded across the breast as a judge would be dressed), standing with the complete Church on the Day of the Lord. Jesus then begins to give an account to each Church, stating what he knows about their deeds, and what He has "against" them. He states each

judgment as a warning, since this was given to John to give back to the churches—but, this is also a *prophetic* event that *will* happen in that future day just as is portrayed in this book. Do you see this?

Now we Christians, living near the end of our dispensation, can look at these warnings and take heed *now*, so that we don't end up hearing those same words on that day!

Let's look at the last Church mentioned, the Laodicean Church, and what Christ says to them—

Revelation 3:15-22

¹⁵ “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

(Note: Just to clarify, “the Church” means the entire Body of Believers who have put their faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It has nothing to do with a building or denomination.)

What good thing does Jesus have to say about this last Church mentioned?

What negative things does He say about them?

What is this Church saying about itself ?

Is it aware of its condition?

What does Jesus tell them to do in v.19?

Jesus says that He stands at the door and knocks; He says that if anyone hears His voice and opens the door, He will *come in to them*. Therefore, is Jesus inside the Church, or standing outside the Church?

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What are the present ramifications of that?

To the person who heeds His voice and opens the door, what will that person get?

And if a person “overcomes,” what does he/she get?

Let’s address one last thing about the leaven (note that leaven is yeast). In what temperature does leaven work the best? What does Jesus call this particular church?

Do you see the present, and future effects of this deception? Briefly write down what this means to you, personally.

I’d like to end this week’s lesson with some encouraging words. This subject of spiritual warfare has the potential to be, because of the nature of it, heavy and burdensome. It need not be, however, because the final day has not yet come, and the overcomers have not yet been identified.

Our time is short, however, and I encourage each one of you to spend some one-on-one time with the Lord. Take everything you’ve been learning to Him. There is only one truth to God’s Word and it’s up to His Holy Spirit to teach it to you. Pray that He opens your eyes and your ears. Pray that He clearly shows you the deception around you, and in your life. Pray that He gives you the strength to stand against the enemy. You have every opportunity—RIGHT NOW—to set your sights on that goal and stand firm!

Meditate on the following passages, and prayerfully make them your own. They should really be coming alive for you!

II Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal [Lit., age-lasting (166)] weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Ephesians 1:18-19

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. ¹⁹

and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might...

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might..

I Samuel 17:47

and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's...

Any thoughts?

See you next week.

Lesson Three – The Enemy Within

Day One – Flesh vs. Spirit

Day Two – Death of the First-born

Day Three – Esau vs. Jacob

Day Four – Saul and the Amalekites

Day Five – Our Response

As we've been learning, our battle with Satan is territorial; it's personal, it's nasty, and it is unceasing. Satan's target, however, is not every Christian *per se*, but every Christian who presses on "toward *the goal* (the kingdom) for the prize (the reward of the inheritance) of the upward call of God (to rule and reign with Christ) in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). Satan will use everything at his disposal to ensure that we do not win this battle. His weapon of choice is deception...and *he has been very successful*. In order to fight in this battle we must know the difference between what God says, and what man says. If you do not know what God says about these things, you *will* be deceived.

Along with Satan, there are two other great enemies of the Christian: the world and the flesh. Although all three are individually separate forces, they are all intertwined because all three work against us in the battle for our souls. This week we will study more about the difference between the *spirit* and the *flesh*.

Let's begin this week with an encouraging prayer from Paul. This is a great passage to pray, for yourself and for one another.

Colossians 1:9-10

⁹ For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

Are you ready to begin? Great, let's go!

Day One – Flesh vs. Spirit

Pray for your study time today, and pray for continued understanding. Humble yourself before Him, and be patient as He works in you. He will be faithful to answer you!

We Christians should be anxiously awaiting the future: that future age, the coming of the kingdom of our Lord and the abolishment of the kingdoms of this world, along with the god of this world. Therefore, we must not associate ourselves with things of this current *world*, this *age*, because they fall under the jurisdiction of the one who battles against us—our enemy, Satan. Satan would have us be deceived into thinking that we *can* be entangled in and focused on the things of this world, this present time, with no consequences whatsoever. The truth in God’s Word, however, is that in order to gain the salvation of our soul, we *must* forfeit our life—our soul—during this present world.

The Greek word *psuche* can be translated either soul or life. This word is found four times in the following passage:

Matthew 16:24-26

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life [soul] shall lose it; but whoever loses his life [soul] for My sake shall find it. ²⁶ For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul [life]? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul [life]?”

This world is passing away (I Jn. 2:17) and “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (I Jn. 2:16). We saw this sadly typified in the error and doctrine of Balaam.

One of the biggest battles we Christians face in this world is the inner battle between our desire to walk according to the spirit and our desire to walk according to the flesh. It is a *constant* battle and we must understand what is at stake if we fail to see the importance of overcoming the flesh.

Man is comprised of three parts—spirit, soul, and body. All three parts need redeeming, due to the original sin committed by Adam. One’s spiritual birth is brought about through initial faith in the shed blood of that which is provided by God:

- In the Garden it was the shed blood of the animals used to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness.
- In Egypt, it was the shed blood of the Passover lambs.
- At the cross at Calvary, it was the shed blood of God Himself, the Passover Lamb.

Spiritual birth has always occurred in the same way: faith in God’s provision of death and shed blood. However, this provision has been progressively revealed throughout time, ending in the Perfect Sacrifice, the Perfect Death of a Perfect Lamb.

One way of seeing this is through that which was established in the beginning, in the six-day restoration of the heavens and the earth in Genesis chapter 1.

Note: The reason for seeing the six-day work of God in Genesis as a restoration and *not* an original creation has been briefly covered in Lesson One. The study course, UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE—BIBLICAL SURVEY covers this in more depth. I will not cover it in this study, but it would be a good idea to make sure you understand this important piece of our foundation.

In summary, it is this: God originally created the heavens and the earth perfect (*cf.* Gen. 1:1; Is. 45:18). Satan was ruling over this original creation (Ezek. 28:11-19). Satan sinned and his sanctuaries were desecrated (*cf.* Ezek. 28:18; Is. 14:12-15). The earth was/became formless and void. Then God moved in order to restore that which was ruined.

God’s pattern for restoration *does not change*. Let’s briefly look at the six days of restoration in Genesis—

Genesis 1:2b

...and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water.

Who was moving over the surface of the water?

Continuing—

Genesis 1:3

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. (Day 1)

Genesis 1:6

Then God said, “Let there be...” (Day 2)

Genesis 1:9

Then God said, “Let the waters...” (Day 3)

Genesis 1:14

Then God said, “Let there be...” (Day 4)

Genesis 1:20

Then God said, “Let the waters...” (Day 5)

Genesis 1:24

Then God said, “Let the earth...” (Day 6)

How did God bring about the complete restoration of the heavens and the earth?

When God *speaks*, the Spirit—His very breath—moves. There are two words for “spirit” in Hebrew, *ruach* and *neshamah*. Both literally mean “breath.” God’s Word—His breath—and God’s Spirit are One and the same.

God’s breath, His Spirit, gives life—

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

How did man originally become a living being?

Then man, and all of mankind after him, died. Man now needs to be made *alive* again. God must move and speak (*breathe*) in His fallen creation to bring about a restoration.

Let’s compare the restoration of both fallen creations—

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Lesson Three The Enemy Within

Genesis 1:2-4

² And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

When the earth was formless and void, what was over the surface of the deep?

God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. Now notice what God did. First, God caused light to shine in the darkness. Then, He separated it from the darkness. The darkness still exists, but now light does also. Do you see that?

Let’s look at God’s other fallen creation—

I Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

How are all made alive?

Notice the connection—

John 1:1-5, 14

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...

From this passage, write down everything you learn about the light.

When the light shines, is there still darkness?

Man is born in complete darkness, due to the original sin. All three parts of man—spirit, soul, and body—are affected by sin. When a person puts faith in God’s provision, God *breathes life into them*. He says, “Let there be light,” and a light shines in the darkness. Our spirit becomes *light* and it is separated from the *darkness*, which is the condition of our unredeemed soul. This is our spiritual birth, which brings about the “division of soul and spirit.”

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Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit...

According to Heb. 4:12, what causes the division?

This is the same as in Genesis 1:2-4, isn't it?

Since darkness still exists in us even *after* we experience a spiritual birth, we need to understand more about this darkness. Let's read about it—

I John 1:5

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Is there any darkness in God?

Let's read a passage from the Book of Acts, where Jesus tells Paul that He will be sending him to the Gentiles—

Acts 26:18

“...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”

Why does Jesus want Paul to go to the Gentiles?

Why do they need to open their eyes?

If they do turn from darkness to light, what might they receive?

Do you see the connection in this verse between darkness and the dominion of Satan? Between light and the dominion of God?

More about darkness—

John 3:20-21

²⁰ (Jesus speaking) **“For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come into the light, lest his deeds be exposed.”** ²¹ **But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”**

According to v. 20, if someone does evil, what do they hate?

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Do they “come into the light”?

What does the one do who *practices* the truth?

1 John 1:7

...but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us [Lit., “keeps on cleansing”] us from all sin.

According to this verse, do we have a choice about walking in the light? (Notice the word *if*.)

Since there is a choice, we must assume that light has already shined in the darkness, otherwise there’d be no choice, right?

So, does this pertain to the *saved* person, or the *unsaved* person?

What happens if we walk in the light?

This verse tells us what happens when we walk in the light. And, since this statement is true, then the converse of this must be true also. If we *don’t* walk in the light, we *won’t* have fellowship with one another (us with Jesus), and the blood of Jesus *won’t* keep on cleansing us from all sin.

Here’s an easy question—if you aren’t walking in the light, what are you walking in?

Do you see that?

Now, on to the *flesh*—

Galatians 5:16-17

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things you please.

What is the command being given in v.16?

Why does Paul say to do this?

Does this imply a choice?

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Can we walk according to the flesh *and* the Spirit at the same time? Why or why not?

According to v. 17, what can we “not do”? Why?

Peter answers this for us—

1 Peter 2:11

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.

Why should we abstain from fleshly lusts?

Reading again from Galatians—

Galatians 5:16

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

How do we abstain from fleshly lusts?

Galatians 5:19-21

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

What does the person who practices these things NOT get?

Let’s tie all of this together. Once we experience our spiritual birth, we have the ability to perceive spiritual things. This puts us in the position wherein now we have a choice whether we walk according to the Spirit (*in the light*), or according to our flesh (*in the darkness*). And in this, it is our very soul that is at stake.

It is at this point we need to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12)—the salvation of our souls. This is the salvation that will be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:5-9). Our soul is that part of us that is connected to this world—*our flesh*. Our spirit, on the other hand—our reborn spirit—is of God

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and is light. So we have a choice. We can walk according to the Spirit, or we can walk according to the flesh. And there are rewards and punishments according to our choices.

(Just so you understand, when Scripture speaks of “flesh,” it is not referencing *all* physical pleasure that we derive from our physical life. Scripture’s use of the word flesh is a specific reference to that carnal part of us that is associated with our natural birth and this world, that which is set on man’s ways and not God’s ways.)

How would you characterize your own walk? Your choices? Are you able to discern what is pleasing to the Lord? Write down your thoughts.

If you are struggling in this area, now would be a perfect time to take it to the Lord and ask for His wisdom in this. He will be faithful to show you!

See you tomorrow!

Day Two – Death of the First-born

Pray first!

Have you ever wondered why God requires a new birth? We’ve discussed the fall of man and the death that was brought to man’s three parts because of it. Why the need for the death and shed blood of God Himself for our redemption? Why does death and blood seem to please God? It’s an amazing picture that God paints for us, and it is important to see the unfolding of God’s perfect plan.

Let’s look at the progression of redemption, which began with Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve sinned; because of that sin, all three parts of man died (became separated from God). God then covered Adam and Eve with the work of His own hands, and that covering came at the cost of spilled blood of innocent animals. From that point onward, all of mankind has been born in the likeness of fallen man, with a sinful nature (Gen. 5:3).

Next in the progression of redemption is the death of Abel at the hands of his older brother, Cain, while they were together in the field. Abel’s spilled blood cried up to God from the ground (Gen. 4; cf. Heb. 11:4; 12:24).

Further on in Genesis we learn more about the progression of redemption through Abraham and his son, Isaac—

Genesis 22:1-2

¹ Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ² And He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

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Do you remember the events surrounding Isaac's birth? (If not, go back and read it in Gen. 15, 16, 21) Briefly describe the situation surrounding his conception and birth.

Abraham did what God told him to do by taking his son, *the son of promise*, up to the mountains in order to offer him up as a burnt offering. Before leaving, Isaac asked a question—

Genesis 22:7-8

⁷And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” and he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” ⁸ And Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

What does Abraham say to his son?

Abraham and Isaac came to the place God had told him, and Abraham stretched out his hand to slay his son. Then—

Genesis 22:11-13

¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² And he said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” ¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

Abraham was stopped from offering his son as a sacrifice. What did God provide for Abraham instead?

What did the ram take the place of?

Can you see the picture being built here? First, *innocent* shed blood in the Garden as a covering for sin. Then the blood of a brother is spilled. Then, a substitutionary death...a sacrifice...a son.

All of this, of course, was pointing to the time when God would offer up His Son, His only begotten Son, the Son of promise. God's Son shed His blood and died. That Son is the Substitutionary Sacrifice for us.

Remember these things as we continue to build this progressive picture.

Now let's fast-forward from Abraham and Isaac to the days in Egypt when that first generation of Israel was on the brink of being redeemed out of slavery. Moses, their deliverer, first asked Pharaoh to let the

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sons of Israel go so they could “celebrate a feast” to the Lord in the wilderness, just a three-day journey away. Pharaoh not only refused, but he made conditions much harsher for Moses’ people.

First, note how God viewed Israel—

Exodus 4:22-23

²² [The Lord said] “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is My son, My first-born.” ²³ So I said to you, ‘Let My son go, that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first-born.’”

What does God call Israel?

God said to Moses—

Exodus 6:6-8

⁶ “Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.’”

In v. 6, what does God say He will do for the sons of Israel?

In v. 7, what does God say He will do and be?

In v. 8, what does God promise He will do?

God said He would deliver the sons of Israel from bondage with “great judgments.” The judgments, which occur over a period of about nine months, are as follows:

1. The Nile is turned into blood (Ex. 7:14-25)
2. He smites the whole territory with frogs (Ex. 8:1-15)
3. People and animals are infested with gnats (Ex. 8:20-32)
4. Swarms of flies cover the land (Ex. 8:20-32)
5. Disease kills the livestock in Egypt (Ex. 9:1-7)
6. Boils and sores infect the Egyptians and the animals (Ex. 9:8-12)
7. Hail destroys crops and vegetation (Ex. 9:13-35)
8. Swarms of locusts cover the land (Ex. 10:21-29)
9. Thick darkness covers Egypt for three days (Ex. 10:21-29)

Then the tenth, and final judgment—the death of the first-born:

Exodus 12:3, 5-7, 12-13

³ “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household.

⁵ Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. ⁷ Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

¹² For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord. ¹³ And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

What are the people of Israel to take?

Describe the lamb.

Then, at twilight, what are they to do with it?

According to v. 7, what do they do next?

On “that night,” what will God do?

This is a judgment “against all the gods of Egypt,” and the blood is a “sign.” What will God do when He sees the blood?

As a result of this last and final judgment, Pharaoh lets Israel go.

God required, *as a judgment*, the death of all the first-born in Egypt—the first-born of the Egyptians *and* the first-born of Israel. However, for His Chosen People He gave a substitution for this requirement. Israel had to slay a lamb, appropriate the blood for God to see, and God accepted this sacrifice as a legitimate substitution, *passing over* them. Their household experienced a vicarious death *of the first-born*, and God was completely satisfied.

Then God told the sons of Israel to keep this day and celebrate it every year as a memorial and a sign, to tell the subsequent generations about how God “brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery, with a powerful hand.” His words to them were this:

Exodus 13:2

“Sanctify to Me every first-born, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.”

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To whom does the first-born belong?

Now, let's take what we've learned in the types, and apply it to the antitype—

I Corinthians 5:7b

For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

John 1:36

And he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

What are the three names for Jesus in these verses?

Jesus is that Perfect Sacrifice pictured for us through the substitutionary deaths of the ram on the mountain with Isaac, and in Egypt with the Passover. God accepts the death of Jesus Christ, His first-born Son, as the perfect substitutionary death in our stead.

Now another question—what “first-born” does God require?

Remembering what we learned about our being born in the likeness of fallen man with a sin nature, does God accept our first birth, our natural birth, born after the likeness of man? (The following verses will help you answer.)

John 3:6

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

I Corinthians 15:50

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

I Peter 1:23

...for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

God *does not* accept our first birth. Our first birth—the natural birth—is inexorably tied to this world and is perishable. Therefore, our first birth must *die*. When anyone accepts Jesus as the Substitutionary Sacrificial first-born death, God sees Jesus' blood and He *passes them by* for judgment—the judgment on all sins and trespasses up to that point. This person is then redeemed, and able to be led to the land of their calling.

This person then has a choice. He can choose to live by the Spirit (walk in the light) or he can choose to walk by the flesh (walk in darkness). Do you see how God built this picture?

Think on these things and make sure you see the progressive picture. Exciting, isn't it?

See you tomorrow.

Day Three – Esau vs. Jacob

Begin your day of study in prayer.

Today we'll be studying another Old Testament picture, *or type*; a picture that we need to understand in our current battle against our enemies. I suppose that we all know about Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, and how God changed his name to Israel. Israel became the father of twelve sons; these twelve sons became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of the nation known as Israel.

But are you familiar with the story of his brother, Esau? Outside of Genesis, chapters 25 through 37, he's mentioned twelve other times in Scripture in a *negative* way. God has nothing good to say about Esau. In fact, read how God felt about him:

Malachi 1:3

"...but I have *hated* Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

Romans 9:13

Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I *hated*."

God *hated* Esau! Wow. What did Esau do that would cause God to hate him? How does that apply to us today? Is it possible for *us* to do something now that would cause God to hate us?

Esau and Jacob were twins, and while they were still in the womb of their mother, Rebekah, they "struggled together within her." Then the boys grew up, and we don't learn much about them except—

Genesis 25:27

When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents.

What is Esau called?

What is Jacob called?

Quickly note Matthew 13:38—

Matthew 13:38

...and the field is the world...

What is the significance of Esau being a "man of the field"?

But *Jacob lived in tents*. Why is that significant? Read this passage from Hebrews—

Hebrews 11:9-10

⁹ By faith he [Abraham] lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

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Abraham lived *as an alien* in the land of promise. This land was to him a “foreign land.” What was he looking for?

Abraham didn’t consider the land of promise his home; so he, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in tents. Why did they dwell in tents?

What comparison do you see between Jacob and Esau from Gen. 25:27?

We’ve learned a lot about Esau and Jacob from just a couple of verses. Let’s keep reading—

Genesis 25:29-34

²⁹ And when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; ³⁰ and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.” ³¹ Therefore his name was called Edom. ³² But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” ³³ And Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” ³⁴ And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁵ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Esau was the first-born of Isaac, but he sold his birthright to Jacob for some bread and stew. What does v. 34 say about Esau and his birthright?

Let’s stop for a minute and look at what a birthright of the first-born meant in those days.

The word for “birthright” in Greek is *prototokia* (4415), which literally means, “the rights of the first-born.” The rights of the first-born son in the Jewish economy in the Old Testament consisted of three things:

1. The first-born son became the priest of the family. Reuben was the first-born of the patriarchs, and so the priesthood of the tribes belonged to him. But because of Reuben’s rebellious behavior he forfeited his rights as first-born. That honor was transferred by God from Reuben to Levi (*cf.* Num. 3:12-13, 8:18).
2. The first-born son had allotted to him also a double portion of the paternal inheritance (*cf.* Deut. 21:15-17).
3. The first-born inherited the judicial authority of his father, whatever it might be (*cf.* II Chron. 21:3).

We’ve already learned that Israel was God’s first-born son. Notice who else is called God’s first-born—

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Hebrews 1:5-6

⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say, “Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me”? ⁶ And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

What is Jesus called in vv. 5 and 6?

And lastly, another first-born of God—

Hebrews 12:23

...to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven...

This last reference to the “church of the first-born” needs some clarification. The church is not a first-born son *yet*. We are currently *waiting* for the adoption as first-born sons—

Romans 8:23

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Let’s see how this birthright is applied to all three of God’s first-born sons—

ISRAEL

- Israel was adopted as God’s first-born son prior to their exodus from Egypt. They were being led to a land in which they were to be a “kingdom of priests.” They would become the priests of God’s family, through the tribe of Levi.
- Israel was allotted a double portion of God’s possessions. This is the two-fold promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:17—the gates of their enemies in the heavens and on the earth.
- Israel was also called to be a “kingdom of priests” in which they would rule and reign in the earthly theocracy, thus establishing judicial authority.

JESUS

- Jesus is God’s only “begotten” Son, His First-born. He is currently our High Priest (Heb. 2:17), and will exercise His office as King/Priest when He returns (*cf.* Heb. 7).
- Jesus is the “heir of all things” and will receive the heavens and the earth as His inheritance (*cf.* Heb. 1:2; Ps. 2:7-8).
- Jesus is the anointed King, and will exercise His title as King of kings when He returns (*cf.* Matt. 2:2; I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16).

THE CHURCH

- The church is “a royal priesthood” (I Pet. 2:9).
- The church is the recipient of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 21:43), in which they are to rule over the earth from the heavens. The church is to be “co-heir” with Christ.
- The church is to have “authority over the nations” and rule the earth with a “rod of iron” in that coming day (Rev. 2:26-27).

Note that it was only *sons* that received recognition in the household. Israel is called a “son of God,” Jesus is God’s Son, and the Church is being called out as “God’s son.” Scripture tells the members of the Church

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to act like sons and not just children, because ONLY SONS CAN RULE. The angels are called “sons of God” because they are currently ruling in God’s administration. The future rulers in God’s administration will all be called “sons.”

Read what Paul writes about sons, as it pertains to the Church—

Romans 8:12-14

¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

Who are the sons of God?

We’ve already learned that a saved person has a choice about how they live day to day. What is that choice?

What happens if that person lives according to the flesh?

What do the phrases “must die” and “will live” mean in this passage? (Hint: reference Matt. 16:24-26).

Read what God does with *sons*—

Hebrews 12:5-10

⁵ ...and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; ⁶ for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom he receives.” ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons [this should literally read, “If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons]; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

Who does the Lord discipline? (The Greek word for “discipline” is *paideia* (3809), which literally means, “child-training.”)

In the literal translation of v. 7, why should we endure discipline?

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What did you learn in Lesson Two about “endurance” through “various trials” from James 1:2-4, 12?

According to v. 8, if you are without discipline, what are you?

Why does God discipline us?

Our present behavior, and particularly our reaction to the various trials and testing that come upon us for our discipline, is the basis for us being called “sons of God”, *or not*. As we’ve seen, it should be our desire to be called a son of God! So we should receive this discipline with joy, for “those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:11) Remember that the “fruit” in Matthew 21:43 is used with reference to the kingdom!

There was a conditional aspect for Israel in respect to God’s earthly theocracy, and there is a conditional aspect to our part in God’s future theocracy. We are currently in line to be adopted as God’s third first-born son; however...

The rights of the first-born can be forfeited!

And that is exactly what Esau did. Let’s get back to his story.

Genesis 25:29-34

²⁹ And when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; ³⁰ and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.” Therefore his name was called Edom. ³¹ But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” ³² And Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” ³³ And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Esau was the first-born and was in line to receive the birthright that was *rightfully* his.

What did Esau sell his birthright for?

How did Esau feel about his birthright?

The author of Hebrews uses Esau as an example to the Church—

Hebrews 12:14-17

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness

springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶ that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

What is Esau called in v. 16?

Esau finally realized the enormity of what he had done when his father, Isaac, gave the blessing of the birthright to Esau's brother, Jacob. ¹

Genesis 27:34-38

³⁴ When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" ³⁵ And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and has taken away your blessing." ³⁶ Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" ³⁷ But Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?" ³⁸ And Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." So Esau lifted his voice and wept.

Isaac does have words for his son, but they are not what Esau wanted—

Genesis 27:39-40

³⁹ Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, "Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above. ⁴⁰ And by your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; but it shall come about when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck.

Esau wanted his birthright back, and though he asked his father to bless him also—*he sought this with tears*—his father only had the one blessing for one first-born. As Hebrews 12:17 says, Esau "found no place for repentance." Esau wanted his father to repent, literally "change his mind," and his father *would not*. Esau was rejected.

The warning in the Book of Hebrews is this—do not despise your birthright as Esau did. He considered it of *no value*.

In order to *not* despise your birthright, you need to know what it is, exactly. Write down what you've learned about *your* birthright—the Christians' birthright.

¹ The Scriptural explanation of these events concerning the "deceit" mentioned by Esau in Genesis 27:35 is dealt with in another Bible Study—THE BATTLE WITH AMALEK, which is available through a download on www.cornerstonejax.org/resources/bible_studies.php

Esau lost his birthright because he gave in to his fleshly desire. We have learned about putting to death the deeds of our flesh and our need to walk in the spirit. *But, we will still sin!* And because we will fail at times and we will give in to our flesh at times, we must not think that we are doomed to the same fate as Esau. We have Jesus, our High Priest, in the heavens right now making intercession for us, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We only need to recognize our sin, which means listening to the Holy Spirit point it out to us, confess our sin, and we WILL be forgiven. But if we, like Esau, continue in our fleshly lusts and consider our higher calling to be of NO value, we will find no place of repentance on the part of our Father.

So, do you consider your birthright valuable? Do you consider the things of this world of no value in comparison to what God wants for you in the age to come? Is there anything in this present world that is worth losing your birthright over? Think about it

See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Saul and the Amalekites

How are you feeling today? Are you feeling overwhelmed, or overjoyed? Excited, or exhausted? Studying God's Word is hard at times, and tiring at times, but it is *so* worth it. There is such treasure in It and I encourage you to continue to study and to continue to pray!

We studied Esau yesterday and the forfeiture of his birthright through his action of feeding his flesh. God hated Esau *because Esau despised his birthright*. Today we will briefly study the Amalekites, and see how they can also teach us about the enemy within each of us.

The Amalekites are associated with Esau, although they are first mentioned in the war that Abram got involved in when he rescued Lot. It is just a mere mention about the "country of the Amalekites" (Gen. 14:7), and we do not see mention of them again until after Esau.

Esau's grandson was Amalek (Gen. 36:12), and it was Amalek and his men who fought against the first generation of Israel—

Exodus 17:8

Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim.

Amalek was defeated by Israel in this battle, and the Lord swore that He would "utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" (Ex. 17:14).

While we can see the Amalekites surfacing in Scripture several times after Exodus chapter seventeen, let's jump to a scene during Saul's reign—

I Samuel 15:1-2

¹ Then Samuel said to Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the Lord. ² "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.'"

Why will the Lord punish Amalek?

Then the Lord gave a clear command to Saul—

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I Samuel 15:3

“Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”

What did God tell Saul to do to Amalek?

Read what Saul did—

I Samuel 15:7-9

⁷ So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. ⁸ And he captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Saul defeated the Amalekites. Did Saul do *exactly* what the Lord told him to do?

What did Saul keep?

What did Saul and the people “utterly destroy” and what did they keep?

God told Saul to destroy everything, not just everything that *he* thought was worthless enough to destroy. But Saul was not obedient, and so God was not pleased with Saul.

I Samuel 15:11

[The Lord said] “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.

Saul sidestepped his responsibility in the matter, then admitted that he “sinned” and “indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and [Samuel’s] words, because [he] feared the people and listened to their voice.” (I Sam. 15:24)

Then Saul’s fate is spoken—

I Samuel 15:26

But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

What did Saul lose for *not* obeying God’s voice?

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And notice the justification that Saul gives for keeping the spoil and not destroying it—

I Samuel 15:20-21

²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”

What was Saul’s reason for deciding to keep the “choicest” of the spoil?

This did not please the Lord. Read what Samuel said after that—

I Samuel 15:22-23

²² And Samuel said, “Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.”

What does the Lord delight in?

What is *better than sacrifice*?

According to v. 23, how did God view Saul’s actions?

Now let’s read about Saul’s end. In this passage, a man has just admitted to ending Saul’s life, and is recounting the story to David—

II Samuel 1:8-10

⁸ “And he [Saul] said to me, ‘Who are you?’ And I answered him, ‘I am an Amalekite.’ ⁹ Then he said to me, ‘Please stand beside me and kill me; for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.’ ¹⁰ So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord.”

Who killed Saul?

What did he take from Saul?

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Do you see what God is teaching us? Amalek is the grandson of Esau. Esau chose his flesh over his birthright. Amalek, as a descendant of Esau, can also be seen as representing the choice of flesh over spirit.

We are to rid ourselves *fully* of our fleshly lusts, for they “wage war against the soul” (I Pet. 2:11).

James tells us—

James 1:21

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all the remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

What are we to put aside?

How much filthiness and how much wickedness?

Do we get to keep any part of it? Maybe just the part we like?

What are we to receive in humility?

Why?

Romans 13:14

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

The picture should be very clear. We are to kill our flesh, that part of us that sets our sights on man’s will and not God’s. *We are to destroy every last bit of it!* None of it can remain, as the Lord told Saul regarding Amalek. We do not get to choose what part stays and what part is destroyed, it all must go. We don’t get to keep some and use it for the Lord—He will not accept it. In order to receive that which is promised, we must die to our flesh.

This, however, is not a one-time deal; it must be a constant, day-to-day choice. It is all part of the battle that rages...with the outcome yet to be decided. May I encourage you to “slay the Amalekite” within? The consequences of not doing so are just as serious as it was with Saul—

II Samuel 1:10

“And I took the crown which was on his head...”

Revelation 3:11

[Jesus speaking] **“I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.**

The person that takes your crown is *you*. By choosing *not* to “lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Eph. 4:22) we relinquish our crown, and we forfeit our rights as first-born.

Keep up the good work. God rejoices in your sacrifice of studying His Word!

See you tomorrow.

Day Five – Our Response

We have had a full week of laying down more foundation, studying God’s Word, all the while building a progressive picture of what is expected of us as God’s children. We are to esteem our birthright, choose to walk by the Spirit, and deny our flesh. This is what is meant by “dying” to ourselves. This is all so that we will be found complete at the coming of our Lord.

Now we come to our Scripture passage that is the basis of this UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL WARFARE study. For now, we will read this passage through and begin to become familiar with it. We will be focusing more on it in the coming weeks.

Read through this passage *twice*. Then answer the questions that follow.

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

According to v. 12, who is our struggle against?

From what you’ve learned so far, who do we know these to be?

Who do we NOT struggle against?

What are we supposed to put on?

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Why?

Do you think God would have provided armor if we didn't need it?

According to Eph 6:13b-14a, what are we to do in this battle (hint: it's two words)?

We are told to *stand firm* in this battle against the spiritual forces of wickedness, and to be strong in the Lord and the power of HIS might. *This is not about our own strength.* Our battle is not an offensive one, but a defensive one. If we choose to walk by the Spirit and deny the flesh, we will be victorious. *We will overcome.*

Let's look at what this looks like in our life. We can see a real practical aspect of this in Peter's letter:

II Peter 1:4-11

⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. ⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal (Lit., age-lasting) kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

What are we told to practice in order to have the entrance into the kingdom abundantly supplied to us?

What does it say of the one who lacks these qualities?

We can also see this in the words from Jesus Himself:

Matthew 5:3-12

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be

satisfied. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. ¹² Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

What qualities are called blessed?

What will those people who possess these characteristics receive?

There's more from Jesus about being an overcomer, and receiving a reward—

Revelation 2:7

(Jesus speaking) **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.”**

What will the overcomer receive?

Revelation 2:26-28

(Jesus speaking) ²⁶ **And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷ and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star.**

What will the overcomer receive?

Revelation 3:5

He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

What will the overcomer receive?

Revelation 3:21

He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

What will the overcomer receive?

I hope you now see why we **MUST** take this battle seriously. Our very life—in the age to come—depends on it!

Let's read a couple of encouraging (and lengthy) passages from Scripture. These words from God tell us that what He asks of us is *completely attainable*. Not only is it attainable, but it is attainable in **FULL** measure. God has given us *everything* we need to be victorious!

Leviticus 26:1-13

¹ You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God. ² You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the Lord.

³ **IF** you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, ⁴ then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. ⁵ Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. ⁶ I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. ⁷ But you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword; ⁸ five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. ⁹ So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. ¹⁰ And you will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new.

¹¹ Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. ¹² I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. ¹³ I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

Deuteronomy 30:9-20

⁹ Then the Lord your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your father; ¹⁰ if you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.

¹¹ For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?" ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it,

that we may observe it?” ¹⁴ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.

So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.

Therefore, we need to be *doers* of the Word, and not hearers only.

What are your thoughts after reading this? What is God saying to you personally?

We must stay encouraged in this battle, and we must encourage *one another*. We need to battle as Moses and Joshua and Israel battled against Amalek. Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of a hill as Joshua and his men went down to the battlefield to fight—

Exodus 17:11-13

¹¹...when Moses held his hand up, Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. ¹³ So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Joshua was not fighting alone. Moses was not on that hilltop alone. When Moses got tired, there was someone there to put a rock under him. When Moses' hands were tired, someone was there to hold them up. *This was all to bring victory to the battle at hand.*

We need one another and we need to rely on one another. Please remember that!

Philippians 1:9-11

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

I Thessalonians 5:14-18

¹⁴ And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. ¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

REJOICE ALWAYS!

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS!

See you next week!

Lesson Four – Finally...

Day One – Maturity
Day Two – The Church at Ephesus
Day Three – The Mystery, Part I
Day Four – The Mystery, Part II
Day Five – The Mystery, Part III

By now you should have an understanding about this battle we are in. We've learned about Satan and his angels, the extensive way he has used and still uses deception, our war against him, the world and the flesh, and the focus of this warfare—the Seventh Day. Our foundational Scripture from Ephesians 6:10-17 gives much detail on *how* we are to battle: wearing the full armor of God. But before we delve into that, we will need to set the context of this passage within the Book of Ephesians. This week we will look at the background and context of Paul's letter, and why it is necessary for us to be of the same mindset as the original recipients of this letter. *There is much we need to have in place before we can put on the full armor of God.*"

This description of the full armor of God is given in Ephesians 6:10-17. Because it's in chapter six, it is contextually necessary to read and understand chapters one through five to see and grasp the entirety of what Paul is talking about.

In addition, the Book of Ephesians is the forty-ninth book of the Bible, out of a total of sixty-six books. It would not be hermeneutically sound to jump right in to the last two-thirds of the Bible and attempt to understand its meaning in an isolated manner. We must know what comes *before* the forty-ninth book of the Big Book. The Bible is not only a chronological historical account of "time" as we know it; it is a progressively revealed account of God's truth, laid out in a manner that man can understand. We must begin in the beginning (Genesis) as God did, and end at the end (Revelation), as God did.

This is why we have spent three lessons reviewing the basic truths of Scripture, truths you may or may not have learned thus far in your Christian walk. This study on spiritual warfare is about solid food and maturity. It's about understanding *why* you've saved. It's about Christ's kingdom in the heavens and His kingdom on earth, all of which takes place on the Seventh Day. It's about Satan's tactics to disqualify you and the present-day prevalent deception around us. It's about suffering and overcoming and rejoicing.

It's all about Jesus Christ.

And once you understand that, there is a huge target on you.

Study well this week, and study prayerfully. Open eyes and open hearts are a must.

Day One – Maturity

Begin your study time today in prayer.

Read through this Ephesians passage a few more times to become familiar with it.

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The word “finally” from the beginning of our Ephesians passage is the Greek word *loipon* (3063), which literally means “something that is yet remaining to be done.” Paul’s use of this word is not to simply express his final words on the matter. Rather, the word *loipon* is used here by Paul in a manner of him telling the people of the Church at Ephesus that after they have understood and *done* all he has spoken about (in the preceding chapters), the last thing they need to *do* is to put on the armor. In other words, after settling in their minds what it is they are fighting for and why, and pressing on to maturity, they need to arm themselves. This is an important concept to grasp, so make sure you understand this paragraph before moving on to the next.

Did you know that God expects every Christian to press on to maturity? Do you know what a mature Christian is? Do you consider yourself a mature Christian? Think about this for a minute. How long have you been a Christian, and are you any different now than you were then? What is different; what is the same? Do you have a greater knowledge of God’s Word than you did before? Why or why not?

The truth of the matter is that not every Christian moves on to maturity. Some do. They move on to solid food. Some do not; they remain on milk. The author of Hebrews explains it like this:

Hebrews 5:11-6:1, 3

¹¹ Concerning him [Melchizedek, contextually referring to things regarding Christ’s return] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary [Lit., beginning] principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to [Lit., unskillful in] the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food

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**is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.
¹ Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity... ³
And this we shall do, if God permits.**

According to v. 12, what should the recipients of this letter be “by this time”?

From v. 12, had they already been taught the “elementary principles of the oracles of God”?

Why did they need to be taught this again?

What is the solid food, and who is it for?

How is the mature Christian described (v. 14)?

Let’s compare this thought with something Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry. Do you remember the parabolic sequence in Matthew chapter 13 that we briefly looked at in Lesson Two? Jesus started speaking in parables because those who *should have* understood what He was talking about did **not** understand. Jesus spoke to His own people things about the kingdom of the heavens, and He was rejected and crucified for it. Of these people Jesus said, “the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes” (Matt. 13:15).

The connection with our passage from Hebrews is this: *Many* of the redeemed people of God that should hear and understand the truths spoken by God Himself concerning the solid food of God’s Word DO NOT hear, nor do they understand. Many of the hearts of God’s own people have become dull, and their ears scarcely hear, and their eyes scarcely see. The sad thing is that *they did not start out that way!* They *became* that way.

Paul encountered a similar problem with the Church in Corinth. Read what he says—

I Corinthians 3:1-4

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men?

What does Paul compare the “babes in Christ” to?

Compare the babes in Christ in the Corinthian letter to the “babe” in the Hebrews letter.

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Paul explicitly says in v. 4 what the root of their jealousy and strife was. They were *walking* like mere men and *following* mere men rather than the Word of God.

When a Christian acts fleshly, he (or she) cannot receive solid food. This solid food is what a Christian needs in order to “grow up in respect to salvation [of the soul]” (I Pet. 2:2). This solid food must be quite important, don’t you think?

Read the Hebrews passage again. It states that there are “elementary teachings about the Christ.”

Hebrews 6:1-2

¹ Therefore **leaving** the elementary [Lit., beginning] **teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity** (5047), **not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,** ² **of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.**

Using the Strong’s definitions from your Appendix, write down the definitions of each word below:

1. leaving (863)-
2. maturity (5047)-

We studied a passage in Lesson Two that uses this same word *teleios* (though in an adjective form). Here it is translated “perfect.” Read the verses again below.

James 1:2-4

² **Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,** ³ **knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.** ⁴ **And let endurance have its perfect** (5046) **result, that you may be perfect** (5046) **and complete, lacking in nothing...**

Do you remember what you learned from this verse? Testing produces endurance, endurance brings our faith to its goal, which brings *us* to *our* goal—ruling and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years. Our Hebrews passage tells us to press on toward this goal, *to maturity*.

However, according to our passage in the Book of Hebrews, in order to mature, what must we leave?

What must we not lay again?

What does that mean? Does it mean that we can’t repent or we shouldn’t have faith? NOT AT ALL! Read the whole context of Hebrews chapter 6, but particularly v. 9—

Hebrews 6:9

But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation...

The author wants better things for the Church, things that carry with them salvation. This is obviously not talking about the salvation connected with spiritual birth, since the author is writing to the Church.

Therefore, to which salvation is this referring? The next three verses use the words “work,” “labor,” “hope unto the end,” and “inherit the promises.” The Book of Hebrews states this further on—

Hebrews 10:39

But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving (KJV, “saving”) of the soul.

The author says to leave behind and not lay again a foundation of elementary things concerning the Christ. We must not *lay again a foundation* of these things, not these things in and of themselves. Do you see the distinction? We need to move *beyond* the initial things having to do with the Christ, and *press on* with the mature things pertaining to the Christ, things that pertain to the salvation of the soul. *Things that have to do with our behavior, our obedience to God’s Word, our purpose for being redeemed.* The latter will move us toward maturity (perfection) and the former will not.

Let’s look closer at the Hebrews passage, and what exactly these elementary things encompass.

Hebrews 6:1-2

1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

What six things are mentioned in relationship to the elementary teachings?

Each one of these things listed carry with them *beginning* teachings (which build the foundation), and each one of these things listed carry with them teachings that produce maturity. .

There is a point here that needs to be made very clear. One cannot move onto the mature teachings without first having the elementary teachings. One must begin (remember that the word for elementary is *beginnings*) with basic things concerning our salvation. THEN one must move on to the mature teachings. Let’s take a look at each one of the six things mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2, and the elemental teachings associated with each:

ELEMENTAL TEACHINGS THAT WE SHOULD MOVE BEYOND FOR MATURITY

- Repentance from dead works—A Christian can perform works, but apart from faith they are considered dead. Works of the flesh are unacceptable to God; works of the Spirit are wholly acceptable. A saved person can repent (change his mind) at any time regarding his manner of walk (behavior).
- Faith toward God—This is inextricably linked to works in the life of the Christian. A saved person must exercise faith in everything that they do. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). However, a saved person has a choice regarding whether they will exercise faith or not. Faith, *in the life of the Christian*, comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). A saved individual must learn what God has said, believe what God has said, and then act

- on what God has said. This all has to do with the salvation of the soul, which is a progression toward maturity.
- Instruction about washings—A saved person still has need of washing, but now it is a partial washing. This washing is to be performed repeatedly, because the redeemed person is constantly being defiled by coming in contact with the world in which they live. A Christian is himself a priest, who has been completely washed once at the time of their initial justification. The Christian must then avail himself of the blood of Jesus Christ the High Priest for the continual washing of sin. Again, this is a choice on behalf of the Christian.
 - Laying on of hands—This idea of separation is linked with the teaching concerning the washing. A saved person must remain separate and clean, with sin continually being identified and separated from their life.
 - Resurrection of the dead—This teaching is all of that which surrounds the different times and circumstances that the dead are resurrected. The saved and the unsaved are resurrected at different times; the Jews and Christians are resurrected with different type bodies and at different times; and the faithful and unfaithful are separated into different groups at the judgment of the saved.
 - Eternal judgment—a.k.a. “age-lasting” judgment—This is the teaching regarding the judgment seat of Christ, the kingdom age, the salvation of the soul, and faithful and unfaithfulness on the part of a Christian. There are many judgments for God’s people and the resulting decisions differ.

The truths surrounding God’s kingdom encompass all of these teachings, and this list is by no means exhaustive! Hopefully this has allowed you to glimpse those things which we should be moving beyond—*not laying a foundation again*—as we move out of elemental things and into more and more maturity.

Take some time to write out what you have learned today.

This would be a good place to stop and take this particular message to the Lord. Spend a few minutes in prayer with Him and ask Him to show you what He means and how this applies to you personally.

See you tomorrow.

Day Two – The Church at Ephesus

Begin your day with prayer!

Today we are going to do some background study regarding the Church at Ephesus and Paul’s relationship with them. As mentioned before, the importance here is that this particular church had received *much* teaching from Paul and was pressing on toward maturity.

The city of Ephesus was a port city of Asia Minor, located on the southwest edge of the region on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Paul first stopped in Ephesus sometime around 48 A.D. while on his way to Syria, and he stayed just a short time. Two disciples were with him, Priscilla and Aquila, and when Paul

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left they stayed behind. During Paul's first stay in Ephesus, he "reasoned with the Jews" in the synagogues (Acts 18:18-21).

Sometime later, Paul returned to Ephesus and stayed almost three years. During that time, Paul did much teaching and preaching.

Acts 19:8-10

⁸ And he [Paul] entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

What did Paul "reason and persuade" the Jews about (v. 8)?

Keeping in mind that Paul was teaching in the synagogues, what do you think that message would be about: spiritual birth by faith in Jesus Christ, or spiritual truths concerning the Messiah, Israel's King, and His coming kingdom?

(Note: the phrase "kingdom of God" is often used interchangeably in Scripture with the phrase "kingdom of [the] heaven[s]," even though occasionally the term "kingdom of God" is used to describe God's universal rule. The rule of the kingdom of the heavens over the earth exists within the absolute sovereignty of the kingdom of God—God is and always will be the Supreme Ruler. However, He is currently letting events occur that will result in the reconciliation of that which He has created. Since Scripture is dealing with those things that are in view to mankind, we can see the two phrases as synonymous as it pertains to the Christian's heavenly calling—*cf.* **Matthew 19:23-24**, "And Jesus said to His disciples, 'Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'")

According to Acts 19:8-10, who was speaking evil of "the Way"?

What did Paul do?

And because of that, what was the result (v. 10)?

What message did these people hear (v. 10)?

Paul left Ephesus, traveled to Macedonia, then to Greece, Philippi, and Troas. He then decided to go to Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost and ended up in the town of Miletus, which is located just south of Ephesus. While there, Paul sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus. They came to Paul, and he gave them a message. Paul probably thought that this message would be his last to them, because he expected that he would be arrested (or worse) in Jerusalem. This is what Paul said to them (remember the time frame here—Paul writes his letter to Ephesus in 60 A.D., and this even transpired in/around 58 A.D.):

Acts 20:18-32

¹⁸ “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵ And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose [Lit., all the will, or intention] of God. ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

According to v. 21, what did Paul testify about?

To whom did he testify?

From whom did Paul receive his ministry (v. 24)?

According to vv. 24 and 25, what did Paul testify solemnly about and preach?

What did he declare (v. 27)?

Do you see that the *whole* purpose of God that Paul taught while in Ephesus is synonymous with the gospel of the grace of God and the message pertaining to the kingdom of God?

Keeping this in mind, let’s read a portion of the letter that Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus—

Ephesians 1:1-4

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

Paul wrote this letter to the saints at Ephesus who are “faithful in Christ Jesus.” Many times Paul writes Christ Jesus instead of Jesus Christ, and he does so for a reason, as is true in all of Scripture, each word is written a particular way for a reason. Nothing is arbitrary or haphazard. Writing *Christ* first brings particular attention to what Christ means. The Greek word for Christ is *Christos* (5546), which means “anointed.” Jesus is not simply the Passover Lamb; He is the Promised Son of David, the Son of God, the King of kings, and the Promised Redeemer. Let’s not forget what Jesus came to the earth to do—He came to reconcile all things, in heaven and on earth, by bringing man back into the position for which he was created. He was anointed by God to fulfill all things and the title *Christ* brings particular attention to His *whole* purpose.

The word Christ then, when used first, refers to the mature teachings surrounding the Christ. The Church at Ephesus would have understood that because, as Paul says, they were faithful *in* Christ Jesus—they were faithful to (they believed in) the whole purpose of God. Read what Paul wrote about the Christ in his letter to Galatia—

Galatians 3:26-27

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Through faith in Christ Jesus, they (and correspondingly, we) are all what?

Do you remember what we learned about sons? Initial faith in Jesus as Passover Lamb brings us into the family of God and makes us His children; we are only sons when we walk according to the Spirit and allow the discipline necessary to adopt us as sons. And do not forget, only sons will rule.

Because the Church at Ephesus was faithful in Christ Jesus, and they understood these things, it was not necessary for Paul to lay any foundation in his letter. He simply began his letter by talking about “the blessings” in “the heavenly places” in Christ, and the “adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself” (Eph. 1:5). This is an important bit of information to have when studying the Book of Ephesians.

Take a moment to think about the big picture of Paul’s teachings. Reflect on what you’ve learned so far about the kingdom and how this goes beyond the beginning teaching about Jesus as the Passover Lamb. In particular, focus on what the Old Testament teaches about Israel and their Messiah and their purpose as a nation, because Paul would have only had the Old Testament Scriptures to teach with. Take your thoughts to the Lord and spend some time contemplating the milk and the solid food. I think you may be surprised at the enormity of what there is to learn!

Day Three – The Mystery, Part I

Be still before the Lord. Seek His face with a pure heart. Ask Him for understanding. Ask Him for His truth. Share your thoughts with Him. He rejoices in the prayers of His people!

Let's pick up from where we left off yesterday, and continue reading in the Book of Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:5-9a

⁵ In love He [God] predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His [God's] will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His [God's] grace, which He [God] freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him [Jesus] we have redemption through His [Jesus'] blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His [God's] grace, ⁸ which He [God] lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹ He [God] made known to us the mystery of His [God's] will...

Remembering that Paul is writing to the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:1), what have we been predestined to (v. 5)?

According to what?

Why have those who are faithful in Christ Jesus been predestined to adoption as sons (v. 6)?

How did God bestow this?

What do we have in Jesus (v. 7)?

This is according to God's *grace*. God's grace is bestowed on us in order to bring glory to God, which will all be done through His Son and our adoption as sons (yet future). This, according to v. 9, is God's will.

Verse 9 also tells us that God's will is a "mystery" that is now being made known to us "in all wisdom and insight." Let's learn more about this mystery as we continue reading in Ephesians—

Ephesians 1:9-12

⁹ He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him. ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him, ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

The mystery of His will is with a view to *an administration*. How does Paul describe this administration (v. 10)?

Where are the things that are to be summed up?

Let's look at Paul's letter to the Church at Colossae to learn more about the "summing up" of all things in Christ—

Colossians 1:16-20

¹⁶ For by Him [Jesus] all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He also head of the body, the church; and he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that he Himself might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

By whom were all things created?

What are the things that were created?

Where would *the visible* things be found?

Where would *the invisible* things be found?

Then v. 20 says that *through Jesus all things will be reconciled*. What does this mean?

What does this *mystery of God's will* have to do with? It has to do with Jesus' purpose—His whole purpose. The summing up (which literally means "the gathering together into one") of all thrones and dominions and rulers and authorities, in heaven and on earth, when Jesus rules and reigns on the Seventh Day. This is God's mystery that He has made known to us.

Let's explore how the New Testament writers describe this mystery. There are different aspects to it, but it is all one mystery. We'll finish today's study by looking at the mystery of the Gentiles being grafted into God's family. Then, we'll spend the rest of this week's lesson focusing on the suffering, death, and glorification of Christ, and how it all applies to the current offer of the kingdom of heaven to the Church. Hang in there, there's some great treasure to unearth!

Ephesians 2:11-13, 19, 3:1-11

¹¹ Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household...

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; ³ that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. ⁴ And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶ to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷ of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. ⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; ¹⁰ in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Why is Paul a prisoner of Christ Jesus?

What does Paul say is the “mystery of Christ” (v. 6)?

Verses 8-10 sum up what we've learned so far. Put these verses into your own words, using as much detail as you can.

Paul was called to preach to the Gentiles the “riches” of the Christ and to teach them things concerning the “administration of the mystery,” which was concealed in the Word of God from the very beginning. He said as much in Acts chapter 20, that he preached the whole purpose of God: faith in Jesus as Passover Lamb to bring about initial salvation, then on to things concerning the kingdom, which would specifically be the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to God's people. Paul brings all this together as it pertains to the nation of Israel and their rejection—

Romans 11:11-14

¹¹ I say then, they [Israel] did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. ¹² Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! ¹³ But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

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Lesson Four Finally...

According to v. 11, what happened because of Israel's transgression?

Do you recall what Israel's transgression was? Their failure?

Israel *lacked faith* in God. They lacked the continual belief in God's Word necessary to receive the blessings. They forfeited their right to the kingdom of the heavens, and they killed their Promised Messiah. By their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Reading more from Romans—

Romans 11:15-20

¹⁵ For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ And if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. ¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear...

Because of Israel's rejection of God's Word (in all forms—spoken, written, and in the Flesh), the world received reconciliation through the blood of Jesus. Paul likens their rejection to branches being broken off. Why were they broken off (v. 20)?

Using your Appendix, look up the definition for the following words from v.20:

1. disbelief (570) –
2. faith (4102) –

Using these definitions, rewrite v. 20.

What does Paul say about us (the Gentiles) in v.17?

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Lesson Four Finally...

Why do we have to be grafted in to the tree (which is Israel)?

(Pull from what you've learned in Lesson One—Abraham and his promises, the God of Shem, etc.)

Continuing in Romans—

Romans 11:20-22

²⁰ **Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; ²¹ for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. ²² Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.**

Since we are now grafted into the natural “olive tree,” God will deal with us much as He has dealt with Israel. According to v. 21, did God spare the natural branches that were unbelieving?

Will He spare us *if we do not remain faithful* (v. 22)?

What two characteristics of God does Paul point out in v. 22?

Most of us have probably seen God as merciful and loving for allowing us to be grafted in to His promises. And so He is, for it took His Own blood to make it happen. But, we also need to see the severity of God. Those who fall due to unbelief will experience His severity by being cut off.

What was the disobedient nation of Israel cut off from?

Likewise, what will the disobedient Christian be cut off from?

The mystery of the “fullness of the Gentiles” is this current dispensation where God is making a new nation to be the recipient of the kingdom of the heavens (which will be made up of mostly Gentiles). Many prophets of old knew that there was more to what they saw in the Scriptures, and they made careful search and inquiry into it. Peter writes about it:

I Peter 1:9-13

⁹ **...obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of [Lit., with respect to] Christ and the glories to**

follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look. ¹³ Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Which salvation is Peter talking about?

According to v. 11, what did the prophets “who prophesied of the grace that would come to us” seek to know?

What was revealed to them (v. 12)?

Read v. 12 again carefully. The prophets of the Lord made careful search and inquiry regarding their prophecies of the Christ. They wanted to know what “person or time” the Holy Spirit was indicating.

The things that the prophets wrote about are now announced to us *through those* who preach the gospel to us, i.e. the whole gospel—the gospel of grace AND the gospel of the glories of Christ in His coming Kingdom. These are things having to do with the salvation of the soul (look again at the context in Peter’s letter). Please grasp the importance of this terminology.

And because of all these things, what are we to do (v. 13)?

We’ll stop here for the day. There was a lot of information in today’s study, so don’t be frustrated if some of it hasn’t clicked into place yet. All the big pieces will fall into place at some point. You just need to be patient and continue to study and continue to ask God to give you wisdom. His Spirit will guide you into all truth, so let Him. Have a good day and we’ll start again tomorrow.

Day Four – The Mystery, Part II

We’ll continue our study of God’s mystery today, paying close attention to Christ’s suffering preceding His glory, and the many things that we can learn from that as we apply God’s Word. All of the foundation we are studying would have been known and understood by the Church in Ephesus, and so we too must understand it if we want to find ourselves in a place where we can “finally” put on the full armor of God. Make sure that you begin and end in prayer today, earnestly setting your heart to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”!

Go back to yesterday’s work and write down what you learned about the Gentiles aspect of the mystery. Use as much detail as you can. (More space is provided on the next page.)

Let's begin with a passage from Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth. Here he mentions the mystery in relation to Christ's death—

I Corinthians 2:6-10

⁶ Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; ⁷ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸ the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹ but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

According to v. 7, what is God's wisdom spoken in?

What wisdom?

To whom does Paul speak this wisdom (v. 6)?

Is this wisdom, spoken of in a mystery, of *this age* (v.6)?

Is it of the rulers of *this age*?

Did any of the rulers of this age understand this mystery, this hidden wisdom?

If they had understood it, what would NOT have happened?

According to this passage, why did God hide this wisdom in a mystery?

Jesus Christ *had to die*. But He did not come to the earth *only to die*. He first came with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to His people (*cf.* Luke 4:43; Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15), and His people had a choice about whether they would accept Him, or not. They chose the latter, and the chief priests and leaders of Israel had their King crucified. But, as we know, the death and resurrection of the Christ sealed the fate of all—Satan and his angels would be dethroned, the Gentiles would now be able to receive God’s blessings, and Israel would one day be placed back in their land. Mankind would once again be placed in a position for rulership. Absolutely perfect.

The suffering, death, and resurrection of the Christ were events that could have been seen throughout the Old Testament by the innumerable pictures and types that were recorded. Israel should have known this, yet they remained blinded to the truth. Let’s read how Jesus rebuked and corrected the thinking of two of His disciples, on the day of His resurrection—

Luke 24:13-27

¹³ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, “What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?” And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, “Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?” ¹⁹ And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. ²⁴ And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.”

²⁵ And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Why does Jesus call the two disciples foolish and slow of heart (v. 25)?

The story continues with the two disciples recognizing Jesus; they then went back to the other nine and recounted to them their experience with Jesus. As they all talked, Jesus appeared in their midst. Read about it—

Luke 24:44-46

⁴⁴ “[Jesus speaking] These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day...”

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Lesson Four Finally...

According to vv. 27 and 44, Jesus explained to them the things concerning Himself in “all the Scriptures,” i.e., “the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms.” Did He leave out any part of the Scriptures?

Is there any part of the Old Testament that is not about some facet of Jesus’ *complete* work?

According to Luke 24:46, what was written in the Scriptures?

Here are a couple of questions to ponder: Why did the Jews reject the Christ, if they had at their disposal the Old Testament Scriptures, which Jesus said was all about Him? And why, even after His death and resurrection, did most of them NOT see Him in all of their Scriptures?

Acts 3:18

But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

It was the *suffering* of Christ that threw people off track. Notice what Jesus says to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. What does He say in vv. 25 and 26?

According to Acts 3:18, what did God, through the mouth all the prophets, announce beforehand?

The nation of Israel did not understand that the Promised Son of David, the King of Israel, would suffer, serve, or be meek in any way. They expected their King to usher in the powerful kingdom that would rule all nations on earth—why would He appear lowly? But what did Jesus say? He had to *suffer* before entering into His glory!

Let’s see *when* Jesus starts speaking about His suffering, and His crucifixion. It comes right after His first mention of His “church”—

Matthew 16:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

²¹ From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Four Finally...

Jesus said that He will build His Church “upon this rock.” What rock is He referencing? You may want to answer Peter because the very name Peter means “rock,” but look at the context. Peter has just made a statement of profound importance—Jesus is *the Christ, the Son of the living God*. (Remember II Samuel 7:12-19, the promise to David?) The Father Himself revealed something significant to Peter, and he listened. Everyone else was saying that Jesus was someone else.

So, what will the Church be built upon?

Who will build it?

Even before Jesus is crucified, He speaks of His Church. Do you see the implication? Jesus **MUST** die in order to graft in the Gentiles, so He begins speaking about His crucifixion because Israel has rejected Him. Now, He will go to the cross.

But what does Peter then say? (Good old Peter...)

Matthew 16:21-24

²¹ From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²² And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s” ²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Obviously, Peter had not understood from the Scriptures that Jesus had to suffer before entering into glory. And because Peter rebuked Jesus for intimating His own death, Jesus called him “Satan” (wow) and a “stumbling block.”

Why did Jesus call Peter this (v. 23)?

Who was Peter aligning himself with? (Keep in mind that Peter was a *redeemed* man.)

Look again at v. 24. If anyone wishes to come after Jesus (Lit. “go where Jesus will be going”) they must deny themselves and take up their cross. The cross is an instrument of suffering and death. What, then, does it mean to *take up your cross*?

Take note that Jesus’ suffering in the flesh is an example for us—

I Peter 2:11, 19-24

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul... ¹⁹ For this find favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a

man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

What are we to abstain from (v. 11)?

According to vv. 19-20, what finds favor with God?

We then read in v. 21 that we have been “*called* for this purpose.” What purpose (v. 21)?

Rewrite v. 24.

Jesus suffered and died *in* the flesh, as an example to us. We are to suffer and die *to* the flesh. We are to die to sin and live to righteousness. This is exactly what we studied in last week’s lesson.

We can see that there is certainly more to following Jesus than simply believing He died for your sins. Jesus says clearly that there will be suffering and death. This means that Jesus’ followers must suffer, and they must die (put to death their life in this age), in order to go be where Jesus will be. And where will He be? In the kingdom, ruling and reigning, in that Seventh Day! Paul says this very succinctly in his letter to Timothy—

II Timothy 2:11-12 (KJV)

¹¹ It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: ¹² If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us...

What would it look like in *your* life to pick up your cross and follow Jesus? What would have to change? Is your heart prepared for this? Why or why not?

Let's stop for today. Stay in prayer over the things that you are learning, and ask your Father to give you the wisdom you need to put the pieces into place. He will, so stay faithful to Him!

See you tomorrow.

Day Five – The Mystery, Part III

Pray first!

Yesterday we looked at the suffering of Christ, and how this is an important piece of the mystery that is now being made known to us. But that is only part of the picture, for Jesus Himself said, **“Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”**

Here's the good news—suffering and glory go hand in hand. Suffering *always* precedes glory!

This is how Paul said it—

Romans 8:16-17

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

We are a “fellow heir with Christ” if we do what?

What is implied by the use of the word *if*?

That means we have a choice about suffering, doesn't it? (Remember that to suffer with Christ means that we die to the flesh!)

If we suffer, what will happen?

An heir, as we've learned, is in line to receive the inheritance. Since this statement in Romans 8:17 is true, then the converse is true also-- if we do *not* suffer with Him, we will *not* be glorified with Him.

Romans 8:18-19

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

The “sufferings of this present time” are connected to “the glory that shall be revealed in us.” Do we receive glory now?

Do we suffer now?

More from Paul—

Colossians 3:3

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

When do we receive glory?

Those that suffer now with and for Christ will be glorified with Him in that Seventh Day.

Colossians 1:24-29

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. ²⁵ Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, ²⁶ that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹ And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Paul rejoiced in his sufferings. (Of course he would, because glory will follow!) What did he say that his sufferings do (v. 24)?

Does that mean that Christ is somehow incomplete without our suffering? Let's look at Hebrews 2:10—

Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect (or bring to completion) the author of their salvation through sufferings.

How is this similar to what Paul says in Colossians 1:24?

(Note: Of course Christ is perfect—He is God. However, in view of the purposes that God intends to carry out through Christ, He is “incomplete” at the present time. Christ is incomplete with respect to having a wife to complete Him. God stated in the beginning that it was “not good for man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Man needed a helper, a wife, in order to rule. That was true for the first man, the first Adam. And it is also true of the Second Man, the Last Adam (cf. Gen. 1:28; Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:45; I Cor. 15:47; Eph. 5:25-32).)

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Four Finally...

Paul also says he was made a minister for the benefit of the Church to fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God. What does Paul mean by “the word of God”? What is the message that Paul preached (Acts 20:24-25)?

The “word of God” means the *whole* counsel of God—the grace AND the glory.

How does Paul describe the Word of God in Colossians 1:25-26?

This mystery has now been manifested to His saints. According to v. 27, what is it that God “willed to make known”?

The mystery is “Christ in you, the hope of glory!” The *hope* of glory—does that mean we have it now?

Does hope mean that we are *all guaranteed* to get it?

Why does Paul proclaim Christ, and teach and admonish every man with all wisdom (v. 28)?

If a man is complete in Christ in that coming day, he will have achieved the salvation of his soul and will receive a reward. How does one become complete? Remember the passage from James—

James 1:2-4, 12

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete [same word used in Col. 1:28], lacking in nothing...¹² ...for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Through trials, through testing, through *suffering*! If one endures through it all, he/she will be found perfect and complete.

II Corinthians 4:6-17

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal [age-lasting (166)] weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

What is our momentary, light affliction producing?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Four Finally...

Which age is it for?

Is there anything that can compare to this glory?

We must suffer through trials and tests, and we must suffer *in* Christ and *with* Christ if it is to be acceptable to God. This is the purpose for which we have been called (*cf.* I Pet. 2:21).

Paul writes it another way—

II Thessalonians 1:5, 11-12

⁵ This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. ¹¹ To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the word of faith with power; ¹² in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to v. 5, for what do we suffer?

Why?

We suffer for the kingdom of God so that we *may be considered worthy* of the kingdom of God.

What does v. 11 say that this is?

Do you see that our calling is the same as our purpose in I Peter 2:21?

It all comes back to glory, doesn't it?

I hope you get the picture that God has built for us, suffering *now* means glory *later*. No suffering *now*, means no glory *later*.

Any thoughts?

Throughout this week's lesson, we have looked at many different verses that touch on many different aspects of the mystery. However, it is all one mystery. It is that "word of the kingdom" and all that it encompasses—the complete gospel. This mystery has to do with *how* we've been saved and *why* we've been saved. It's the complete picture of Jesus the Christ and His finished work. It's about the *whole counsel of God*.

So let's get on with it and mature.

See you next week.

Lesson Five – The Belt of Truth

Day One – Living By Faith

Day Two – The Race

Day Three – The Belt of Truth

Day Four – The Whole-Hearted Attitude

Day Five – Examples and Encouragement

Are you getting frustrated? Are you tempted to stop studying? Are you thinking that maybe you've bitten off more than you can chew? I am sure that you have been experiencing MUCH spiritual warfare in your life since you've started this study. You are learning about your enemy and he is not happy about that. You are learning about your purpose—God's purpose *for you*—and your enemy is not happy about that. Like I said, there is a huge target on you.

However, God's Words speak SO much louder than Satan's. And make no mistake, Satan is a liar and he does not want you to go on. He wants you to be confused, and he wants you to be overwhelmed, and he wants you to be conflicted. *He wants you to give up.*

Yes, you will be overwhelmed at times. Yes, you will be confused at times. And yes, you may have difficulty understanding God's Word at times. That is normal. But please—press on! Keep going forward! Pray your way through the tough times and *do not give up!*

Make up your mind now before we get any further because if you don't know where you are going and why, you have absolutely no business putting on the belt of truth. In fact, it would be impossible.

Day One – Living By Faith

Before you begin today, would you take a few minutes and pray for understanding? God is ready to have His Spirit lead you into ALL truth, but you have to desire to see it and you have to desire to hear it. Pray for His protection against the spiritual forces in the heavenly places that want to keep you from understanding your purpose. This is a real battle and those forces are much, much stronger than you, but they are NOT stronger than the Lord! He will protect you and strengthen you and *mature* you, if you will let Him.

As a Christian, you are in a race. It's a race with one goal, one prize. The moment you first believed in Jesus Christ, you were put on the starting blocks of this race. This race is your journey, and if you don't

know where you are going, and if you aren't determined to get there, *you will not get there*. This is what the belt of truth is all about.

Today we're going to look a bit at the Book of Hebrews, which deals almost exclusively with the salvation of the soul. (This salvation is intimately connected with the belt of truth, so hang in there!)

Hebrews 10:36-39

³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. ³⁷ "For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. ³⁸ But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the saving of the soul.

We've already studied about the need for endurance. What does this passage say that you need endurance for?

When that is done, what will you receive?

What was it that was promised? (Think back to Abraham's two-fold inheritance and the promise made to David.)

According to v. 39, what does it take to save the soul?

Verse 38 states that God's "righteous one shall live by faith." In order to be God's "righteous one," a person must be born again (*saved*); then, that righteous one is expected to live by faith. This would be faith put into action, which is the faith necessary to save the soul.

Notice that the person (again, the *saved* person) who does not live by faith is considered to have "shrunk back to destruction" and God's "soul has no pleasure in him."

Look up the word "destruction" in your Appendix, and write out its definition.

destruction (684) -

This Greek word *apoleia* (684) is also used in the following verse—

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction (684), and many are those who enter by it. ¹⁴ For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

In light of the Hebrews passage, what does this mean?

The author of Hebrews goes on to say exactly what kind of faith we need, and he gives us many examples to illustrate the point—

Hebrews 11:1-3

¹ **Now faith** (contextually this must be referring to the “faith to the saving of the soul” from the previous verse) **is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** ² **For by it the men of old gained approval.** ³ **By faith we understand that the ages were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

What is it that we hope for? (Refer to Eph. 1:18 and Col. 1:27 if needed.)

How does v. 1 describe faith?

By that faith, what did the “men of old” gain?

Let’s pick out a few verses from chapter eleven to see *how* the men of old gained approval. (It would be a good idea for you to read all of Hebrews chapter 11 now, if you have time.)

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous...

Did Abel just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

How does the author of Hebrews describe Abel?

Continuing—

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...

Did Noah just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

Were his actions based on something he saw?

What were his actions based on?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Continuing—

Hebrews 11:8-9

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise....

Did Abraham just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

Were his actions based on what he saw?

What were his actions based on?

Continuing—

Hebrews 11:20

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

Did Isaac just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

What did the blessings have to do with?

Continuing—

Hebrews 11:22

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

Did Joseph just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

Joseph did this because he believed (*because God had said*) that God would one day redeem Israel out of the bonds of slavery in Egypt and take them to the land promised to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Joseph knew this to be a future time; he asked that when it did happen, the nation take his bones with them when they went.

He acted on faith, based on what he *knew* would happen yet future.

Continuing—

Hebrews 11:24-29

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment, with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

What did Moses do by faith?

What was he looking to?

Was he looking to the present, or was he focused on the future?

The author of Hebrews goes on—

Hebrews 11:32-40

³² And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonments. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated ³⁸ (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Explain what these men and women did.

How did they do it (v. 33)?

What did they gain because of this faith (v. 39)?

According to this verse, did they receive what was promised?

Verse 40 explains why. Rewrite this verse in your own words.

Do you understand that we are all waiting for *the same thing*? We should all be looking toward the same thing? And we have clear instructions on how to receive what was promised, don't we? BY FAITH! And as we've seen, it is faith put into action—it is *faith with works*. This is faith that comes after our *initial* saving faith—it is *faithful* obedience to what God has said. Paul sums it up—

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

From what you've just learned, how would you explain the phrase “from faith to faith”?

Let's not forget the content of the Book of Hebrews. We are to live by faith, act by faith, all for THE faith—looking out ahead to the future promises. And if you are familiar with Hebrews at all, you'll know that it contains no less than five warnings to the Christian in regards to this.

This is our journey, our race, our fight. We begin at one point and we head to a future point. We have a purpose and a goal. Do you see that? Have you ever seen it like this before? Write down your thoughts.

We'll stop here for the day. Tomorrow we'll continue in Hebrews and study a bit more about living *by faith* in our current race *of faith*. This will lead us right into putting on the belt of truth!

Have a great day!

Day Two –The Race

We're picking right back up where we left off yesterday, in Hebrews chapter 11, leading into chapter 12. Take a minute to refresh your memory as to what we have learned from yesterday's lesson. Pray for continued understanding of God's Word.

Now let's take another look at the Hebrews passage we've been studying, because the very next verse sums up this day's lesson perfectly—

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance (Lit., weight or burden), and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race (Greek word used here for race is *agon* which is also translated “fight”) that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Notice how v. 1 begins—“Therefore.” This word can also be translated “consequently,” or “because of this...” Reflecting on yesterday’s lesson, sum up the thought that the “therefore” is connected to.

According to v. 1, what do we need to lay aside?

Then we need to do what?

Do you see the word picture being formed? We are to run the race set before us without any encumbrances and sin, with our eyes on ONE THING ONLY. What/Who is that one thing?

Notice *how* we are to run—with endurance. The word for endurance is the same word in the James passage that keeps coming up. Read it again—

James 1:2-4

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Now tie this thought together with Hebrews 10:36 regarding endurance. How do these two passages relate?

How did Jesus *endure* the cross and the shame (Heb. 12:2)?

What was *the joy set before Him*? (Re-read Heb. 2:10 if needed.)

Let’s now look at how Paul describes this race. We’ve studied just a little bit about Paul and what he taught and preached. He taught and preached “the whole counsel of God”—the gospel of grace and the gospel of the kingdom. Paul knew that he was in a race, and he was concerned about his outcome. Let’s read about it—

I Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵ And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I fight in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷ but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possible, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Who are the ones running the race (all people in general, or just Christians)?

Does everyone receive the prize?

Paul tells the Church at Corinth (and by extension, the Church in general) to “run in such a way that you may win.” Does this imply that it is possible to run in a way as to *not* win?

What do those who compete in the race exercise (v. 25)?

What do those in the race compete for?

Implicitly, how would a Christian win the prize?

How does Paul run the race (v.26)?

How does he fight?

He does it all with purpose, doesn't he? What seems to be his goal?

Does Paul think that there is a chance he could be disqualified?

Think about that for a minute. Paul, the Apostle, thought that he could possibly be *disqualified* from this race. What does that mean?

The Greek word for “disqualified” is *adokimos* (96), which is the negative of the word *dokimos*. *Dokimos* is the word used in the same James passage we've been studying—

James 1:12

“Blessed is a man who perseveres (Lit., endures) under trial; for once he has been approved (*dokimos*, 1384) he will receive the crown of life.”

Compare James 1:12 with Paul's statement in I Corinthians 9:27. What are the similarities?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Now make this application personal. What do *you* need to do, and why?

Paul talks about his race in other ways also. Read about it in his letter to the Philippians—

Philippians 3:12b-14

^{12b} I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Why does Paul press on?

How does he press on?

What does he press on toward?

What does that mean?

Paul mentions a prize in his letters to the Corinthians and the Philippians. Compare the two prizes.

Now let's read about the end of Paul's life, in the last known epistle he wrote. He comments on the race he has run—

II Timothy 4:6-8

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

What does Paul mean in that he has kept the faith?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Did Paul think he had accomplished what he needed to?

What did he expect to receive?

When will he get it?

Who will give it to him?

What are crowns for?

Now, let's sum up what we've learned—

Every Christian is in a race, whether they know it or not. Every Christian is expected to run in the race and reach the goal. The race is our journey through this life, in which we are expected to die to our flesh, transform ourselves (through the inward work of the Holy Spirit) to the image of Christ, not be conformed to the image of the world, and resist the devil. We are to endure trials and rejoice in our sufferings. We must suffer and we must endure discipline if we are to be called a “son” of God. And all of this is for a reason! It is for that revealed goal that awaits us at the end of this age, the six-thousand years of time—it is for the purpose of ruling and reigning with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens in that Seventh Day. Isn't that exciting?!

Note this—God only leads in *one* direction. When the first generation of Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, God led them in a specific direction, with a specific goal. He led them by a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day to the land promised to them, Abraham's descendants. On the journey, God taught the nation of Israel things they needed to know regarding the land and the kingdom that was to be set up.

God is now leading *us* in one direction. Our journey has a specific goal. The Spirit of God is teaching us the things we need to know regarding the heavenly land, wherein the kingdom is to be set up.

Now for a personal question, if you do not know where the finish line is, how can you get there?

If you do not know that there IS a finish line and a prize, then how can you get there?

If you are unsure as to what the goal or prize is in this race, do you think you might be running with uncertainty? Maybe fighting as to beating the air? According to Paul, will that person receive the prize?

And finally, if you don't know the rules of the race, what is the possibility that you will be disqualified?

Think and pray about these things, keep up the good work, and stay encouraged in your studies.

We'll study again together tomorrow.

Day Three – The Belt of Truth

The last two days of study lead us right into the putting on of the belt of truth. Pray that your heart remains open and seeking, so that God can continue to teach you.

The belt of truth is the first item mentioned in the putting on of our spiritual armor. First, let's review why we need God's armor.

Ephesians 6:11, 13

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil...¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day...

Why do we need the full armor of God?

Just for the sake of clarification, one must put on the full armor of God, which means putting on every piece. One cannot pick and choose which piece of armor they would like; one must put on the *full* armor or *no* armor at all.

The belt of truth, as we are calling it, is mentioned in this way—

Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth...

The phrase “girded your loins” is the Greek word *perizonnumi* (4024), which means “to fasten one's belt.” Hence, the phrase, “belt of truth” is an accurate rendering to describe this piece of the armor.

Let's for a moment examine what the armor of Paul's day was like. Rome was the world power at the time Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, and Paul was a Roman citizen, though a Jew. The Roman soldier wore only a tunic under their armor, and when putting on the armor they would put on their belt (also known as a “girdle”) *first*. The breastplate, or body armor, would connect to the belt and the belt would transfer some of the weight of the iron mail from the shoulders to the hips. The soldier's legs wouldn't be covered with anything, but they would wear socks and boots on their feet. The Roman soldier's boot looked like a sandal, but it was called a “boot.” The soldier would also wear a helmet and carry a shield and weapons. The weapons attached to the belt.

What, then, does it mean *spiritually* to put on the belt of truth? You might be quick to answer that the truth is simply God's Word. That wouldn't be entirely correct because Ephesians 6:17 states that the “sword of the Spirit” is God's Word. The belt is something we put on *first* that will hold the rest of the armor in place; and, as we've already studied, in order for someone to even *put on* the full armor he/she must already be in possession of a mature knowledge of God's Word. Therefore, the belt of truth isn't referring to the Word of God.

We could try to find the meaning of the belt of truth by relying on what truth means in our English language, which is simply being honest and forthright. That, however, wouldn't be an accurate way to

interpret this verse either, because as we know, the full armor has to do with standing against the spiritual forces in the heavenly places. Being honest and forthright about any particular matter wouldn't be the foundation of defensive armor. Being honest is something we should do, but it is not considered a piece of armor.

We need to look a bit further for the answer.

The word for truth is the Greek word *aletheia* (225), which denotes that which is opposite to a falsehood. It's usage, however (especially by Paul) has a particular, specific meaning. Let's take a look.

Galatians 5:5-10

⁵ For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. ⁷ You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. ¹⁰ I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

What are we waiting for?

What is our hope? Please explain.

According to v. 5, what do we wait *through*?

We wait *by* what?

According to v. 6, what matters?

Paul addresses the Church in v. 7 by saying, "You were running well." What is he referencing?

Apparently they *were* (past tense) running well, then they were hindered from continuing to run. They were hindered (which literally means "beaten back") from obeying the truth. Because they were disobedient, they stopped running.

What would the truth be referencing? (Look at the context—Christians, in a race, who stopped running; they did not head toward their goal.)

Who do you think hindered them? (We know where the influence to disobey comes from, but who ultimately *makes the choice* between walking in the spirit and walking in the flesh?)

Looking at another letter from Paul, we see mention of truth in connection with hope—

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Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Colossians 1:3-5

³ We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven [Lit., the heavens], of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel...

According to v. 5, what did they previously hear about?

What do we know about this *hope laid up for us in the heavens*?

The Church at Colossae heard about “the hope” in the “word of truth.” Paul calls *the gospel* the “word of truth.” Since you know what Paul means when he writes *the gospel*, what then does “the word of truth” mean?

Let’s look at one more passage from Paul regarding truth.

I Timothy 2:1-4

¹ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

What does God our Savior desire (v. 4)?

The Greek word used here for “knowledge” is *epignosis* (1922), which means a mature knowledge. It is the word *epi*, which is an intensifier, with the word *gnosis* which means “knowledge.”

What did you learn about mature knowledge from Lesson Four?

What does Paul mean by the mature knowledge of the truth?

I hope you see the context surrounding Paul’s use of the word *truth*. Paul’s letters to the churches are about Christ and His coming kingdom and the church’s future participation in that. That is the truth, of which Paul writes. (James and Peter also use it in the same way. James 5:19 and I Peter 1:22 use *the truth* in relation to the salvation of the soul.)

We can see a bigger picture of truth emerge by looking at a couple of Old Testament Scriptures.

(Note: One way to be more accurate in comparing a *specific* word in both the Old Testament, which was written in Hebrew, and the New Testament, which was written in Greek, is to stick with one language. Since we have access to The Septuagint¹, we can use that. However, when comparing words with content and context in mind, English translations usually work just fine.)

I Kings 2:1-4

¹ As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, ² "I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. ³ And keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, ⁴ so that the Lord may carry out his promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"

How are David's sons to "walk before the Lord" (v. 4)?

A little further on in the Book of I Kings we read—

I Kings 3:6

Then Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great lovingkindness to Thy servant David my father, according as he walked before Thee in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward Thee..."

How did King David walk before the Lord?

We can see a commitment, a sincere heart, and an attitude of *determination* in these statements surrounding the truth.

If we are to put on the belt of truth, which is the foundation that holds together the rest of the armor, we must not only possess a mature knowledge of what the truth is, but we must possess an unfaltering commitment to knowing and believing that it is indeed The Way, the Only Way, THE Truth.

Walking in truth and obeying the truth are just other ways of saying *faithful obedience to God's Word*. *Truth* is belief in what God has said and obedience to it! It is being absolutely committed to being victorious! Now we'll put these thoughts together with the words of Christ Himself—

¹ ¹ The Septuagint, or simply "LXX", is a collection of Jewish Scriptures which were translated into Greek between the third and first centuries B.C. The Septuagint incorporates the oldest of several ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The word *septuaginta* means "seventy" in Latin and derives from a tradition that seventy-two Jewish scholars (seventy being the nearest round number) translated the Pentateuch, or Torah, from Hebrew into Greek for one of the Ptolemaic kings, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. The Septuagint includes some books that are not in the Hebrew Bible. Many Protestant Bibles follow the Jewish canon and exclude these books.

John 14:5-6

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

There is only one way to the Father. There is only one hope and one race, with one goal. There is only one way to get the finish line—through Jesus Christ the Prophet, the Priest, the Judge, and the King.

It is your knowledge of and determination to run this race, to fight this fight, and stand firm before the enemy which comprises the belt of truth. It is the fortitude to hang on to your hope no matter what the enemy throws at you. It is what holds the rest of the armor in place. And all of this—ALL of it—is done through Christ Jesus, THE TRUTH.

See you tomorrow.

Day Four – The Whole-Hearted Attitude

Begin your day in prayer!

The Scriptures are full of examples of steadfast determination. There are many figures that exhibited faithfulness in the face of adversity; people who could have given up but were committed to serve, obey, and *follow* the Lord until the end. That is what Scripture would call a *whole-hearted* attitude.

Let’s look at Psalm 119 and the description of this whole-hearted attitude—

Psalm 119:2

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

Psalm 119:10

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

Ps 119:34

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

According to these three verses, what characteristics surround the idea of a whole heart?

God wants your *whole* heart! Read about His commands-

Joshua 22:2-5

(Joshua speaking to the second generation of Israel upon entrance into their land)

² [Joshua] said to them, “You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. ³ You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. ⁴ And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan. ⁵ Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord

commanded you, to love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Joshua tells the Israel to go to their land that was promised them. What does he tell them to be careful of (v. 5)?

How are they to do this?

As you know, Israel never stayed truly faithful to God’s commandments and they turned quite defiant and disobedient. God, though, never stopped reminding them (through the prophets) that they needed to change their ways—

I Samuel 12:20-24

²⁰ And Samuel said to the people, “Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. ²¹ And you must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. ²² For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. ²³ Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

²⁴ Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

According to v. 20, how was Israel commanded to serve the Lord?

What must they not turn aside from (v. 20)?

Why must they not turn aside from following the Lord (v. 21)?

According to v. 24, they need to fear the Lord and do what?

It’s back to the truth, isn’t it?

Now let’s look at a condemnation given to the Nation of Israel regarding their lack of whole-heartedness when the Prophet Isaiah spoke to the disobedient nation.

Isaiah 1:4-6

⁴ Alas, sinful nation, people weighted down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. ⁵ Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint (Lit., troubled or sick).

⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.

How is Israel described?

Specifically, how is their heart described?

Remember, when Jesus came to the Nation of Israel the first time He stated, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This was a cry to the nation to change their behavior and get back on track with God. They needed to do this because God still saw them in the same condition as they were during Isaiah’s day.

Israel’s repentance would have brought the blessings God had promised to them. Israel, as a nation, has yet to come to the place of repentance; because of this condition, they forfeited their right to rule in the kingdom of heaven (*cf.* Matt. 12:31-32; 21:43). They did not lose their right to rule in the earthly kingdom, however, and that promise will still yet be fulfilled. Jeremiah describes what that future time will be like, once they do repent as a nation—

Jeremiah 24:6-7

⁶ “For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. ⁷ And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 29:13

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

When Israel returns to God *with their whole heart*, what will He do for them?

In order to find God, how must one search for Him?

In light of all of this, do you think God accepts a half-hearted attitude? Why or why not?

Let’s continue our study by looking at some specific examples of this whole-hearted determination to follow the Lord. We can see this attitude in Caleb in relation to the first generation of Israel at Kadesh. We can see it in Rebekah, a member of Abraham’s family who leaves her family behind to marry Isaac, Abraham’s son, the son of promise. And, we can see it in Ruth, as she clings to Naomi instead of turning back as her sister-in-law Orpah did, determined to go where Naomi goes. Because of this heart attitude, Caleb receives his inheritance, and Rebekah and Ruth get married—both women receive an inheritance with their respective husbands. This is very encouraging for us!

We'll finish up today by looking at Caleb's heart and his choices. Tomorrow we'll examine Rebekah's and Ruth's attitudes.

CALEB

You should be familiar with the first generation of Israel and their failure to enter the land promised to them due to their hearts of unbelief. Out of the more than one million adults that should have gone into the land, only two actually got to set foot in it and receive their inheritance. Caleb and Joshua were the only ones who believed what God said.

Numbers 13:30

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it."

What report did Caleb give to the people?

Was Caleb unsure or ambivalent in any way?

The other ten leaders who spied out the land gave a negative report, and the people believed them—

Numbers 14:1-5

¹ Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. ² And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ And why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt? ⁴ So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." ⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.

Then Caleb and Joshua responded—

Numbers 14:6-9

⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; ⁷ and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."

Then the people responded to them—

Numbers 14:10

But all the congregation said to stone them with stones.

Caleb and Joshua certainly didn't hold the popular view, did they?

What did God think about them? (In particular, we'll focus on Caleb)? Let's read—

Numbers 14:24

“But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully (Lit., completely), I will bring him into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

How did Caleb follow God?

Now imagine what Caleb had to endure. He was told that he would receive his inheritance, but he would have to wait until the entire first generation (excluding him and Joshua of course) passed away. That took 38 additional years! At any time Caleb could have lost hope, given up, or started complaining and grumbling as the rest of the people did. But he didn't. He remained determined to receive that which was promised to him. He waited patiently for it.

And when it came time for Caleb to receive his inheritance, he spoke in this way—

Joshua 14:6-12, 14

⁶ Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know the word which the Lord spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. ⁸ Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the Lord my God fully. ⁹ So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God fully.’ ¹⁰ And now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. ¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and for coming in. ¹² Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day...¹⁴ Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the Lord God of Israel fully.

Why did Caleb receive his inheritance (v. 14)?

How do you see Caleb exhibiting the belt of truth?

In like manner, how would you see yourself exhibiting the belt of truth?

That's it for today. See you tomorrow.

Day Five – Examples and Encouragement

Pray before you begin, keeping in mind all that you have learned so far about the whole-hearted attitude. Pray for God to show what that would look like in your own life.

Let's look at two other Old Testament figures who exhibited a steadfast determination in pursuing the things of God. We won't be spending a lot of time on all the details surrounding these two women; we'll primarily focus on one point in particular.

REBEKAH

If you are unfamiliar with the story of Isaac and Rebekah, please read Genesis 24 now.

Rebekah is an example for us of the Bride of Christ, so let's focus on some of the highlights of the story—

Abraham sent his oldest servant to his family to find a wife for his son, Isaac. He instructed his servant to find the bride from his family *only*. The servant took a sampling, ten camels full, of Abraham's goods with him to show the prospective wife. Once there, Abraham's oldest servant found Rebekah at the well, where she had come to draw out some water. After she filled her jar, the servant asked her for a drink of water. Rebekah "quickly" gave him a drink, and then went back for more in order to give the servant's camels some water. This was the sign that the servant had prayed for in order to determine which one of Abraham's family members would be the bride for Isaac.

Once the servant determined that Rebekah was indeed from Abraham's family, he went back to her house to discuss the matter with her family. He recounted the entire story to Rebekah's brother and mother, and asked if she could come back with him to become Isaac's wife. At first, they all said yes.

Here's the part of the story that we'll pay closer attention to. Rebekah and her family decided that she would go on with the servant to marry Isaac; however, the family took a surprising turn—

Genesis 24:55

But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go."

What did Rebekah's family say?

Abraham's servant answered—

Genesis 24:56

And he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

The family wanted to delay Rebekah from going to Isaac, and the servant needed to leave right away. The decision then rested on Rebekah, whether she would stay or whether she would go—

Genesis 24:57-58

⁵⁷ **And they said, "We will call the girl and consult her wishes."** ⁵⁸ **Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"**

Here it is. The choice. Does she go to Isaac or does she stay with the family?

Genesis 24:58

And she said, “I will go.”

Rebekah left and went on the journey to meet Isaac. The family stayed behind. A separation occurred.

The significance of the statement, “I will go” is self-explanatory. All who want to be the bride of the Father’s Son will have to, at some point, make that same choice and say those same words. Becoming mature in the faith, dying to the flesh and overcoming the world (all of which results in the salvation of the soul and the proper preparation of our wedding garment) are the direct result of a whole-hearted determination to go on the journey to another land.

Do you remember what awaited Rebekah at the end of her journey? *She got married and she received Isaac’s inheritance as his wife..*

RUTH

Perhaps we could spend months (years!) on the Book of Ruth and still not reach the end of what we can learn from its content. So, for our purposes here we will focus on a few of its highlights and how they pertain to the Christian’s determination in the race of faith.

Please read Ruth chapter 1 from your Bible now.

The setting is this—Elimelech, an Israelite, his wife Naomi, and their two sons settled in the land of Moab (a Gentile land) because there was a famine in the land of Judah. While there, Elimelech died and his two sons took Moabite women as their wives. About ten years later both the sons died, which left Naomi alone with her daughters-in-law. Naomi then decided to head back to Judah, for she had heard “that the Lord had visited His people in giving them food” (Ruth 1:6).

Naomi left Moab with her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. On the journey, Naomi said to both—

Ruth 1:8-9

⁸ “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ May the Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

Both Ruth and Orpah began the journey to the land of bread (Ruth 1:6-7), having separated themselves from their families and the land of their birth. They were both Gentile women who had become part of the family of Israel; both of these women are types of Christians. At the onset of the journey, Naomi told them both to go back to their own land. They then said to her—

Ruth 1:10

“No, but we will surely return with you to your people.”

They both decided to continue on the journey.

Then—

Ruth 1:11-13

¹¹ But Naomi said, “Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? ¹² Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons, ¹³ would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the Lord has gone forth against me.”

This is the second time Naomi told them to go back.

(Understanding the culture a bit will help with this. According to the custom of the day, if a man died while married, having no children, his wife was to marry within the family in order to preserve the family’s inheritance [Deut. 25:5-10]. In this story, Naomi had no more sons that they could marry, nor a husband to birth any more sons, so she told them to go to their own family’s home to find another husband for themselves, and to have rest therein.)

This time, in response to what Naomi said, *a separation of the two women* took place—

Ruth 1:14-15

¹⁴ And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

Who turned back?

What did Ruth do?

Was Orpah still a member of the family, even though she turned back?

Notice in that last verse, Naomi said once more for Ruth to go back. Read what Ruth said—

Ruth 1:16-17

¹⁶ But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.”

Did Ruth decide to go with Naomi?

Did Ruth know where she was going?

Could she have turned back?

Write what Ruth said about going.

Is this a whole-hearted attitude, or half-hearted? Determined or not? What makes you think so?

Continuing—

Ruth 1:18

When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

Naomi then stopped telling Ruth to go back. Then they both continued on their journey to Bethlehem.

Do you remember what awaited Ruth at the end of her journey? *She got married and received an inheritance with Boaz.*

Here are a few questions for you to think about—

If Rebekah had decided *not to go on the journey*, would she have married the son?

If Ruth had decided *not to go on the journey*, and *continue* on the journey, would she have married the kinsman-redeemer?

If you decide *not to go on the journey*, will you marry the Son, the Kinsman-Redeemer?

Does the journey and the marriage have anything to do with eternal salvation? In other words, if you decide not to go on the journey, are you still saved? Are you still part of the family?

Do you really know what is at stake if you decide not to go?

Write down your thoughts.

As we end our week of study, I'd like to focus on a few verses that serve as great encouragement for us, because we all, at various times, lack determination to continue on the journey; we lack the belt of truth. The belt of truth is the whole-hearted determination that says, "I know where I am suppose to go, I WILL go, and I WILL get there. I don't care what hinders me, I will get there. God will lead and I will follow. And when I fall, I will get back up again."

For the moments that we feel downhearted, we need to go to God and find His encouragement to keep going. We need to deal with the sin that encumbers us from running; we need to take full advantage of our High Priest. We need to keep going, no matter what.

Once you know your purpose and that it requires a journey, just settle with the Lord that you *will go* and you will *keep going*. He will carry you along, if you let Him.

So let me ask you—do you really *want to go*? Are you willing to *believe* what God has said? Are you willing to make that journey, *no matter what the cost*? Isn't it worth it?

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Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Ask the Lord to show you the way, and He will.

Now read the following verses, and make notes if you want. When you're done, write out a little prayer to God the Father and tell Him the deep desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4-5

⁴ Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it.

James 1:5-7

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.

Matthew 7:7-8

⁷ “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.”

NOTES:

Matthew 21:22

“And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

John 15:7

“If you abide in Me [Jesus], and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”

I John 5:14-15

¹⁴ And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

II Timothy 2:11-13

¹¹ It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; ¹² If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

NOTES:

PRAYER:

Keep up the good work! See you next week!

Lesson Six – The Breastplate of Righteousness

Day One – Righteousness
Day Two – Born out of Water and Spirit
Day Three – Right Living
Day Four – Righteous Acts
Day Five – Judgment and Encouragement

So you've decided to press on! You're determined to reach the goal! You are resolved to run the race and to make the journey to the land of your calling.

You should now confidently be saying,

Numbers 13:30

We should by all means go up and take possession of [the land], for we shall surely overcome it.

You're a Caleb, you're a Ruth, you're a Rebekah—right? Good! Let's go on!

It's okay if you feel inadequate or unworthy of your "heavenly calling." Honestly, what you *feel* is immaterial. Our emotions vacillate and change daily. That is not the point. The point is that GOD is more than adequate and He is more than worthy and it is by His blood and by His cleansing and by His power that you will go on and take possession of the land. You *can* overcome because He *has* overcome. He has said, "Take it!" You just need to make the choice to let Him take you there. Now, don't stand in His way or let that old man of flesh pull you in the other direction. The victory is yours!

Let's read again our passage from the Book of Ephesians—

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your

loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

My prayer is that by now you understand the spiritual struggle and why it is happening. I pray that you are now somewhat aware of the prevalent deception regarding God's truth of the coming kingdom and Satan's systematic and targeted attacks concerning your involvement in it. It is, as the verse states, a struggle against heavenly forces; forces of darkness that do not want Christians to understand that they have the ability to take their positions from them. Satan and his angels have done everything in their power to prevent as many saints as possible from realizing their heavenly inheritance. And, unfortunately, his tactics have worked for the most part. But you can rejoice because God's Spirit is opening up the truth to you, and I pray that you are determined to take hold of it, no matter what! You have put on the belt of truth and are now ready for the breastplate of righteousness.

Let's personalize the following verse, words spoken by Jesus Himself—

Matthew 13:11, 16-17

¹¹ [Jesus speaking] **“To you [me] it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it has not been granted.¹⁶ But blessed are your [my] eyes, because they see; and your [my] ears, because they hear.¹⁷ For truly I [He] say[s] to you [me], that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you [I] see, and did not see it; and to hear what you [I] hear, and did not hear it.”**

AMEN!

Day One – Righteousness

Begin your study time in prayer. This week's lesson will be a bit longer than the others, so plan to spend some extra time over the next few days on God's Word. Part of the process of our study is to *unlearn* some things that may have been misunderstood in the past, so be patient and pray for continued understanding.

Let's explore the word *righteousness*. Righteousness is one of those biblical words that seem to have a bit of confusion surrounding it. It is used almost 300 times in the Bible; it's used more times than the word 'salvation' and more times than the word 'love.' Isn't that interesting?

The Greek word for "righteousness" is *dikaiosis* (1343), which literally means "to conform to what is right, or that which is just." The root word *dike* means a "manner or tendency." The noun *dike* carries with it the thought of judgment; it expresses the idea of an expected behavior or conformity, according to an imposed standard, with a prescribed punishment for nonconformity. (You may need to read that last sentence a few times to make sure you understand it!)

The noun *dike* is only used four times in the New Testament. It is also translated "judgment," "vengeance" (twice), and "punishment" (*cf.* Acts 25:15; Acts 28:4; Jude 1:7; and II Thess. 1:9).

The Hebrew word for "righteousness" is *tsedhaqah* (06666), which is actually a legal term that describes relationships, whereas the parties involved must be faithful to the expectations of one another. This word implies rightness, justice, and fairness.

There's another word in Scripture that is used in a similar manner as righteousness, and that word is "justification." The Greek word is *dikaiosis* (1347), which means *the act* that establishes a right or just person as such. It is the *act of*, and not the character of, justice.

The Greek word for the verb “justify” is *dikaioo* (1344), which means to either bring out the fact that a person is righteous or, if he is not righteous, to make him so. This word does not necessarily refer to *how* he is made just. It has the same root word *dike*, as above.

The noun “justification” is not found in the Old Testament, but the verb “justify” is. The Hebrew word is *tsadheq*, which means to make right or just. In the Septuagint the Greek word *dikaioo* (1344) is used, as above.

We can thus see that the words “righteousness” and “justification” are similar and connected, but they are not interchangeable. The words “just” and “righteous” however, *are* interchangeable. It’s okay if this still seems a bit hazy; in time, you’ll be able to clearly see how Scripture uses these words.

So now let’s look at the words from God’s perspective, which really is the only perspective that matters. His justice is perfect (Ps. 19:7) and His way is absolutely righteous and absolute perfection (Ps. 18:30). Anything short of perfection God does not accept; He only accepts that which is holy, for He is holy. Therefore, man must conform to God’s idea of *right*. If man does not, God will not accept him. That is where the judgment comes in: acceptance and denial by God, based on His standards. Does that make sense?

We also know that man can IN NO WAY do *anything* solely by his own hand or on his own terms that would earn him the righteousness and justification needed in God’s sights. God, and only God, is capable of producing holiness and perfect righteousness. So, where does that leave us? Mankind needs justification and righteousness; there is no other way to get to God. And we can’t do it on our own. Anything short of God’s perfect righteousness would place man in judgment by God and man would suffer loss.

So our questions may be: Is justification a one-time deal? Is righteousness a once-and-for-all deal? If so, then what happens to the Christians’ continual sin, which we all do? Are we always seen as righteous before God if we are saved? If so, then does that mean that all the “unrighteous” ones mentioned in Scripture must be the unsaved? Since Christ is righteous and the Christian is part of His body, how can they be righteous and unrighteous at the same time? I hope you ask yourself these types of questions, because God wants us to KNOW the answers! Our running this race according to the rules depends on us knowing the answers!

Where does man’s righteousness begin? As stated before, it must begin with God.

Man, in his unredeemed state, is totally and completely separated from God. He is naked, without any covering whatsoever. Adam was created in God’s likeness, but fell due to sin. Since that time *all* people that have been born and that will be born are born in *Adam’s* likeness (Gen. 5:3), save One—the One born to a virgin.

Unredeemed man today needs a covering in order to stand in the presence of God. And, as happened with Adam and Eve, God is the only One who can make the covering and *cover* man.

Genesis 3:21

And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

Man can do *nothing* in this process, except of course *let* God do the work. This is man’s *initial* justification.

Do you remember the events surrounding the first Passover? Refresh your memory by reading Exodus 12, if necessary. And now we see—

I Corinthians 5:7b

For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

Christ is our Passover Lamb. His blood has been shed and we appropriate it by believing in Him as the Sacrifice.

Acts 16:30-31

³⁰ ...and after he [the jailer] brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”

I Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I [Paul] delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...

In the same way the nation of Israel was saved out of bondage in Egypt by the Passover lambs, we are saved out of bondage to sin by the blood of THE Passover Lamb. Once the blood is appropriated, God passes over us as He sees the blood, signifying that a death has taken place. And, in judgment, a death *has* taken place. Our first birth, our natural birth, is passed over. God accepts Jesus’ death in substitution for our death. Our past sins up to this point—all of them—are forgotten. *They are remembered no more!* We become a new creature to God—

II Corinthians 5:17-18

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

And—

Ephesians 2:4-5,8-9

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

Is there anything we can *do* to gain this salvation, other than *believe*?

This free gift of salvation affects our *spirit*, which is just *one part* of our three-part being. The redemption of our soul and our body is dealt with subsequent to this.

It is imperative that we understand how Scripture presents the differences between our *initial* justification (a one-time deal, a salvation we presently possess) based on *Christ’s* righteousness, and our *future* salvation that depends on our being justified by our present acts of faithful obedience to God’s Word (this is our on-going works of righteousness throughout our present life). Today we’ll deal with the former; we’ll study the latter later this week.

Let’s look at a portion of Scripture from Paul, from the letter he wrote to the Church in Rome:

Romans 5:8-9

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

According to v. 9, by what have we been justified?

From what you've learned so far, is this justification in relation to eternity, or the kingdom age?

What does this justification demonstrate toward us (v. 8)?

More in the same chapter—

Romans 5:14-16, 18

¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. ¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Who is the “one who sinned” in v. 16?

What was his sin?

What is the “judgment” that “arose from one transgression” that resulted “in condemnation”? (*cf.* Gen. 2:17; 3:16-19)

Then, *on the other hand* we have the free gift. What did it arise from (v. 16)?

What did the free gift result in (v. 16)?

According to v. 18, through *one act* of righteousness, justification of life came to all men (all men who believe). This is the free gift. Do you see how *man's* works can't enter the picture at all in relation to the free gift? Our spiritual birth is an act of the Spirit, completely separate from man's works. We can't *earn* it! And since we can't earn it and we do nothing to get it, WE CAN DO NOTHING TO LOSE IT!

Let's settle this issue for ourselves, for the last time. WE CANNOT LOSE THE FREE GIFT. WE CANNOT GIVE IT BACK. WE CANNOT *UNSAVE* OURSELVES IN RELATION TO LIFE FOR ETERNITY. Judgment, in relation to eternal security, has taken place the moment that one puts faith in the shed blood of God's Perfect Provision. *It is impossible to undo that which God has done.*

Thus, *justification by faith* is based entirely upon Christ's righteous, justifying act — His finished work at Calvary. And it is this justification, us being made righteous through Christ through faith, that places us in the family of God and gives us life for eternity.

When we are spiritually born, *by grace through* faith, God places on us *Christ's* righteousness. This then puts us in the position to run in the race and to be led by the Spirit to the land of our calling.

Now let me ask you a question. Do you think that it would be *this* righteousness that the breastplate is referring to? Remember that the armor is for the maturing Christian already in possession of the Word of God, who has determined to run the race set before them. What do you think?

If this is not the righteousness that is being referred to in the breastplate of righteousness, then *what* righteousness is Paul referencing? Well, if we are to put on the breastplate of righteousness, then it would definitely have something to do with what we do.

Let's stop right here for the day. Spend some time thinking on the Scriptures we studied, and ask God to solidify them for you.

See you tomorrow.

Day Two —Born out of Water and Spirit

Pray first!

Yesterday we covered the idea of initial justification. Justification is the act of *being made righteous*, righteous in the sense of being clothed with God's standard. We also know this to be an act of being *born again*, and this happens by faith/belief in God's Provision of a Sacrificial Death—Jesus the Christ, God Himself. Through faith, we receive the free gift and we are saved by God's grace, based on Christ's one righteous act. God sees us as "righteous" through Christ's righteousness.

Now, once this initial justification has occurred, we are able to make choices on how we live in this life. We can choose to live by the Spirit, or we can choose to live by the flesh. We have *the freedom* to choose.

Now what?

John 3: 5

⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit [Lit., born out of water and Spirit], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Jesus says that one must be born *out of water* and born *out of Spirit* in order to enter the kingdom of God. We can understand "born out of water" as referencing water baptism. This is best seen through the type of the first generation of Israel. We've already looked at Israel's redemption the night of the first Passover, now let's study about their passage through the Red Sea.

Please read Exodus chapters 14 and 15 from your Bible now.

Israel was saved from the bonds of slavery in Egypt through the death of a substitutionary first-born lamb. Then God led the entire nation, by Moses, to the Red Sea, where He parted the water to allow them all to pass through. All safely made it through. The Egyptians who followed them, however, did not make it

safely through and all were swallowed up by the waters, “not even one of them remained” (Ex. 14:28). Thus, the water became a place of burial. The nation of Israel found themselves on the other side, with the Spirit of God leading them to their Promised Land.

I Corinthians 10:1-2

¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

What was the result of the fathers passing through the sea?

The nation of Israel’s baptism was *subsequent* to their redemption out of bondage; Israel’s redemption out of bondage was in *no way* dependent upon their baptism. Can you see that?

Let’s see how baptism is presented in the New Testament—

Luke 3:3

And he [John the Baptist] came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

Remember, the people of the nation of Israel, to whom Christ came preaching the kingdom of heaven, were a *saved* people. The message that Jesus and John brought was one that could only be understood by a people with the capacity for spiritual understanding, for Jesus spoke spiritual words. Therefore, the water baptism that John preached and practiced was not for spiritual birth; rather, it was for “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” One important thing to note is that repentance (literally “changing one’s mind”) in the spiritual sense can only be done by a saved person because it involves a *choice* of direction. A spiritually *dead* person is unable to make any spiritual choice except initial saving faith.

Baptism, initially, was only for Israel—

Acts 13:24

...after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

John even told them what needed to be done in accordance with being baptized—

Luke 3:8-9

⁸ “Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ And also the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

What was the nation of Israel told to “bring forth”?

Why?

According to v. 9, what happens to the tree that does not bear fruit?

As we know, Israel, as a whole, rejected the message, first by killing John the Baptist, then by killing the King Himself. Remember what Jesus said about their rejection of His message—

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”

Who will the kingdom of God be given to?

So we see that producing fruit is directly related to baptism, and directly related to inheriting the kingdom.

Paul writes this about baptism—

Romans 6:4

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to Another, to Him who was raised from the dead that we might bear fruit to God.

What does baptism represent? (Rom. 6:4)

In order to be buried, one must be dead. Who died in our stead?

And He died in order that we too, as Christ, might what?

Walking implies an action of some sort, doesn't it? How are we to walk? Paul writes—

Romans 6:11-13

¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts. ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

According to v. 11, what are we to consider ourselves?

And because of this, what are we *not* to do (v. 13)?

What does v. 13 say we *need* to do?

Do you see the choice? We can let sin reign in our bodies and obey its lusts, essentially making our body an instrument of unrighteousness, or we can consider ourselves *dead* to sin (symbolically keep our old man of flesh in the water, the place of burial) and be alive in Christ, essentially making our body an instrument of righteousness. Isn't that what the Scriptures say?

Our old man (the man of flesh associated with our first, and natural, birth) must stay dead. But have you noticed that the old man of flesh doesn't stay down for too long? He keeps popping back up to lead in the way of flesh, doesn't he? But what is at stake if we do not reckon him dead—over and over and over again—and we let sin reign? Let's see what Jesus said about it—

John 12:24-26

²⁴ “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ He who loves his life [soul] loses it; and he who hates his life [soul] in this world shall keep it to life eternal [age-lasting]. ²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Rewrite vv. 24 and 25, applying what you've learned about baptism.

We've already studied that the flesh and the Spirit cannot both be served at the same time. If we let that old man (the flesh) lead us, we commit *unrighteous* acts, which is unfruitful. We need to let the Spirit lead us in newness of life, as seen in life beyond baptism, which produces fruit—*righteous acts*.

Let's continue looking at the first generation of Israel. After they went through the place of burial, the Red Sea, they came out on the other side to be led to the land of their calling, the Promised Land.

Exodus 13:21-22

²¹ And the Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² he did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Israel was being led in a *specific* direction for a *specific* purpose. Who led the nation of Israel to the land?

And for us, today—

John 16:13

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Who leads the Christian?

Read these few verses printed below and underline any mention of the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:17-18

¹⁷ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

I Thessalonians 5:19

...and do not quench the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Romans 8:13-14

¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

Write down what we are being told in regards to the Spirit.

A burial and resurrection must take place in the life of a Christian; that is why God commands His children to be baptized. The act of baptism is symbolic. Our old man must stay in the place of death and the new man must walk in newness of life; we must follow the Spirit and allow Him to fill us and lead us throughout our journey. There is no other way to get to the land of our calling.

Let's stop there for today. We've covered much in the past two days. See you tomorrow!

Day Three – Right Living

Now that you know about initial justification, based on the work of Another, let's move on to justification by work—*our* works. And just to be clear, the former must come first. Only after initial justification has occurred can a person be in a position to be justified by works.

What do you think, does it matter what we do and how? Is there maybe a list of good deeds we can follow? If we just do everything on it, that's it, we're in the kingdom?! Or maybe just learn enough and know enough and based on our amazing ability to recall and connect Scripture the Lord will give us a place on His throne?

Think again.

Yes, we have to *do* something. And that something *MUST be done in faith*. Period. We must *believe* what God has said (which means *knowing* what God has said) and then DO IT. There is no other way. We've discussed this before—

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith (4102) it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe (4100) that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Is there any other way to please God, other than through faith/belief?

According to this verse, what two things must a person believe when he comes to God?

There is a passage from Habakkuk that is quoted three times in the New Testament—

Habakkuk 2:4

Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.

We already looked at one instance in Galatians where this verse is quoted; let's now look at the other two—

Hebrews 10:38

But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

Romans 1:17

For in it [the gospel Paul preached] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

Who is the “righteous” one referring to?

How will the righteous one live?

The Apostle John talks about practicing righteousness versus practicing sin—

I John 3:4-7

⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. ⁵ And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

What is sin (v. 4)?

Is there sin in Christ?

If you are abiding in Christ, can you sin (v. 6)?

What is the one who practices righteousness called (v. 7)?

So we can see a direct connection between *living* by faith and *practicing* righteousness. They are the same thought.

Now think about what John wrote in his epistle. All Christians sin (I John 1:8). Does that mean that when a Christian sins, he isn't "abiding in Christ"? What do the Scriptures say? *If a Christian is sinning, he is not abiding in Christ* (I John 3:6). If a Christian is practicing righteousness (which means not sinning) he is considered righteous, just as Jesus is righteous. Isn't that what it says?

This is obviously speaking of things that occur *after* initial justification!

As we know, all Christians sin—

I John 1:8, 10

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

And God has given us a provision for our sin—

I John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

What does this verse call sin?

What are Christians to do about it?

John, the author of three epistles and the Gospel of John, tells us what Jesus said about "abiding in Him"—

John 15:1-11

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be ["you shall be"] My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Who does v. 4 tell us to abide in?

What does v. 9 tell us to abide in?

How are we to do that (v. 10)?

If we abide in Him, what will we produce (v. 5)?

If we do not abide in Him, can we produce fruit?

What happens if we don't abide in Him (v. 6)?

Whom does the bearing of fruit glorify (v. 8)?

What does the bearing of fruit make us (v. 8)?

Why are we to do all of these things (v. 11)?

Do you remember what Jesus' joy was? (Read Heb. 12:2 if needed)

Read John 15:4-5 again. Not only must we abide in Christ, He must also abide *in us*. Read the following verses and keep this in mind (we just studied some of these verses yesterday)—

Ephesians 5:17-18

¹⁷ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

Colossians 3:16a

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you...

I Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Romans 8:13-14

¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

What is the Word of God telling us here? Write it out.

Abiding in Jesus means keeping His commandments. Jesus abiding in us means that we are following Christ's words—the Word of God, the Spirit of God. We abide in Christ by following the Spirit, and not the flesh.

And obviously, keeping His commandments means *doing* something. It's about practicing righteousness; it's about faithful obedience; it's about works! That is our fruit.

Yes, **works**! The word *works* almost seems like a bad word nowadays, doesn't it? But the Scriptures talk about works, so we must talk about works. (In case you haven't noticed, that's what we've already been talking about, we just haven't used the word *works* very much.)

James says it well in his epistle, an epistle that talks about “the salvation of the soul” (James 1:21)—

James 2:14-26

¹⁴ What use is it [Lit., what does it profit], my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that [Lit., what does it profit]? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless [Lit. dead]? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

We've already studied that faith by itself is considered righteousness (*cf.* Rom. 4; Gal. 3), but what James is talking about here is the faith that we need to possess in order to *save our souls*. That faith must be accompanied by something. What is it?

James goes on to call “foolish” the person who doesn't see that works needs to accompany faith (again with respect to the salvation of our soul [1:21], not in respect to our spiritual birth). What does James say about “faith without works” (vv. 17, 20, and 26)?

Can a person's *soul* be saved by faith alone? No. That faith is considered dead. To find out what is meant by "dead," let's look at the comparison James uses in vv. 15-17. Having faith without works is like telling someone to be warm and filled when they are cold and hungry. *It is of no use to them—it is of no profit.* In this same way, faith is of *no profit* without works.

Any thoughts?

We will pick right up from here tomorrow and take a closer look at *how* and *why* faith (the faith necessary to save the soul) is useless without works. Please remember that we are dealing with issues that have no impact whatsoever on the righteousness that you presently possess—the free gift of eternal life. The breastplate of righteousness is one part of our defensive armor, armor that each Christian needs in order to stand firm against the enemy. It is our protection and it is the armor *of God*. He provides it. We just need to use it.

Pray for continued understanding of these things.

See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Righteous Acts

Pray before you begin today.

Yesterday we studied about our faith being useless if it isn't accompanied by works, specifically referencing the salvation of our soul *only*. Our acts of righteousness, our works, are done by faithful obedience to God's Word as we walk in the Spirit. In essence, it is the Spirit that we allow to work in us that produces the acts of righteousness which brings our faith to its goal. We need to believe this to be so, and act accordingly.

The good news is that we don't have to run around busily trying to work for the Lord. He has already taken care of that for us—

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

According to v. 10, what are we?

What have we been created for (v. 10)?

Who prepared our good works?

When?

What are we supposed to do with them?

There's a beautiful picture in the book of Ruth about walking in the good works that God has prepared beforehand. See if you can make the connection—

Ruth 2:8, 11-12, 15-17

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

¹¹ And Boaz answered and said to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know. ¹² May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her. ¹⁶ And also you shall purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles and leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her." ¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

Write out what this passage tells us about our works.

Do you recall what happens to Ruth at the end of her journey? *She got married.*

Do you recall what happens to Rebekah at the end of her journey? *She got married.*

And what is at the end of our journey if we complete it successfully? *We become part of the bride of Christ.*

Read these verses from the Book of James again—

James 2:21-22

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

What happened to Abraham's faith because of his work of offering up his son?

That word "perfected" is the Greek word *teleioo* (5048). It means "to complete" or "to finish." It (in various forms) is found in many of the verses we've been studying throughout this Study:

James 1:2-4

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect (teleios) result, that you may perfect (teleios) and complete, lacking in nothing.

Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect (teleioo) the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Hebrews 6:1

Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press onto maturity (teleiotes), not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...

Hebrews 12:2

...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter (teleiotes) of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Ephesians 4:13

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature (teleios) man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

There are many Scriptures that could have been used here, but I wanted to use the verses that we've already studied in past lessons in order to help you tie these thoughts together. Now there's one more verse to look at—

I Peter 1:9

...receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Using your Appendix, look up the definition for the word, “end.”

end (5056) -

What does Peter say is the end of our faith?

Now write out what this verse means.

This next verse will tie this breastplate of righteousness together—

Revelation 19:7-9

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. ⁸ And it was given to her to clothe herself in

fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.⁹ And he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

What is our wedding garment made of?

Why do we need a wedding garment?

What will happen to the one who shows up without a wedding garment? Jesus Himself told us—

Matthew 22:1-14

¹ And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, ² “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. ⁴ Again he sent out other slaves saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.”’ ⁵ But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to this business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.’ ¹⁰ And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. ¹¹ But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

This parable is connected to the other parables we studied in Lesson Two. The topic is the same—the offer of the kingdom of the heavens.

In this parable, whom does the king represent?

Whom does the son represent?

Whom do those who had been invited to the wedding feast in v.3 represent?

Did they come?

Whom did the king invite instead?

Whom do the dinner guests represent?

Whom does the man *without* wedding clothes represent?

What are the wedding clothes (Rev. 19:7-9)?

What happens to the man without a wedding garment?

From what you have learned so far, what does v. 14 mean?

How important is it *for you* to be making your wedding garment right now?

Let's end today with an encouraging passage from Paul. Make this personal as you read it—

I Timothy 6:11-12a

¹¹ But flee from these things, you man of God; and *pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.* ¹² Fight the good fight of faith...

Setting our minds on these things *pleases* God! We should want what He wants. We should see things the way that He sees things. We have everything we need in order to do so. How gracious is He?!

See you tomorrow.

Day Five – Judgment and Encouragement

Pray. Pray. Pray!

Judgment for a Christian's eternal security is already passed, and because of that, each Christian currently possesses a salvation—a new birth of their spirit that gives them everlasting life.

However, there is yet a future judgment for Christians. This future judgment pertains to the salvation of the soul and is based entirely on works—*our* works. These works must be done in faithful obedience to what God has said. *Faith* concerning future things, and *obedient works* emanating out of *that faith* are what get counted to us as righteousness, over and over and over again. These righteous acts make up our wedding garment.

Have you noticed how the word *works* makes many Christians cringe? Many think that it sounds heretical to say that a Christian is saved by his/her works. Many think it heretical to hear that individual judgment in the last day will be based on works. Why do you think that is?

The enemy has done a thorough job of perverting all thoughts surrounding works, presumably because he knows that it is our *faithful works* that are judged at the judgment seat of Christ and it is our *faithful works* that determine whether we rule and reign with Christ—a position that our enemy currently holds and is not willing to let go of. Do not be deceived! Understand what *God* has to say about works, not what *man* has to say about works.

Let's see how Jesus deals with individual judgment—

The judgment seat of Christ takes place in the heavens at the end of this age. All Christians will appear before Jesus. He will judge each one of us in relation to entering or *not* entering into His kingdom.

II Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

What will each Christian be recompensed for at the judgment seat of Christ?

The Book of Revelation gives us much information concerning that future day. The seven Churches pictured in Revelation represent the complete Church in His presence on that day. *That means that these words are of utmost importance to us today; they serve as warnings to us.*

Revelation 2:1-5

¹ To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: ² I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not and you found them to be false; ³ and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

How does v. 2 begin?

What does Jesus commend the Church of Ephesus for?

What does He have against them?

What does He tell them to do about it (v. 5)?

What will Jesus do to them if they don't?

To the second Church mentioned, Jesus says this—

Revelation 2:8-10

⁸ And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: ⁹ I know your works, and tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

How does v. 9 begin?

What does Jesus commend the Church in Smyrna for?

Does He have anything against them?

What does He tell them to do??

Explicitly, what do they receive if they do it?

Implicitly, what *don't* they get if they *don't* do it?

To the third, fourth, and fifth Churches in His presence on that day, Jesus says much of the same things. He knows their deeds and He commends them for some, and chastises them for others. With each description, He gives them a direct commandment to “Repent.” Read Revelation 2:12-3:4 for the details.

Now we’ll go on to the sixth Church—

Revelation 3:7-11

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens, says this: ⁸ I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹ Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.

How does v. 8 begin?

What does Jesus commend this Church on?

Does He have anything against them?

What does He tell them to do?

Why?

The seventh, and final Church in His presence on that judgment day—

Revelation 3:14-20

¹⁴ And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

How does v. 15 begin?

Does Jesus commend the Church in Laodicea for anything?

What does Jesus call them in v. 16?

What will He do to them (v. 16)?

What does Jesus say that they say?

What don't they know?

What does He advise them to do?

What does it mean that the Laodicean Church is naked? What should they use to clothe themselves? What does Revelation 19:8 say that that is?

Write down any thoughts you may have after reading this, and how you feel that God is speaking to you personally.

Encouragement

Would you like to be encouraged? Let's list what Jesus says to the Churches regarding changing their behavior. God saw fit to record these things so that we can read them and learn from them. We have opportunity *right now* to change. In that coming day, as we each stand before our Lord and Judge, we will *not* have an opportunity. It will be too late then!

(Thank you Lord for preserving these words!)

I'll summarize them, in order—

Remember from where you've fallen.
Repent.
Do the deeds you did at first.
Repent.
Overcome.
Be faithful until death.
Overcome.
Repent.
Overcome.
What you have, hold fast until He comes.
Overcome.
Wake up.
Strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die.
Remember what you have received and heard, and keep it.
Repent.
Overcome.
Hold fast what you have.
Overcome.
Keep His deeds until the end.
Buy from Him gold refined by fire.
Buy from Him white garments to clothe yourself (*righteous acts*).
Buy from Him eye salve to see.
Be zealous.
Repent.
Open the door that He's knocking on.

Overcome.

Do any of these apply to you? What should you do about it?

Now we'll read *the promises* He makes to those who do these things—

I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
You will not be hurt by the second death.
I will give some of the hidden manna.
I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone.
I will give him the morning star.
I will give him authority over the nations.
You will rule them with a rod of iron.
You will be clothed in white raiment.
I will not erase your name from the book of life.
I will confess your name before My Father and before His angels.
I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God.
You will not leave the temple of My God.
I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, and My new name.
I will grant to you to sit down with Me on My throne.

Are you encouraged?!

See you next week!

Lesson Seven – The Gospel of Peace

Day One – Shod Your Feet

Day Two – Peace of God

Day Three – Peace with God

Day Four – Stand Firm

Day Five – Seek Peace and Share It

Has it become a bit easier to get through the trials and testing with a definite future focus? Has this changed the manner in which you handle the difficult situations? I hope that you've been able to see a change in your reactions to the various trials that come upon you. Instead of giving up or *giving in*, the goal is to find yourself relying on the Lord and His strength and His Spirit to take you through it.

Your goal is *to* overcome, not to *be* overcome. Remember that Satan's tactics are deliberate and targeted *personally* to each individual. He knows your weaknesses and he knows your strengths. It is most advantageous to be able to spot the battle as quickly as possible, then you can war against it in the proper fashion. The battle is the Lord's. Do not forget that!

Study well this week, and seek God's face continually.

Day One – Shod Your Feet

Begin your study time today in prayer. Pray for strength and pray for wisdom. You may want to pray that God gives you ample time for study!

Paul writes that we do not battle against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). Also—

II Corinthians 10:3-4

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

To properly engage in this warfare, we must have on the full armor of God and we must make sure it is on correctly. So far, we've studied:

- The belt of truth – you are determined to make the journey and you know exactly what you’re heading towards. You know what you believe and why, based on God’s Word. You are whole-hearted and steadfast in your race of faith.
- The breastplate of righteousness – you choose to walk in righteousness by the Spirit, not the flesh. You work out your faith by obeying what the Lord says. When you mess up, which you will, you confess it and He forgives it. Your aim is to please the Lord by being transformed *by the renewing of your mind* into the image of Christ.

This week we will look at shodding our feet with “the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Although we are studying each individual piece of the armor in a singular fashion to grasp its full meaning, we should not think that the armor itself is put on in this manner. It is not put on sequentially, i.e., the whole armor is a set of interdependent parts that cannot be separated from one another. As was said prior, either you put on the *whole* armor or you put on *no* armor. It is, in essence, ONE piece of armor. This is much like we see in the picture given to us in the Book of Ruth—

Ruth 3:3-5

³ [Naomi speaking to Ruth] **“Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.”** ⁴ **And it shall be when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you shall do.”** ⁵ And she said to her, “All that you say I will do.”

Ruth received instructions on how to prepare herself for meeting the kinsman-redeemer. She is told to do three things before going down to the threshing floor. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ruth must do these things *sequentially*. These instructions are given to her after she commits to make the journey to the land to find “rest,” but before she becomes Boaz’s wife.

Let’s look at these instructions as they apply to Christians. We are to do the same things as Ruth did, in preparation for our meeting THE Kinsman-Redeemer, in order to become His wife. The difference is that we must do these things *continually* and *concurrently*, while we make our spiritual journey to find “rest.” We must:

1. Wash ourselves continually by the Word of God (*cf.* John 13:8; Eph. 5:26).
2. Anoint ourselves continually by being filled by the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24).
3. Continue to make our best clothes, our wedding garment comprised of righteous acts, to put on in that coming day (*cf.* Matt. 22:12; Rev. 19:8).

Write out a brief summary about the Christians’ proper preparation.

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Seven The Gospel of Peace

The armor of God spoken of in Ephesians and the instructions given in the Book of Ruth are each dependently held together as a cohesive unit by a common bond—

I Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

How does the power of God protect us (v. 5)?

What does the power of God protect us for?

It all comes back to faith! Believing what God has said. Where does faith come from?

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

This would be a great verse to memorize!

The next piece of armor is the “preparation of the gospel of peace,” with which we are to “shod” our feet. Let’s read our foundational passage from the Book of Ephesians again—

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Using the Strong’s lexicon from your Appendix, write down the definitions of each word below:

1. shod (5265) –
2. preparation (2091) –
3. gospel (2098) –

4. peace (1515) –

Using the above definitions, rewrite v. 15 in your words.

Let's put that together—

Our feet carry us on our journey, and it is with our feet that we “stand.” Our feet are to be bound with a readiness in regards to the *good news of peace*.

Notice that we are told to shod our feet with the *preparation* of the gospel of peace, not with the gospel of peace itself. There are different facets of the gospel of peace, which we will explore in the next two days, but of prime importance is the idea of making ourselves *ready* in regards to it.

Peter sums up the thought perfectly—

I Peter 3:15

...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

What are we to be ready to do?

How often are we to be ready?

Is it considered an offense or a defense?

At this point in your understanding of the whole armor of God, is it for offensive tactics, or defensive?

It is also interesting to note that it is our *feet* that are connected to this readiness. The feet were the element of transportation for the messenger in days past, as noted by Paul—

Romans 10:14-17

¹⁴ **How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?** ¹⁵ **And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!”** ¹⁶ **However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”** ¹⁷ **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Seven The Gospel of Peace

And from Isaiah—

Isaiah 52:7

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”

What does the person in Isaiah’s passage announce?

What does this person bring?

What does this person say?

Notice the connection in Isaiah 52:7 between announcing *salvation* and speaking of *God the Son reigning*.

How ready are you to make a defense? Are you equipped to preach to others the gospel of peace, the good news of salvation?

Do you think that the enemy of your soul would target you in this area? Maybe attack you with a barrage of questions regarding the hope that is within you to see if you know what you know? Could you stand firm in such a situation? Or would you be swayed by someone who can quote more Scripture than you can? (It would do you well to know that Satan is well versed in Scripture!)

Think about and pray over the things that we’ve studied today.

See you tomorrow!

Day Two – Peace with God

Pray first.

Yesterday we studied the term “shodding your feet.” It references the readiness each Christian is to have in terms of being the messenger of the gospel. We need to always be ready to make a defense of *the hope that is within us*.

The word *peace* though, is presented in several different ways in Scripture. The word *peace* simply means the absence of strife. Therefore, the context of the word is extremely important because peace is used in many varied ways throughout Scripture. Sometimes it is used as “holding one’s peace,” meaning to be silent, and sometimes it is used as “peace to this house” or “go in peace.” Some Scriptures, such as Luke 12:51 and Matthew 10:34, are notable—

Matthew 10:34

[Jesus speaking] **“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”**

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Seven The Gospel of Peace

Luke 12:51

[Jesus speaking] **“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;”**

And a familiar Scripture about peace—

Isaiah 9:6

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

The usage of peace in the above manner doesn't really apply to our Ephesians verse or this lesson (although all Scripture is intertwined). We are looking at the *gospel* of peace, which is a bit more specific. The gospel, which simply means “good news,” as presented in Scripture, has many descriptions—the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of Christ, Paul's gospel, the gospel of God's Son, the gospel of your salvation, and the gospel of God, to name a few. These phrases sum up the very heart of the message of the good news that Jesus and His Apostles brought to the people—the good news that God has given all things into His Son's hands, to reconcile *all things*. It is the whole counsel and will of God.

Specifically, Paul presents the good news of peace in a certain way. There is peace *with* God, and peace *of* God. Let's look at the former—

Romans 5:1

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

What happens before we have *peace with God*?

Is that referencing our initial justification, or is it referencing the on-going points of justification by works? (To clearly know the difference between the two, you'll need to have done Lesson Six.)

In order to grasp the full meaning of this verse, we'll need to read it in context. (If you have time, read Rom. 3:21-6:23 to fully grasp the context of this verse.)

Romans 5:1-8

¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. ⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

According to v. 2, in what do we now stand?

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Lesson Seven The Gospel of Peace

Through Whom did we obtain our introduction into this grace?

How did we obtain our introduction into this grace (v. 1)?

What does justification by faith now give us (v. 1)?

Having been justified by faith, in what do we exult (v. 2)?

Not only do we exult in hope of the glory of God, we also exult in something else. What does v. 3 say that this is?

Now *really* pay attention to the first two verses. What we have now, as you've answered in the last few questions, is a result of v. 1. What then, is v. 1 referring to? (Try your best to answer this!)

Moving on in the passage—

Romans 5:9-10

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

What have we now been justified by (v. 9)?

Let's break down these two verses—

Note that v. 9 begins with “Much more then...” This verse is saying that *because of* us having been justified by Jesus' blood, and *in a greater degree than* us having been justified by His blood, we *shall be saved* (future tense) from the wrath of God through Jesus.

Verse 10 is actually saying the same thing as in v. 9. While we were enemies (unsaved, dead in our trespasses and sins) we were reconciled to God (given peace *with* God) through the death of Jesus Christ. “Much more” (because of this reconciliation and in a greater degree than this reconciliation) we “shall be saved” (future tense) by Jesus' life, by the power of His resurrection.

There are two separate things being talked about in this passage. One being referred to as having already happened (initial salvation through initial justification); the next thing (*being saved*) is future and based on past justification. Do you see that?

The passage in Romans continues, and it is very clear that it is our *initial* justification being talked about—

Romans 5:15-16

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Romans 5:18

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Go back through the first of these two passages and underline each use of the word “gift.” What is the free gift referencing?

This free gift gives us “peace with God.” Does every Christian have this peace?

Let’s look at it another way—

Colossians 1:19-23

¹⁹ For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him [Jesus], ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. ²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, ²² yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

After reading this passage, go back and reread the passage from Rom. 5:9-10. What are the similarities? Use portions from the text to support your answer.

According to Col. 1:20, what did the blood of Jesus’ cross make?

What does being reconciled have to do with, according to vv. 20 and 22?

I hope you noticed the biggest little word in Scripture at the beginning of v. 23—“IF.”

What is the “if” in v. 23 connected to?

Let’s break down this passage to understand it a bit better—

All Christians have been reconciled to God through Christ’s death. This happened for a purpose—in order to be presented back to Him “holy and blameless.” And we *will* be presented to Him IF we remain faithful to the faith (breastplate of righteousness) and remain steadfast and immovable (belt of truth) in relation to the HOPE (ruling and reigning with Christ) of the gospel (the gospel of grace AND glory).

We’ll look at one more companion passage to the other two we’ve studied—

Ephesians 2:11-19

¹¹ Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.

Is this referring to the Gentiles being grafted in through faith in the death of Jesus Christ, or is it referring to a future salvation for those who are faithfully obedient?

Who was separate from Christ (v. 11)?

How are the Gentiles described in v. 12?

What brought them near?

What does v. 14 call Jesus, and why (ref. v. 15 also)?

By abolishing the enmity, what did Christ establish (v. 15)?

What did Jesus preach (v. 17)?

To whom did Jesus preach?

Because of this peace, what do we now have (v. 18)?

And because of this peace, what does v. 19 call us?

The *peace* we now have *with God* through Christ should be a settled matter for each Christian. You need to know what God says about it so that you can be prepared to tell others what God says about it. If you don't have a readiness in regards to this aspect of the gospel of peace, you cannot possess a readiness in regards to the whole message of the gospel of peace. Tomorrow we'll study the other facet of peace—the peace *of* God.

Good job today! I know today's study was long; I hope you have gleaned much from it!

See you tomorrow!

Day Three – Peace of God

Before you begin today, make sure your heart and mind are settled. Pray that you would focus on God's Word today, and that He would teach you great and mighty things.

Yesterday we studied about the *peace with God* that Jesus' death on the cross made possible. This is the free gift of salvation, a necessity that makes this next aspect of the gospel of peace possible. One cannot know the peace OF God without having peace WITH God. However, one can have peace with God and *not* know the peace of God.

Let's start by reading a passage from Paul—

Philippians 4:1-9

¹ Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. ² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. ³ Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵ Let your forbearing spirit [Lit., moderation or gentleness] be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

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Paul mentions a shared struggle in the “cause of the gospel.” By way of review, what was Paul’s gospel? (Ref. Acts 20:24-27, if necessary.)

According to v. 7, what will the peace *of* God do?

The word “And,” a connecting participle, appears at the beginning of v. 7. Therefore, v. 7 cannot be separated from the preceding verses. Beginning with v. 4, what does Paul tell his beloved *brethren* to do?

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What does Paul say about our minds in v. 8?

Now connect that thought with the following verse from Paul—

Romans 8:6

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.

What is the connection?

Rewrite Phil. 4:9.

Does the *peace of God* have to do with works? Use portions of the text to support your answer.

The statement in v. 5 is a reminder of why Paul is telling them this. What is that reminder?

Let's focus again on Phil. 4:4-6. Keeping in mind that the word "peace" means the *absence of strife*, and Paul is exhorting the church to behave in a certain manner, read the following—

- **Rejoice in the Lord—always! Rejoice!**
The Greek word for "rejoice" is *chairō* (5463), which means to be glad. The noun form of the word is found in Hebrews 12:2, "[Jesus]... for the joy set before Him endured the cross..." So be glad in the Lord! Be glad!
- **Let your moderation and gentleness be known to all men.** The word for "gentleness" is also found in II Corinthians 10:1, "I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ..." Be moderate in your behavior, and gentle.
- **Be anxious for nothing.** The word for "anxious" is the Greek word *merimnaō*, which means to take thought of. It is found in Matthew 6:27 and 31, "And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?'" Settle yourself with the Lord and cast your cares on Him. Don't worry.
- **In prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.** The word for "supplication" means a more specific request than the word "prayer" denotes. Bottom line—rely on God.

This would be the very recipe for the lasting, continual *peace of God*. It is an inner peace that is manifested and accomplished through faithful obedience.

Paul sums it up even more succinctly in his letter to the Church at Thessalonica—

I Thessalonians 4:16-23

¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What are the acts of obedience Paul tells the church to do? List them below.

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-
-

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-
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Why does Paul exhort them to act in this way (v. 23)?

Paul states this in a slightly different way to the Church at Colossae—

Colossians 3:15-17

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Rewrite this passage in your own words.

Some final thoughts from Jesus Himself—

John 16:33

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Ultimately, where will we find peace?

We’ll stop here for today. See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Stand Firm

Pray first.

Let’s go back to our foundational passage—

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly

places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist [literally, “withstand”] in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Go back through these verses and underline each use of the phrase, “stand firm.”

Read this passage again and then answer this question: Do you stand firm first, and then put on the whole armor of God, or are you put on the whole armor of God and then stand firm?

It may not even need to be said, but in order to stand firm, you must have something SOLID to stand upon. Your foundations must securely be in place.

Psalm 11

¹ In the Lord I take refuge; How can you say to my soul, “Flee as a bird to your mountain; ² For, behold, the wicked bend the bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. ³ If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” ⁴ The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. ⁵ The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, and the one who loves violence His soul hates. ⁶ Upon the wicked He will rain snares; fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. ⁷ For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face.

What happens if the foundations are destroyed?

What do you think the foundations are?

Isaiah 28:16

Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no man can lay a foundation other the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

NOTES:

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Now let me ask you a not-so-simple question—Who is Jesus the Christ? Remember what Peter said to Jesus when Jesus asked him who he thought He was—

Matthew 16:16

And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

What does that statement mean? (We see the word, “Christ” which means “Anointed,” and “Son of God.” Really think about this one!)

Most of Christianity has removed all thought of Christ’s future kingdom and His future reign with His bride out of the description (and worship) of Jesus Christ. Do you think that takes away from the solid foundation laid in God’s Word? If Jesus the Messiah is *just* our Passover Lamb, then what is everyone building on? *Will it withstand the fire at the judgment seat?*

We must take note of what we are standing on now, because in that coming day we will all stand before the Lord and give an account of it (*cf.* Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10).

I Corinthians 2:5

...that your faith should not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

What is our faith to stand on?

What is it NOT to stand on?

More about standing—

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls.

What are we supposed to *stand by*?

In what are we to walk?

If we do, what will we find?

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And—

I Corinthians 16:13

Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

What does Paul tell the church to stand firm in? (Be sure to keep the definite article “the” with your answer!)

Paul again comments on the church “standing firm”—

Philippians 1:27-28

²⁷ **Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I [Paul] come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸ in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.**

What are they (we) to stand firm in and strive for? (Again, do not forget the definite article.)

Rewrite v. 27.

We are warned about standing firm, *standing firm and not being distracted!*

Luke 9:59-62

⁵⁹ And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Permit me first to go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹ And another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say goodbye to those at home.” ⁶² But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Luke 17:32-33

³² **“Remember Lot’s wife.”** ³³ **Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it.”**

NOTES:

Now let’s go back to Romans chapter 5, which we looked at in the first section. You should be familiar with it, so let’s draw out another piece to fit in with the peace *of* God—

Romans 5:1-2

¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

As we studied, this verse states that we Christians have been justified by our initial faith in Jesus Christ and that gave us *peace with God* (reconciliation). Through our initial faith in Jesus, we received *an introduction into the grace of God in which we now stand*. Now, because of this we can exult in hope of the glory of God.

We've studied a bit about glory, and we've mentioned *hope* quite a few times throughout this study. Hope and peace go hand in hand. We hope and we strive for future glory with Christ and this blessed hope brings us peace.

Our “shodding our feet” with the preparation of the gospel of peace is intimately connected to our hope—

Colossians 1:22-23

²² ...yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Colossians 1:5

...because of the hope laid up for you in [the] heaven[s], of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel.

How did the church at Colossae, to whom Paul was writing, hear about the hope laid up for them in the heavens?

Read through some verses that mention “hope.”

Psalms 119:81

My soul languishes for Thy salvation; I hope in Thy word.

Jeremiah 17:7

Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is in the Lord.

Acts 26:6-7

⁶ And now I [Paul] am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; ⁷ the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.

Ephesians 4:4

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling...

Galatians 5:5

For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials

Titus 2:11-13

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

Titus 3:5-7

⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal [age-lasting] life.

Hebrews 6:19

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil.

Go back through each verse and underline the word “hope.” Then list what each passage says about hope, being specific and concise.

I’ll start it for you—

1. We have hope in God’s Word
2. A man who has hope in the Lord is blessed.
3. We have hope in the promise.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Simply put, our hope gives us the *peace of God*, for a future salvation, which is made possible by our having *peace with God* through our past salvation.

Enjoy your day today, and we'll study more tomorrow.

Day Five – Seek Peace and Share It

We ended yesterday's study time with a simple thought that sums up what we've learned so far about peace. Our peace *with* God was made possible by the death and shed blood of God Himself, in the person of Jesus the Christ, on the cross. We have peace with God through our belief in this Perfect Sacrifice.

Possessing the peace *of* God, however, is not a guarantee for all who possess *peace with God*. Experiencing the peace of God is made possible by the power of the resurrection, and it is a continual choice to live by the power of the Spirit (I Pet. 1:3-5). Keeping our minds and our actions focused on the blessed hope of future glory gives us the peace of God necessary to stand firm in this present day.

Think and pray on this before you begin, asking God to show you the truths in His Word as we continue to study.

There's another aspect to peace that is connected to our pursuit of righteousness and our race of faith. It's not directly related to the gospel of peace in a primary sense; it is more of a secondary application, if you will. Let's explore the *bond* of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-6

¹ I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

How does Paul describe the manner in which we are to walk, to be worthy of our calling (vv. 2 and 3)?

What would this look like in your own life?

Here are some similar thoughts from James—

James 3:16-18

¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

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Describe the “wisdom from above” (v. 17).

How is the seed, whose fruit is righteousness, sown?

And this seed is sown by whom?

Here’s a familiar verse—

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Look back at the previous three Scripture passages. Underline the word (or form of the word) “gentle” in each. That word keeps popping up in connection with peace. What is the connection?

More verses on *peace*—

I Peter 3:11

Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

Romans 14:19

So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Mark 9:50

Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Do you think that Scripture is at all unclear about seeking peace with another?

Peace is simply the absence of strife, nothing more. Peace is accomplished through inner discipline and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, through the practice of self-control and gentleness and love. It is a fruit of the Spirit, not a deed of the flesh.

Being peaceable does not mean always being a doormat or giving in just to keep the peace (although sometimes it does mean getting off your position and not having to be right). There is never a time to compromise God’s Word, but there is many a time to bite your tongue and stay silent.

We are to be prepared to share the gospel of peace with others. God has given us everything we need to accomplish this. We have His Word, we have His Spirit, and we have His grace. You are probably familiar with what man calls *The Great Commission*—

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Drawing from what you’ve learned so far, what is a disciple and how is a disciple made?

Again, drawing heavily from what you have already learned, what is baptism for and what does it represent?

In order for you to teach someone to observe the Lord’s commandments, you must know what it is you are going to teach.

Therefore, *be prepared* to go and share! Share the gospel of God’s Ggrace with the unsaved and the gospel of the glories of Christ with the saved. But remember, in order to honor God’s Word and His incredible message, know *why* you know what you know, and *how* you know what you know.

I Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I [Paul] delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

What should you use to teach?

II Timothy 2:14-15

¹⁴ Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

Rewrite this passage in your own words.

Any thoughts?

Let's end this week with these words from Christ. They are such an encouragement for us as we struggle day to day with the various trials. We are not in this alone! God knows what we need. Rejoice and rest in that thought.

Matthew 6:24-34

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and riches. ²⁵ For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹ yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. ³⁰ But if God arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? ³¹ Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ ³² For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

NOTES:

See you next week.

Lesson Eight – The Shield of Faith

Day One – Being Taught
Day Two – Above All
Day Three – God’s Perfect Plan
Day Four – Unity of the Faith
Day Five – Encouragement

We now come to the piece of armor called the “shield of faith.” At this point in the study, we will be doing a lot of review of past lessons and connecting-the-dots. We’ve already covered a lot of material so far concerning faith as it applies to this aspect of our battle gear; in this lesson, we will try to understand it a bit more and fill in a few gaps.

You should know by now that faith simply means belief, and more specifically, faith *as God sees it* is belief in Him and what He has said.

Romans 10:17

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Now some people may claim to have an abundance of faith, but have no knowledge of God’s Word other than knowing that Jesus died for their sins. Can that be so? Every Christian possessed a basic faith when they accepted the free gift, which resulted in them receiving everlasting life. However, as we have studied, that initial faith is not enough to save them in that *future day*. The faith that one needs after being born again is an active faith, a faith that combines with works, which results in the salvation of the soul. And according to our Romans passage, faith cannot exist apart from the Word. Therefore, the motivating question for all of God’s children should be, “If you don’t know *what* God has said, how can you have and *put into action* the kind of faith that pleases God?”

Think about it, and study well this week.

Day One – Being Taught

A very important part of your study time is the time you spend in prayer to God. Please do not skip this in an effort to “just get the lesson done.” It is time well spent and you will receive much from your efforts. God loves to hear the prayers of His people!

As a student of Scripture (which every Christian should be), you should be reading God's Word and constantly making connections, asking questions, seeing subtle revelations as well as obvious ones, *asking questions*, all the while checking context and content. It sounds complicated, but it isn't (time consuming, yes, but very available and possible to the average, non-seminary-trained layperson). In order to *un-complicate* this and put the focus where it should be, let's step back for a moment and contemplate the real issue at hand, which is—

John 16:13-15

¹³ “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.”

Where will the Spirit guide you?

What will He disclose to you (v. 14)?

What else will He disclose to you (v. 15)?

The Spirit speaks what He hears—

I Corinthians 2:9-12

⁹ ...but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.” ¹⁰ For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God...

Verse 10 states that God “revealed them” to us, through the Spirit. What did God reveal?

How can the Spirit do this (vv. 10b and 11b)?

And just a few verses later we read—

I Corinthians 2:16

For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

What do we have?

(Note: You and I, as present-day Christians, can *in many cases* use the “we” in the epistles to apply to us. All the epistles, from Romans to Jude, were written to churches and hence were written to saved individuals. The topic of each epistle is the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to God’s people—the very same thing being offered to us today. Sometimes, however, the context reveals a specific trait that the writer and the recipient share, such as faithfulness, that you and I and other members of the Body may or may not share. Needless to say, we would then need to check the Word, as well as ourselves, to see if it is applicable.)

According to the preceding verses, can you and I know and understand what God’s Word says and means? In other words, can any Christian know the truth of God’s Word?

God’s Word says we can! Do you believe—*have faith in*—that? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit will teach you? Apart from the Spirit, you cannot learn the *deep things of God*. If you have felt (or still feel) overwhelmed at the enormity of what you *don’t* know, stop it. Stop worrying about not knowing enough and not having a good grasp and recall of Scripture; just follow the Spirit, get into God’s Word and be obedient, and He will teach and He will lead. It is simply a matter of choice!

As I’ve said repeatedly, you need to know what you believe. You need to know God’s Word. Some people need to read a passage over and over before they can remember it, others may need to *hear* it over and over before they can recall it from. And occasionally, others cannot seem to make the Scriptures stick in their head no matter what they try. That can be discouraging, can’t it? But be encouraged, because God wants you to learn and He wants you to share the message, and He wants you to know His Word. It may take you longer than it takes your friend, and you may not have as much time as the next guy to devote to studying the Word. Do not forget that each one of us is a unique individual that God needs to mold and shape and refine—and what works on one person may not work on another, and God knows this! Just submit yourself and your time to Him, remain faithfully obedient, and He will ready you for the work He has planned for you.

There is, however, a commonality in the way God teaches the truth of His Word—

Isaiah 28:9-13

⁹ “To whom would He teach knowledge? And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast? ¹⁰ For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.’” ¹¹ Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, ¹² He who said to them, “Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” and, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen. ¹³ So the word of the Lord to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there,” that they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive. ¹⁴ Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers...

To truly understand what is happening here in Isaiah, you need to read the entire chapter, plus the preceding and following chapters. Keep in mind that Isaiah, a prophet of the Lord, is ministering to the Nation of Israel at a time when the nation has been divided into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. Isaiah proclaims his message of repentance first to the Northern Kingdom of Israel just prior to it being conquered by the Assyrians, and then he turns his attention to the Southern Kingdom of Judah with warnings of the same nature. Essentially his message to the people of God is the same—repent from sinful behavior and turn their attention back to the Lord. Isaiah gives strong warnings about the judgments to come regarding Israel’s ungodly behavior. Isaiah does give hope to the nation, however, and makes many prophecies regarding the coming Messiah and His bringing salvation. Isaiah chapter 28 is a warning to the

priests and prophets of Israel who were engaging in unrighteous behavior and leading the people in the same manner.

Please read Isaiah chapter 28 now.

Now read this passage again—

Isaiah 28:9-13

⁹ “To whom would He teach knowledge? And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast? ¹⁰ For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.’” ¹¹ Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, ¹² He who said to them, “Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” and, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen. ¹³ So the word of the Lord to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there,” that they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive. ¹⁴ Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem.

According to vv. 9-10, God teaches and interprets the message in the following manner:

- Order upon order (Lit., commandment upon the commandment)
- Line upon line (Lit., connecting cord upon the connecting cord)
- A little here (Lit., a small bit here)
- A little there (Lit., a small bit there)

Before we go any further, it is important to note that the punctuation marks you see—quotation marks, question marks, periods, and commas—WERE NOT in the original language. The writers of ancient Hebrew did not use punctuation marks. Instead, they had ways of ordering words or using interrogative words to indicate, for example, when a question was being asked or when a new sentence was beginning. The language also consisted of marks on the letters of the words themselves to indicate meaning and emphasis. I do not claim to have any (near to NONE) knowledge of ancient Hebrew. I do however have some knowledge of English grammar and am able to read materials that others have written regarding the original text. Albeit the reliance is on man’s words when it comes to this area, but if you take such investigation and use it as a tool for dissecting the translations of the languages, you may end up with a bit more answer than you have question. Then let the Lord build on that with other Scriptures, which will indeed give you commentary on what it is you are seeking. (Sometimes this takes setting aside a particular thought or verse for a while until you come upon another verse or section that supports or explains it.)

So having said this, let’s look at Isaiah 28:9 as the Hebrew interlinear has it—

Whom? he shall direct knowledge and whom? he shall explain report ones being weaned from milk ones being pulled away from breasts

Literally it should read—

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts.

According to the literal translation of this verse, to whom will God teach knowledge and whom will he make to understand doctrine?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Eight The Shield of Faith

Do you remember what we studied about *milk* in Lesson Four (p. 81)? What does Heb. 5:12-13 say about the milk and those who partake of it only?

Do you see a connection to what Isaiah is saying? What is it?

God teaches in this manner to those *ready* and *willing* to do what it takes to mature.

Going back to the passage in Isaiah, there's another aspect to the manner in which God teaches in the way of, "line upon line, order on order, a little here and a little there." We can also learn *why* He teaches in this way.

Who is the "them" in v. 12? (You will need to read Is. 1-11 to answer this.)

What did God say that they would not listen to (v. 12)?

What do you know about the "rest" that God spoke about?

And because they would not listen, how will God speak to them (v. 13)?

Why will God speak to them this way (v. 13b)?

What will He use to speak to them (v. 11)?

Verse 14 begins with "therefore," so make sure you check the context to see what it is connecting. Isaiah tells the "scoffers" to listen to the Word of the Lord. The scoffers are the ones ruling "this people who are in Jerusalem," and "this people" are the ones who would not listen to God's invitation to "rest." Let's continue reading the passage—

Isaiah 28:14-16

¹⁴ Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, ¹⁵ because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, for we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception." ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a costly cornerstone

for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed. ¹⁷ And I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the level...”

What do these scoffers say?

What does the Lord say back to them (v. 16)?

Now, doing just what this passage says to do (line upon line, a little here and little there), compare the scoffers in Isaiah to the scoffers mentioned in Peter’s second epistle. Notice that in both cases it is scoffing in relation to future judgment and the people’s response to what the Word of the Lord says—

II Peter 3:2-10

² ...that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. ³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers (KJV uses the word “scoffers”) will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

This passage speaks for itself, doesn’t it? The scoffing is in relation to the Day of the Lord—the Seventh Day Rest. Exactly what Isaiah speaks about.

Any thoughts?

Good job today. Stay diligent in your prayer time, and we’ll start again tomorrow.

Day Two – Above All

Pray before you begin.

Read again Paul’s words to the church at Ephesus—

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Drawing from what you learned in Lesson Four of this study, what does Paul mean by beginning this thought with the word, “Finally”?

Why do we need to stand against the schemes of the devil? Why do we struggle against these spiritual forces in the heavenly places?

Paul states in v. 13, “Therefore” we are to take up the full armor and stand firm. “Therefore” is a connecting word to say “because of this which I just said...” Connect v. 13 with v. 12, and sum up what this passage means (again, this is “line upon line, a little here and a little there!”).

Then we get to v. 16, our verse for this lesson—

“... in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

The King James Version has this verse translated—

Ephesians 6:16

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

What does “above all” mean in this verse?

How important is the shield of faith?

Would this shield be referencing the faith necessary to bring about spiritual birth, or the faith necessary to save the soul? Or both? How do you know?

Paul is talking about the faith necessary to *save the soul* (the faith that James says must be accompanied by works), because this whole passage in Ephesians is directed to the one who is already spiritually alive. That initial saving faith is no longer an issue, nor could it be considered a part of the armor since the armor is to be worn by one who is pressing on toward maturity. Do you see that? (If you are struggling on this point, go back and work through Day One of Lesson Six and Day One of Lesson Seven.)

As we've studied, faith must at the heart of all that we do.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Can we please God without faith?

Remember the sure-footed stance we must have when wearing the armor? It is our foundation, it is how we *stand firm*. Read what Hebrews says about our foundation—

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

The word “assurance” is the Greek noun *hupostasis* (5287), which literally means a “stand under”—something used as a foundation or basis. This is actually a derivative of the word *histemi* (2476) which means “stand” and is found in Ephesians 6:11,13, and 14.

Using this definition, rewrite Hebrews 11:1.

What is it that we hope for?

Contextually speaking, what faith is this referring to? Read the verse that precedes Hebrews 11:1—

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Eight The Shield of Faith

Hebrews 10:39-11:1

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving [Lit., saving] of the soul. ¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Is the faith that leads to the saving of the soul an active faith, or a passive faith? What does that mean?

According to Ephesians 6:16, this faith will “extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.” Would that be *some* of the flaming missiles, or ALL of the flaming missiles?

The phrase “flaming missiles” in the original Greek is actually, literally, exactly what it says—“fiery or burning darts or missiles.” Since the evil one doesn’t throw tangible, literal projectiles at us, we must take this to mean a figurative “flaming missile” (and since the whole of the armor is figurative and not literal, this would just make sense).

The phrase “evil one” is the Greek word *poneros*, which means “wicked” or “evil.” It is in the form of an adjectival noun, so the actual rendering of the word is “evil one.” However, we are unable to tell if Paul meant The Evil One (Satan), or a person who is evil. It doesn’t really matter, because Scripture teaches us that Satan is the author and manipulator of all that is evil.

What do you think Paul is referring to when he says “flaming missiles” of the “evil one”?

Since this is a personal battle, and Satan is determined to see you be overcome and defeated and on the wrong side of the goal of your calling, how do you see that Satan will attempt to keep *you* from reaching the goal?

How will *the shield of faith* keep you from being overcome and defeated?

We’ll end here for today. As I said, much of this Lesson is review, and now it is time to pull the many pieces together and get a more comprehensive understanding of the battle we are engaged in.

See you tomorrow.

Day Three – God’s Perfect Plan

Pray first.

Faith/belief must be according to what God has said; therefore, faith is specific. Faith must be in relation to that which is revealed in God’s Word—who God is and what God has done, is doing, and will do; otherwise, *it is not the kind of faith that pleases Him*.

We’ve explored a bit about the mystery of the Gentiles; their part in God’s plan of reconciliation and how the mystery was hidden until it could be understood through the events of the Cross and Resurrection. One important thing to note about this revelation of God’s plan is that all things have occurred exactly as God designed them to occur; all things, from the beginning, have happened according to God’s intended plan. Never along the way did God change to “Plan B.”

Matthew 13:34-35

³⁴ All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable, ³⁵ so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.”

Remember that the parables were specifically about the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. The things that Jesus speaks about concerning the kingdom were hidden *since the foundation of the world*. Is there any indication that God changed His mind about the kingdom at any point?

Read about the kingdom, and when it was prepared—

Matthew 25:34

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

When did God prepare the kingdom?

Read about God’s works, and when they were finished—

Hebrews 4:3

For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, “As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,” although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

When were God’s works finished?

Read about Jesus, and His origins—

I Peter 1:20-21

²⁰ For He [Jesus] was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

John 1:1-2,14

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

According to these verses, how long has Jesus been around?

When was Jesus slain?

When was His earthly body crucified?

Did God know it would happen?

Therefore, God's plan has never changed and what He said at the beginning in relation to man must still hold true—

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

This is the point to which all of God's Word moves—

Revelation 19:15 (This occurs in the Seventh Day, the Lord's Day, after the marriage of the Lamb)

And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron...

Revelation 2:26-27

²⁶ And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; ²⁷ AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father...

Do you believe that?

Then what you believe needs to be accompanied by obedience—works in accordance with your faith. It seems simple, and it *is* simple in concept:

- Know what God has said
- Believe what God has said
- Do what God has said

The hard part, of course, is actually doing it.

Sum up what you have learned so far about the shield of faith. How does it tie into the rest of the armor of God? Why is this particular piece considered “above all”?

Think and pray on these things. See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Unity of the Faith

I know that these lessons get a bit long. I know how difficult it is to find time to study. I know it is much easier just to listen to what other people say. *I know.*

I also know that God expects us to mature. I also know that maturity comes from the solid food of God’s Word. I also know that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God—you cannot mature without knowing what God says. I also know that maturity comes through suffering. Suffering comes from doing what is right. *Doing* what is right comes from *knowing* what is right. I know these things because God’s Word tells us these things.

I also know that Satan does not want you or me to know these things. But God does.

So, *please* stop right now and read the entire book of Ephesians. Keep in mind *everything* that you have learned up to this point and read it. But before you begin, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you. Ask for patience and ask for understanding. Ask for eyes to see and for ears to hear. Ask in faith and then *act* in faith. Remember, with God ALL things are possible.

Now, having read the entire Book of Ephesians (Good job!), let’s focus on one last thing.

Ephesians 4:1-16

¹ I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.” ⁹ (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

According to v. 4, there is *one* body and *one* Spirit. What is the one body?

What is the *one* Spirit?

What is the *one* hope of your calling?

Notice that it is *one* hope of our calling; all Christians have the same calling.

Who is the *one* Lord in v. 5?

What is the *one* faith? (Yes, there is only *one* faith, and it is not simply the grace message.)

What is the *one* baptism?

And who is the *one* God and Father?

Do you see what Paul is getting at? There are not many right answers to these questions—in fact, there is only one correct answer for each, *just one*. The Church at Ephesus would not have had any problem answering these questions. Paul states the *one-ness* of their belief and therefore the *unity* of their belief. He told them to be diligent to preserve it.

Looking back to our Ephesians passage above—

From v. 11, name the ministries that Christ gave the Church.

Why were they given?

They need to do their work *until* we all attain to what (v. 13)?

Note the phrase, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith.” In the original Greek, the word *faith* in this verse has a definite article in front of it—“the.” In the Greek language the use of a definite article is different than in English. In English, it serves merely to particularize or to refer to a particular object. In Greek, however, it serves to **emphasize** the person or thing it is used with.

What is the *unity* of the *faith*? This would need to be seen as different from unity of faith. Let’s get familiar with Paul’s usage of the term, “the faith.”

I Timothy 3:9

...but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience...

From what you’ve learned so far, what is the mystery all about?

So we see that “the faith” is wrapped up in the mystery.

More from Paul—

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

The Church at Colossae had “received Christ Jesus the Lord” and Paul now tells them to *walk in Him*. They were being built up in Him and were being established in “the faith.” This speaks of maturity and growth. What does maturity in the Christ entail?

Do you see what Paul means by *the* faith? It is the word of the kingdom, the gospel of glory, the hope of the Christian’s calling. It is all about the whole counsel of God—His perfect plan and His perfect will—everything contained within His Word pertaining to the gospel of grace *and* the gospel of glory.

If *unity of the faith* (those things having to do with the glory of Christ and the kingdom of heaven) is the goal, how is it achieved? The ministry mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 was given for this purpose—to equip the saints for service and maturity, so that they could all “attain to the unity of the faith AND of the knowledge (Lit. mature knowledge) of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

Is this unity of the faith at all speaking of general brotherly love? Look at the context in the Book of Ephesians. It’s about *maturity* of the faith, being no longer “children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine.” It’s about a like-minded Church, with *one* hope of their calling and *one* faith. The Church in Ephesus possessed a mature knowledge of the kingdom and how they were to get there. This unity does not speak of uniformity, conformity, or acceptance of each other’s differing views about the Christ and His kingdom. How can it?

What if one of them did not believe in the literal coming kingdom? Or, what if a group of them did not think they needed to be concerned about the kingdom? How can they grow up together in *the faith* and be united together in *the faith* if they all believe different things concerning what *the faith* has to do with?

Think about it.

Day Five – Encouragement from the Psalms

Begin with prayer.

I never used to like reading the Book of Psalms. I couldn’t connect with the poetic writings, nor understand what caused the writers of the Psalms to get so emotional (and lengthy!). Now that I see the “kindness and severity” of God (Rom. 11:22), and how it pertains to me *personally*, I have a much greater appreciation for the thankfulness and gratefulness—and *sorrow*—of each writer’s heart. So if you, too, have any hesitation to the Psalms in general, set that aside for now and read this portion of Psalm 119 with a new understanding; look at it through new eyes. Can you do that?

Psalm 119:1-48

- ¹ How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.
- ² How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.
- ³ They also do no unrighteousness; they walk in His ways.
- ⁴ Thou hast ordained Thy precepts, that we should keep them diligently.
- ⁵ Oh that my ways may be established to keep Thy statutes!
- ⁶ Then I shall not be ashamed when I look upon all Thy commandments.
- ⁷ I shall give thanks to Thee with uprightness of heart, when I learn Thy righteous judgments.
- ⁸ I shall keep Thy statutes; do not forsake me utterly!
- ⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word.
- ¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments.
- ¹¹ Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.
- ¹² Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes.
- ¹³ With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Thy mouth.
- ¹⁴ I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.
- ¹⁵ I will meditate on Thy precepts, and regard Thy ways.
- ¹⁶ I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word.
- ¹⁷ Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live and keep Thy word.
- ¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.
- ¹⁹ I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Thy commandments from me.
- ²⁰ My soul is crushed with longing after Thine ordinances at all times.

- ²¹ Thou dost rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, who wander from Thy commandments.
²² Take away reproach and contempt from me, for I observe Thy testimonies.
²³ Even though princes sit and talk against me, Thy servant meditates on Thy statutes.
²⁴ Thy testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors.
²⁵ My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to Thy word.
²⁶ I have told of my ways, and Thou hast answered me; teach me Thy statutes.
²⁷ Make me understand the way of Thy precepts, so I will meditate on Thy wonders.
²⁸ My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to Thy word.
²⁹ Remove the false way from me, and graciously grant me Thy law.
³⁰ I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Thine ordinances before me.
³¹ I cleave to Thy testimonies; O Lord, do not put me to shame!
³² I shall run the way of Thy commandments, for Thou wilt enlarge my heart.
³³ Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall observe it to the end.
³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law, and keep it with all my heart.
³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it.
³⁶ Incline my heart to Thy testimonies, and not to dishonest gain.
³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Thy ways.
³⁸ Establish Thy word to Thy servant, as that which produces reverence for Thee.
³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread, for Thine ordinances are good.
⁴⁰ Behold, I long for Thy precepts; revive me through Thy righteousness.
⁴¹ May Thy lovingkindness also come to me, O Lord, Thy salvation according to Thy word;
⁴² So I shall have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust Thy word.
⁴³ And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I wait for Thine ordinances.
⁴⁴ So I will keep Thy law continually, forever and ever.
⁴⁵ And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts.
⁴⁶ I will also speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and shall not be ashamed.
⁴⁷ And I shall delight in Thy commandments, which I love.
⁴⁸ And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Thy statutes.
⁴⁹ Remember the word to Thy servant, in which Thou hast made me hope.
⁵⁰ This is my comfort in my affliction, that Thy word has revived me.
⁵¹ The arrogant utterly deride me, yet I do not turn aside from Thy law.
⁵² I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O Lord, and comfort myself.
⁵³ Burning indignation has seized me because of the wicked, who forsake Thy law.
⁵⁴ Thy statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.
⁵⁵ O Lord, I remember Thy name in the night, and keep Thy law.
⁵⁶ This has become mine, that I observe Thy precepts.

The word “commandment” is the Hebrew word *mitswah* (04687), which means a command. It is a derivative of the Hebrew word *tsqawah* (06680), which means to make firm or establish.

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “commandments.”

Write down what the author says about God’s commandments—

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The word “ordinance” is the Hebrew word *mishpat* (04941), which means a judicial verdict, either favorable or unfavorable. Some translations use the word “judgment.”

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “ordinance” or “judgment” (same word).

Write down what the author says about God’s ordinances/judgments—

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The word “precepts” is the Hebrew word *piqqud* (06490), which means an appointment or allocation mandated by God.

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “precept.”

Write down what the author says about God’s precepts—

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The word “statute” is the Hebrew word *choq* (02706), which means a regulation or law which must be strictly obeyed (natural law as well as God-given).

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “statute.”
Write down what the author says about God’s statutes—

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The word “law” is the Hebrew word *torah* (08451), which means instruction or doctrine.

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “law.”

Write down what the author says about God’s laws—

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The word “testimony” is the Hebrew word *edhah* (05713), which means something that attests or witnesses.

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “testimony.”

Write down what the author says about God’s testimonies—

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And lastly, the word “way” is the Hebrew word *derekh* (01870), which means a journey or course, a path or a manner.

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the word “way.”

Write down what the author says about God’s ways—

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Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Eight The Shield of Faith

Now read this Psalm passage again and this time direct it to the Lord, making it a desire of your own heart if indeed it is. Ask Him to show you where you are weak, and where you are strong. Ask Him to show you His way, so that you may walk in it.

See you next week.

Lesson Nine— The Helmet of Salvation

Day One – The Helmet of Salvation

Day Two – The Hope of Salvation

Day Three – Sons of Day

Day Four – Be Alert and Sober

Day Five – More Encouragement

We are nearing the end of our study on the full armor of God. This armor is a serious and necessary element in our individual, lifelong battle with our enemy, and no part of it is to be taken lightly. God has provided this means of defense for precisely the reason that we WILL need it—otherwise He would not have spoken about it. Think about that. YOU need the full armor of God to withstand in this evil day. *Every* piece of armor is crucial. You must know what it is, how it fits together, and how to know whether you have it on or not.

How would you describe your current state of preparedness?

If you feel as if you are falling short of being prepared, ask God to give you knowledge, desire, and *faith*. Ask Him with a pure heart. And be prepared to receive it.

Day One – The Helmet of Salvation

This week as we study the helmet of salvation we will need to focus primarily on a passage in Thessalonians, which is an excellent explanation for, and commentary on, this week's piece of armor.

Read through our foundational Ephesians passage, and then read the passage from Thessalonians. We'll briefly discuss how to compare them before looking deeper into the meaning behind the "helmet."

Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our

struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

Paul's letter to the Church in Thessalonica—

I Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹ Now as to the times and the epochs [of the return of the Lord Jesus, *check context*], brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

What does Paul call the helmet in Ephesian 6:17?

What does Paul call the helmet in I Thessalonians 5:8?

Which salvation is being referenced? How do you know?

As we've learned, the word *salvation* can mean different things in Scripture; it is not just a reference to deliverance from an eternity in hell, as we may have previously been taught. There is the salvation that pertains to our spiritual birth, a salvation that we currently possess. There is also the salvation of our soul, a salvation that will be revealed in a time yet future. One main difference between the two is that one is freely given by the work of Another, and the other is given based on our faithful works of obedience. So, in essence, determining which salvation the helmet is referring to in both passages is easy to ascertain—notice that Paul says in both letters that *we* put it on. This implies a work, and any type of work that is done *by us* has no place in the free gift of salvation.

It's extremely important to grasp the bigger picture of context when we compare like words, such as helmet, from separate books of the Bible. We need to make sure we are not just grabbing at words because we want to *make* them fit together. The only way we can properly make the words fit together is if the original writer(s) intended them to mean similar things. This is all part of hermeneutics, and all students of Scripture need to follow certain guidelines to make sure they are studying Scripture in the proper fashion. This particular example is an easy one, since the same writer wrote both letters, and the helmet in both cases is seen in terms of salvation and in conjunction with a breastplate; this, combined with the overall idea of battling in relation to the coming Day of the Lord makes the similarities obvious. Let's take a closer look at how we arrive at this—

- I. Paul writes to similar groups of people (to Thessalonica around 51 A.D. and to Ephesus around 60 A.D).
 - Paul calls the Church at Ephesus the “faithful in Christ Jesus” and says to them, “For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you...” (Eph. 1:15-16).
 - Paul writes to the Church at Thessalonica, “We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your *work of faith* and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ...you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.” (I Thess. 1:3-4,7)
- II. Paul exhorts both groups to behave in a manner worthy of the kingdom to which they have been called. (This is essentially the theme of all his letters.)
 - To the Church at Ephesus he writes, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love...do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” (Eph. 5:1,2,3,5)
 - To the Church at Thessalonica Paul writes, “...just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” (I Thess. 2:11-12)
- III. The Church in Thessalonica had undergone and was still encountering much tribulation and suffering, the Church at Ephesus was about to (primarily in regards to the destructive work of false teachers).
 - Paul told the elders of the Church at Ephesus (almost ten years prior to his writing the epistle of Ephesians) to “be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock...after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” (Acts 20:28-30) This can also be seen in Paul's letter to Timothy (who was in Ephesus at the time), which Paul wrote shortly *after* his letter to the Church at Ephesus, regarding the strange doctrines being taught there (I Tim. 1:1-7). Even Peter addresses the sufferings that believers were enduring in that area (*cf.* I Peter 1:1; 1:6; 3:14; 3:17; 5:10). This helps explain why Paul tells the Church at Ephesus to put on the whole armor in order that they may stand firm (Eph. 6:10-20).
 - Paul states that the Thessalonians “endured the same sufferings at the hands of [their] own countrymen,” and he had told them in advance that they were going to “suffer affliction,” which he said “came to pass.” He writes, “For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain” (I Thess. 2:14; 3:4-5). In Paul's second letter to this church, written that same year, Paul references their present sufferings (II Thess. 1:4). Knowing this helps us see why Paul encourages them to wear the armor so that they will overcome.

- IV. Both churches are told to overcome now, with the armor on, in light of the coming Day of the Lord.
- To Ephesus, Paul writes, “take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day (this present day), and having done everything, to stand firm.” (Eph. 6:13). He had earlier stated that the mystery (which has to do with Christ and His bride, the spotless and unblemished Church, to be determined in that coming day) was to be made known “through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 3:10)
 - To Thessalonica, Paul writes that the Day of the Lord will “come just like a thief in the night,” but “we (*the faithful*—check context) are of the day” and we need to be “sober” with this armor on in order to escape through the destruction of this day.

Do you see the similarities? For the most thorough understanding, you should read both epistles in one sitting and compare the overall subject matter of each. I have pointed out some of the highlights in order to show the thought process that must happen each time we connect the dots. When you study each book, you must keep all of these things in perspective, all the while keeping the overall perspective of the central theme of the Big Book. Sometimes it’s easy to see the connections—like the helmet—other times it is not so easy.

This was a short day of study, so spend some time becoming familiar with both passages concerning the helmet. If you still have some time today, read the entire Book of I Thessalonians. It’s short, but packed with information.

We’ll pick up again tomorrow.

Day Two – The Hope of Salvation

Don’t forget to pray.

We’ve established that the part of our armor Paul calls the helmet of salvation can also be described as the *hope* of salvation. It is stated like this—

I Thessalonians 5:8-11

⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

We have already covered in past lessons what our “hope” is as Christians. This is a crucial part of what we believe, so let’s review a few verses again concerning hope—

I Peter 1:3-5, 9

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials. ⁹...obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Nine The Helmet of Salvation

What are we born again to (v. 3)?

This living hope is explained in v. 4. What is it?

This hope is connected to a salvation (v. 5). When will that salvation be revealed? What salvation must it be referring to (v. 9)?

More from Paul—

Titus 2:11-13

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

When do we realize the blessed hope (v. 13)?

Continuing in Titus—

Titus 3:5-7

⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal [age-lasting] life.

What does this hope have to do with (v. 7)?

More on hope from Paul—

Colossians 1:27

...to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in [or “among”] you, the hope of glory.

What else does this hope have to do with?

Glory, the salvation of the soul, life for the age to come, the inheritance reserved in heaven are all facets of the *complete picture of the hope* that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ made possible. This hope is

to encourage us, to strengthen us, to help us to stand firm in the battle against the heavenly forces. It is to be our focus; it is to be our anchor—

Hebrews 6:18-19

¹⁸...in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹ This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil...

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul! Think about that phrase, and then personalize it—

This hope I have as an anchor of my soul!

Is that a true statement? Do you have *this hope* as an anchor of your soul? If not, then how can you expect to wear the helmet that's comprised of it?

Notice what the author of Hebrews says about laying hold of the hope, "we who have fled for refuge..." What do we need to flee and seek refuge *from*? (Think about David escaping from Saul's kingdom, and the typology in that word picture.)

We must not move away from this hope! Because hope, being what it is, sometimes is realized, and sometimes *is not* realized.

We can see hope in a general sense being played out in an *unrealized* fashion in Scripture—

Luke 23:8-9

⁸ Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. ⁹ And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.

What was Herod hoping to see?

Did he see it?

Even though the Scriptures don't record it, do you think that Herod still had hope after he realized that Jesus was not going to perform a sign?

More about hope—

Acts 16:16-19

¹⁶ And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. ¹⁷ Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bondservants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸

And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment.¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities.

What was the slave-girl doing that was bringing her master profit (v. 16)?

What did Paul do to her?

With the spirit gone, could she perform this work anymore?

Since there would be no more profit, her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone. Hope remains hope until some termination point. Do you see that?

The Scriptures also present hope as *conditional*—

Hebrews 3:5-6

⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; ⁶ but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Colossians 1:22-23

²² ...yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

These two passages place the idea of hope within an “if”, “then” sentence structure. What are the conditions surrounding hope?

Lot’s wife is an example of someone who did not (figuratively) have on the helmet of the hope of salvation. Do you remember her? You should, for we are told to by Jesus Himself:

Luke 17:32

Remember Lot’s wife.

You can read her story in Genesis 19:1-29. She started out all right; she was moving in the right direction and knew exactly where she was going. She was told to “escape for your life!” to the mountains, and specifically to NOT look back, *but she looked back anyway*. She thought that what she was leaving behind was much more important than what lay ahead of her.

She did not have on her helmet of the hope of salvation; if she had had it on, she would have been in the front of the pack running toward that mountain, not in the back, wishing she could stay in the valley.

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Nine The Helmet of Salvation

Jesus says something similar during His earthly ministry—

Luke 9:61-61

⁶¹ And another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say goodbye to those at home.” ⁶² But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

What does “putting your hand to the plow” represent?

What does “looking back” represent?

If one does look back after putting his hand to the plow, how are they described?

And notice what we are to look to—

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Who are we to fix our eyes on?

Underline the second half of v. 1.

Rewrite this passage in your own words.

Describe what it looks like to have on the helmet of salvation.

And to sum it all up—

Psalm 71:5

For Thou art my hope, O Lord God...

Isn't God's Word awesome!?

See you tomorrow.

Day Three – Sons of Day

In the Book of Thessalonians, Paul makes a connection between wearing the helmet and being “of the day” and being “sober.” Today we’ll look at the former phrase, and the latter tomorrow. Paul, you remember, is writing to a faithful group of Christians that he has no doubt will enter into the kingdom of their Lord—

I Thessalonians 4:17-18

¹⁷ **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them** [the dead in Christ] **in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.** ¹⁸ **Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

Note: If you were to take this previous passage out of context, you could question whether there really is a separation of Christians at the judgment seat, as we have been studying. Again, you must go back to context of the entire letter and note the numerous times that Paul describes the Thessalonian Church in an *extremely positive and faithfully obedient way* (see vv. 1:3; 1:6-8; 2:13-14; 2:17-20; 3:5-7; 4:1; 5:4-5). Therefore, because of what Paul has seen in them, he is able to say confidently that they will *always* be with the Lord in that Coming Day.

Now read the whole passage again—

I Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹ **Now as to the times and the epochs** [of the return of the Lord Jesus, check context], **brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.** ² **For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.** ³ **While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.** ⁴ **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;** ⁵ **for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;** ⁶ **so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.** ⁷ **For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.**

⁸ **But since we are of the day** [Lit., we are of day], **let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.**

⁹ **For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** ¹⁰ **who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.** ¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.**

According to v. 4, what does the Day of the Lord do to the one who is in darkness?

Do you remember what the Day of the Lord is?

Paul describes this faithful group as being “sons of day” and accordingly they will not be overtaken “like a thief” when the Day of the Lord comes. They will not be like the others he describes, the ones “in darkness,” who do *not* escape. It is important for us to understand what the phrase “of day” means, and even more importantly, how to emulate it. We’ll spend the rest of today’s study time doing just that.

The Greek translation for “the day of the Lord” is comprised of two definite articles that precede both nouns, which means that it is referring to *the* Day of *the* Lord. Remember, in the Greek language, the use of a definite article emphasizes the person or thing it is used with. Notice that Paul calls them “sons of day” and not “sons of *the* day”; there is no definite article. Based on this we can see that being a “son of day” isn’t referencing being a son of “the day of the Lord.” This, then, puts these actions in the *present*, implying *future* ramifications. Do you see that?

In this passage, we do see the phrase “sons of day” written in such a way as to put it on equal ground as “sons of light.” Paul juxtaposes these two phrases with *not* being “of night nor of darkness.” This gives us some direction to go in understanding *light* and *day* in a similar sense. Let’s see what other Scriptures say about this—

Genesis 1:4-5

⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.⁵ And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

What is the light called?

What is the darkness called?

Do you remember the connection with this restoration account and the restoration of fallen man’s spirit? This was in Day One of Lesson Three. Go back and review this part, if necessary.

We read more about *day* in the following passage—

John 11:9-10

⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

If anyone walks in the day, does he stumble?

Why?

If anyone walks in the night, does he stumble?

Why?

Continuing in the Gospel of John—

John 12:35-36

³⁵ Jesus therefore said to them, “For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.”

Jesus says this immediately after saying to His disciples that the “Son of Man must be lifted up” (John 12:32-34). What does He say they must do to become “sons of light” (v. 36)?

Would He be referring to belief that brings about spiritual birth, or a belief subsequent to that? How do you know?

Keeping in mind that the disciples were born again individuals, what was it that they were to “believe” about Jesus? (You need to really think about this one. Refer to Matthew 16:13-20 if necessary.)

What doesn’t the one who “walks in the darkness” know (v.35)?

And from the same book—

John 8:12

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

He who follows Jesus will not walk in the darkness. What will he have?

According to John 8:12, if one wants to *not* walk in darkness, he must follow Jesus. Read what it takes to follow Jesus—

Luke 9:23-26

²³ And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” ²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵ For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

According to Jesus' Own words, what does it take to follow Him, and why?

With this in mind (noting especially that the one in darkness does *not* know where he is going), why does Paul write in the I Thessalonians chapter 5 passage that a “son of day” and “son of light” will NOT be overtaken by the Coming Day of the Lord?

I hope this encourages you to be sure you are wearing the armor of God, so you too can be a “son of day” and “son of light.” I imagine that none of us wants to be caught unaware and unprepared when the Day of the Lord comes!

See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Be Alert and Sober

Begin with prayer.

The second part of Paul's description regarding *not* being in darkness and *not* being overtaken by the Day of the Lord is what he describes as being “alert and sober”—

I Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹ Now as to the times and the epochs [of the return of the Lord Jesus], brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

⁸ But since we are of the day [Lit., “we are of day”], let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Paul commands the Church at Thessalonica, and himself, to “not sleep” as others do, and to be “alert and sober” (v. 6). When do sleepers sleep and drunks get drunk (v. 7)?

What is *night* associated with?

NOTE: Paul begins this thought about being prepared for the coming of the Day of the Lord by addressing a specific concern that the Church had about “those who have fallen asleep in Jesus” (vv. 4:13-16). Verse 16 is obviously referencing Christians who have died physically with the term “fallen asleep.” However, when Paul starts talking about letting *us* not “sleep” because “those who sleep do their sleeping at night,” he is not referencing this same idea. The word for “asleep” in v. 13 is the Greek word *koimao* (2837), which means to put to sleep or to be dead. The word for “sleep” in v. 6 is the Greek word *katheudo* (2518), which means to lie down to rest. He is speaking of our *spiritual life*, not our *physical life*. Thus, with Paul stating not to “sleep,” he is not saying anything about being *physically* dead, but rather admonishing them, and himself, to “be alert” and “be sober” *spiritually*.

Let’s look at couple of instances in Scripture where we see sleeping portrayed in the manner of not being alert. Here the physical would reflect the spiritual—

Matthew 26:37-41

³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.” ³⁹ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” ⁴⁰ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? ⁴¹ Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Jesus admonishes His disciples for sleeping while they should have been keeping watch with Him. Why does Jesus say they need to keep watch (v. 41)?

And another passage—

Mark 13:32-37

³² [Jesus speaking] “But of the day or hour [of the Lord’s return] no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son but the Father alone. ³³ Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is. ³⁴ It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. ³⁵ Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or in the morning—³⁶ lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’”

According to Jesus, being *asleep* means *not being alert*. What does Jesus say in v. 37?

His admonition to stay alert is in view of what (vv. 32 and 33)?

The idea of being “sober” is also connected with the idea of being “alert” in Peter’s epistle:

I Peter 5:8

Be sober, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Why do we need to be alert?

What happens if our adversary devours us? What do we Christians have to lose?

Paul commanded the Thessalonians, and himself, to “be sober” with the armor on (I Thess. 5:8). Why does he say they need to “be sober” and “of day” (I Thess. 5:9)?

Now going back to the helmet, and the idea of being sober, note the following passage from Peter’s first epistle (which was written to the general area where you’ll find Ephesus, just a year or two after Paul wrote his letter)—

I Peter 1:10-13

¹⁰ **As to this salvation** [of the soul, see v. 9], **the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry,** ¹¹ **seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.** ¹² **It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.** ¹³ **Therefore, gird [Lit., bind] your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

What part of the body does the helmet go on?

What are the commands in v. 13?

Verse 13 begins with the word “therefore.” What are the thoughts that the “therefore” connects?

With all of these thoughts in mind, summarize what is meant by the helmet of salvation.

Paul has an excellent summation of this whole thought surrounding the helmet of salvation in his letter to the Church in Rome—

Romans 13:10-14

¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. ¹¹ And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

This all has to do with obtaining salvation, doesn't it? We need to heed the words from the author of Hebrews—

Hebrews 2:3

...how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

Think on these things and we'll meet again tomorrow.

Day Five – More Encouragement

I have heard it said by some that this kingdom teaching is an impossible expectation for Christians, that entrance into the kingdom is too hard to “earn” and no one can ever measure up. I have heard by some Christians that the immensity of guilt over *confessed* sin, coupled with the lack of some tangible work to proclaim, is keeping them from enjoying the hope that is set before them. I have even heard from some who have said that they don't expect to receive their inheritance, no matter how much they try. Wow, there is a very definite lack of faith in these statements.

I imagine that if you are a “glass is half empty” kind of person this might be your initial response to the calling that God has for you. If so, you may be the kind of person who thinks negatively about most things so that when things turn out positively, you can be pleasantly surprised and not have to suffer from

disappointment. However, this is *not* how God expects us to respond to the offer He has for us, nor the attitude that pleases Him in regards to His promises. One could even say this attitude is self-centered and *faith-less*. Let's note what God has said concerning His promise to His children, and how it contradicts the mindset I've just described.

Romans 4:13-16

¹³ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶ For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

The inheritance is a promise to the descendants of Abraham, which all Christians are. Therefore... (Perhaps you may want to say this aloud.)

The inheritance is a promise to me because I am a descendant of Abraham.

Ephesians 1:14

[The Holy Spirit of promise] is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

II Peter 1: 3-4

³ ...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises...

The inheritance is yours to attain. You need to stay faithful to what God has said. He has given you *everything* you need to do so. Therefore...

The inheritance is mine to attain. I need to stay faithful to what God has said. He has given me everything I need to do so.

Philippians 3:20

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

Colossians 1:13-14

¹³ For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

All Christians have been delivered out of the kingdom of Satan (this present world system) and into the kingdom of God's Son. Our citizenship is *there*, not here. Therefore...

I have been delivered out of the kingdom of Satan, this present world system. My citizenship is in the kingdom of God's Son.

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.**
⁶ **In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.**

The Lord will direct you and bring you into His kingdom, *if you let Him*. Therefore....

The Lord will direct me and bring me into His kingdom, if I let Him.

John 15:7-11

⁷ **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”**

Abide in the Lord. Let His words abide in you. Keep His commandments. He wants His joy to be your joy, and for *your joy to be made full*. Therefore...

I must abide in the Lord. I must let His words abide in me. I must keep His commandments. He wants His joy to be my joy and for my joy to be made full.

Hebrews 9:11-12,16,22

¹¹ **But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹⁶ For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. ²² And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

It took the death of *God Himself* to make this possible. Do not make light of it or consider it unimportant. God shed His blood—for you—to give you the Kingdom. Say it aloud...

It took the death of God *Himself* to make this possible for me. It is of utmost importance. God shed His blood to give me the kingdom.

Deuteronomy 30:11,14

¹¹ **For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. ¹⁴ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.**

You CAN be obedient. It is not too difficult. Therefore...

I CAN be obedient. It is not too difficult for me.

Luke 10:25-28

²⁵ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal [age-lasting] life?” ²⁶ And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” ²⁷ And he answered and said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; Do this, and you will live.”

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

Do this, and you will live...

...If I do this, I will live.

Don't listen to the naysayers, don't listen to the voice of guilt, and don't listen to the enemy. Listen to the Spirit and He will guide you into all truth.

I Thessalonians 5:11, 13-17

¹¹ Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. ¹³ ...Live in peace with one another. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. ¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

AMEN!

See you next time.

Lesson Ten – The Sword of the Spirit

Day One – Knowing the Word of God

Day Two – Epignosis

Day Three – Using the Word of God

Day Four – On the Defense

Day Five – No Greater Weapon

So here we are! We have come to the last piece of our spiritual armor of God and the last lesson in our study. We have spent weeks looking at the nature of our warfare against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, and the defensive tactics that God expects us to use if we are to stand firm when attacked. We have seen and studied what is at stake for Christians in that coming day and why our enemy will stop at nothing to see us disqualified from receiving our inheritance, which is reserved for us in heaven. We now know and understand that the whole armor of God fits together interdependently and each piece cannot be seen individually exclusive of the other pieces.

The belt of truth, which symbolizes our wholehearted attitude to follow the Lord's will, must be put on first because we must settle within our hearts that we WILL follow God's truth regardless of the consequences. To that piece of armor, we attach the breastplate of righteousness, which symbolizes our choice to live righteously, being faithfully obedient to God's Word, His revealed plans and purposes. Our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which signifies not only our understanding of God's truth but an ability to share the message of the gospel (the whole gospel: the gospel of peace *with* God and the gospel of peace *of* God) with others. We must know the message in order to stand firm on the message. The shield of faith is our belief in God and His promises— the faith that we live by day to day, the faith that is useless without works, the faith that is necessary to save our souls. This piece of armor we are to take up above all, for with this faith we are able to extinguish *all* the flaming missiles of the evil one. Last week we studied the helmet of salvation, which is the living hope that sustains us as we persevere toward the goal of our faith, the salvation of our soul. All these elements are necessary to complete our current race of faith and stand unashamed at the judgment seat of Christ.

Let's put the last piece of armor in place. This week we will study the sword of the Spirit, which, as with all the other pieces of the armor, we will see is also a defensive weapon, not an offensive weapon.

Study well this week!

Day One – Knowing the Word of God

This last piece of armor, the sword of the Spirit, completes the full armor of God. At first glance, we may think that the sword indicates our only piece of offensive gear, a weapon that would give us victory if we learn how to wield it while attacking our enemy. However, to understand its usage, we must stay within the context of the whole of our foundational passage, being careful to read out of the text that which was originally written *into* the text.

Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

This is an easy one, what is the sword of the Spirit?

Scripture makes this clear in other places as well. God's Word is His very Spirit; they are one and the same—

II Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Greek word for “inspired” is *theopneustos* (2315), which is the compilation of two words: *theo*, which means “God,” and *pneustos*, which means “breathed” (*pneustos* is the predicate adjective form of the word *pneo*, which means to breathe). Therefore, the literal translation of this word is “God-breathed.”

We have studied in past lessons that the word “spirit” and the word “breath” are the same words in both the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

According to v. 16, how much of Scripture is God breathed?

Therefore, how much of Scripture is God's Spirit?

Let's see this full circle—

- All Scripture is the Word of God—II Timothy 3:16
- All Scripture is God's Spirit—II Timothy 3:16

- All Scripture is about Jesus—Luke 24:27
- Jesus is the Word made flesh—John 1:14
- Jesus is God—John 10:38
- God is Spirit—John 4:24

Now back to our armor, and what you have learned so far—

Can someone put on the belt of truth without possessing knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone wear the breastplate of righteousness without possessing knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone shod their feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace without knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone take up the shield of faith without knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone take, and wear the helmet of salvation without knowledge of God's Word?

So, can someone take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, without possessing knowledge of God's Word?

Now think about that. One must be in possession of knowledge of God's Word to put on and use all pieces of the armor. Therefore, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" must be referring to something beyond simply possessing knowledge of God's Word, for Paul is telling us that we must KNOW the Word of God to USE the Word of God. Knowing and using are two separate things. We'll explore this in more detail, but first, let's look again at what is meant by possessing knowledge of God's Word.

God's Word exhorts us repeatedly to desire knowledge, and He in fact rebukes His people for *not* having knowledge. But knowledge is presented in different ways in Scripture and we need to understand its different meanings if we are to grasp the big picture.

There are essentially two different Greek words used to convey the thought of "knowledge." There is *gnosis* and *epignosis*.

Gnosis (1108) means simply "knowledge" in the sense of knowing something experientially. It is more of a present and fragmentary knowledge that remains topical and one-dimensional.

In addition to the word *gnosis*, the Greeks used the word *epignosis* (1922). *Epignosis* is the compilation of two words: *epi*, which means "upon," denotes an intensification of the word to which it is attached, and the word *gnosis*, which we've just looked at. *Epignosis* is defined as clear and exact knowledge, in that it expresses a more thorough participation in the object of knowledge on the part of the subject. We can translate this as being a *mature* knowledge.

God differentiates between the two types of knowledge, and so must we.

For the rest of your study time today we will be learning about basic knowledge, *gnosis*. Tomorrow we'll concentrate on *epignosis*.

The following verses from the Old Testament (drawing from the Septuagint) use the Greek word, *gnosis*—

Proverbs 18:15

The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.

How are those who seek and acquire knowledge described?

To what is the love of knowledge equated?

Having knowledge is spoken of as a positive thing—

Luke 1:77 (speaking of the message of John the Baptist)

To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins...

II Corinthians 4:6-7

⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."⁷
But we have this treasure...

What is "this treasure"?

And from Peter—

II Peter 1:5-6

⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness...

Do you think God wants us to acquire knowledge?

In particular, notice one aspect of what we are to know—

Ephesians 3:17-19

¹⁷ ...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know [this is the verb form of "gnosis"] the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Knowing the love of Christ *surpasses* knowledge, it does not make all other knowledge void. The knowledge of the love of Christ is superior to other knowledge, for it leads to our being “filled up” to all the fullness of God. Now that is something that I want to know!

Paul mentions love, as it relates to knowledge, in his first letter to the Church at Corinth. Here he warns about the potential danger of knowledge—

I Corinthians 8:1-11

¹ Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. ² If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; ³ but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. ⁴ Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrifice to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, ⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. ⁷ However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. ⁸ But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. ⁹ But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

¹⁰ For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. ¹² And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

¹³ Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.

What knowledge is Paul talking about (v. 1)?

He explains a bit more about what they “know” in v. 4-6. Write it below.

Paul states that “not all men have this knowledge” in v. 7. What knowledge is he referring to?

What men, saved or unsaved? (Refer to v. 13)

Sum up the danger of knowledge, in principle, as Paul has stated in vv. 10-12.

Knowledge—*gnosis*—must exist internally within a personal framework of the outworking of the fruits of the Spirit in order to benefit us in our current race of faith. From this, the Lord begins to bring us into an understanding of *epignosis*, or a *mature* knowledge.

Now another warning regarding *gnosis*, from Paul to Timothy—

I Timothy 6:20-21

²⁰ **O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—²¹ which some have professed and thus gone astray from [Lit., miss the mark concerning] the faith.**

Think deeply on this one. What does Paul mean by the *false* knowledge of “opposing arguments” to “what has been entrusted” to Timothy, concerning the faith? Let’s break it down a bit by looking at another verse from the same letter—

I Timothy 1:11

...according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God [Lit., the gospel of the glory of the blessed God] , with which I have been entrusted.

And more—

II Timothy 2:1-2

¹ **You therefore [Timothy], my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.**

What was Paul entrusted with?

What did he entrust to Timothy?

Paul tells Timothy to guard it (that which is *true* knowledge, context says), and avoid what?

Note what Paul is saying. Timothy is being opposed by arguments concerning knowledge that Paul calls *false*. The arguments are concerning that which has been entrusted to Timothy.

From what you’ve learned so far, what would this false knowledge consist of that would cause some to miss the mark concerning THE faith?

And again, what does Paul tell Timothy to do about this false knowledge?

And for you personally, are you avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is *falsely* called knowledge?

Are you guarding what has been entrusted *to you*?

And just twelve verses later we read—

II Timothy 2:14-15

¹⁴ **Remind them** [faithful men, who will be able to teach others (v. 2)] **of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.** ¹⁵ **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.**

Any thoughts?

See you tomorrow.

Day Two – Epignosis

Make sure that you begin with prayer today. Set aside your concerns and your worries and ready yourself to receive teaching from the Lord. Meditate on the Scriptures and allow God’s Spirit to lead you into all truth.

There is an awesome passage about mature knowledge in the Book of Proverbs. This book contains the writings of King Solomon, to whom God gave “wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore” (I Kings 4:30). The Book of Proverbs, by its own admittance, was written to convey “instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; to give prudence to the naïve, to the youth knowledge and discretion” (Prov. 1:2-4).

Proverbs 2:1-10

¹ **My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you,** ² **make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding;** ³ **for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding;** ⁴ **if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures;** ⁵ **then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover [acquire or find] the knowledge [epignosis, LXX] of God.**

Verses 1 through 4 give direction on how to “discover knowledge.” What are they?

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Solomon wrote this particular Proverb to his son (v. 1). This, then, is the teaching of a father to his son on the particulars of gaining knowledge. We can translate this over to us personally, as a guidebook from our Father to us, His sons (if we allow the child-training [*cf.* Heb.12:7-8]), regarding the discovery of the knowledge of God.

What does this Proverb say to you, personally?

Do you honestly desire *epignosis*? Are you willing to work for it? It is what God wants for you!

I Timothy 2:2-4

² ...that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge [*epignosis*] of the truth.

What does God desire (v. 4)?

What is the *epignosis* of the truth? You may already know, but read on before answering—

Hebrews 10:23-29

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. ²⁶ For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

What is the “confession of our hope”?

In v. 25 the author says we are to do these things for a reason, as we see the day drawing near. What day?

Then he tells us why, because “if we go on sinning willfully” after receiving the *epignosis* of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Did you catch that? *There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*. All that remains is a terrifying expectation of judgment. This person, the one who goes on sinning willfully after receiving the *epignosis* of the truth, has trampled under foot the Son of God, *regarded the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified (this is a saved person he is talking about!) as unclean, and has insulted the Spirit of grace*. Wow, those are strong words. Do you see how the author connects v. 29 with what is said in v. 28? The person who does this is compared to the person who has set aside the Law of Moses.

Epignosis has to do with the Son of God, the blood of the sanctifying covenant, and the Spirit’s work. All things pertaining to the gospel of the glories of Christ, things surrounding His coming back as King.

Read what the prophet Hosea says about Israel, while it is in a state of harlotry regarding its covenantal relationship with God—

Hosea 4:1-6

¹ Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge (*epignosis*, LXX) of God in the land. ² There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. ³ Therefore the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky; and also the fish of the sea disappear. ⁴ Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof; for your people are like those who contend with the priest. ⁵ So you will stumble by day, and the prophet also will tumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. ⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (*gnosis*, LXX). Because you have rejected knowledge (*epignosis*, LXX), I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

What is this passage saying? Does it have any present application?

We are not only exhorted to acquire mature knowledge, we are also told to take this *epignosis* and *apply it*. Again, we see *epignosis* in a relation to love—

Philippians 1:9-10

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in real knowledge (*epignosis*) and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ...

Why are we to apply *epignosis* in love (v. 10b)?

More about mature knowledge from Paul—

Ephesians 1:17-18

¹⁷ ...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling,

what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Colossians 1:8-10

⁸ ...and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit. ⁹ For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge (*epignosis*) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,¹⁰ so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all aspects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God...

Paul is praying for those to whom he has written these letters. What is he praying for? (Eph. 1:17 and Col. 1:9)

The “knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him” is elaborated on in Ephesians 1:18-19. What is it?

Why does Paul want them to have this knowledge (Col. 1:10)?

What should they “increase” in (Col. 1:10)?

We can read exactly where *epignosis* is found—

Colossians 2:2-3

² ...that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (*epignosis*).

Where is *epignosis* found?

Let’s tie together this whole thought concerning knowledge, both *gnosis* and *epignosis*—

II Peter 1:2-10

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God and of Jesus our Lord;³ seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge (*gnosis*);⁶ and in your knowledge (*gnosis*), self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in

your perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge (*epignosis*) of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

How are we to be fruitful in the mature knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 5 –8)?

What will we receive if we practice these things (v. 11)?

I hope you've gained a better grasp of and appreciation for the term *knowledge*, and I most sincerely hope that you desire to acquire it! But most importantly, I hope that you desire to live it. Your seeking should never end, for there can never be an end to the knowledge, *gnosis and epignosis*, of God.

Day Three – Using the Word of God

Pray first.

We've seen how important it is to have knowledge of God's Word. But simply knowing it and quoting it is not enough. Static knowledge—*knowledge by itself*—profits nothing. Concerning that, Scripture is clear—

James 4:17

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

James 1:15b

...and when sin is accomplished [Lit., completed entirely], it brings forth death.

If we are to use the sword in the manner that Paul suggests, we must wield it and move it appropriately. We must accurately handle it to thwart the blows of our enemy (much like the shield of faith). We are in danger of being overcome if we do not learn how to use the sword of the Spirit.

II Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth (Lit. the word of the truth).

What is the word of *the* truth? Paul had already commented on it in his letter to Ephesus—

Ephesians 1:13

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth (Lit., the word of the truth), the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...

The word of truth is the gospel of our salvation! Isn't it great that Scripture interprets itself? And as we know, the Word of God is all about Jesus Christ, who is Himself Salvation.

So how do *handle accurately* the Word? Jesus is our Perfect Example, specifically in the incident that follows—

Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning you'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Jesus responds to the temptations in the same manner each time. What does He use?

Jesus did more than just quote Scripture. He spoke the words He lived and He lived the words He spoke. This is our weapon and this is how we are to use it. When the enemy advances on us and attempts to shake us from our steadfastness, we reestablish our focus with the Word of God. When the world around us appears desirable and we are in danger of conforming to it, we use the Word of God to transform us. When our flesh gains a stronghold, we use the Word of God counteract it. We stay focused, we stand firm, *we overcome*.

Read again the passage from Matthew. Notice Satan's tactics. Jesus is hungry, and Satan offers Him a remedy. Jesus thwarts the attack with the Word of God. Satan then quotes Scripture (inaccurately) to Jesus in order to sway Him, but Jesus rebukes him with more of God's Word (and an *accurate* rendering of God's Word). Finally, Satan shows Him all the glory of the world, and offers it to Him. Jesus refuses with a firm "It is written..." It is the *written* word spoken that has the power here, did you notice that?

How will Satan tempt you? He will because that's what he does. Will he offer to meet one of your physical needs? Maybe he will use Scripture to entice you to succumb your position? Maybe he will offer you power and false glory? Will you recognize the deception? Will you have the sword of the Spirit ready to fend him off? What are your thoughts?

Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

Lesson Ten The Sword of the Spirit

Remember the example of Amalek from Lesson Three?

Exodus 17:8

Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim.

Who came against whom?

Exodus 17:13

So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

How did Joshua overwhelm (which means *he was victorious against*) Amalak?

Amalek, a type of the flesh, is overcome with the sword, a type of the Word of God. The Word of God, God's Spirit, will keep us from being overcome, *if we use it*.

Note from our Ephesians passage what Paul says immediately after mentioning “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—

Ephesians 6:17-18

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

BE ON THE ALERT! With all prayer and petition, praying at all times in the Spirit.

Being *in* the Spirit means being *filled* with the Spirit. It means walking by the Spirit and not the flesh—

Ephesians 5:17-18

¹⁷ So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled [Lit., continually filled] with the Spirit...

What does Paul call someone who doesn't understand what the will of the Lord is?

What does Paul tell that person to do?

This idea of being *filled* takes us right back to a passage we looked at concerning knowledge—

Ephesians 3:17-19

¹⁷ ...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

We must not forget that walking by the Spirit, being filled continually with the Spirit, is an *action*, not just a state of being. It is more than just knowing something, it is doing what you know. James says it best—

James 1:18, 21-25

¹⁸ In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. ²¹ Therefore putting aside all filthiness and wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

What are we to put aside (v. 21)?

How are we to receive the Word (v. 21)?

Specifically, what Word (v. 18)?

Where is the Word when we receive it (v. 21)?

That implies that we need to know it before we use it, doesn't it?

What can the Word do (v. 21)?

Rewrite v. 22.

What does James say about the person who merely hears the Word and doesn't do it (vv. 23-24)?

What happens to the one who looks at the "law of liberty" and "abides by it" (v. 25)?

What does James call him (v. 25)?

And again, what can this Word do if we are "effectual doers" (v. 21)?

What is the goal of our faith (I Pet. 1:9)?

To sum it up:

- Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 8:17).
- Faith without works is dead (Jam. 2:17).
- Be doers of the Word, not hearers only (Jam. 1:22).
- The implanted Word is able to save your soul (Jam. 1:21).
- The outcome and goal of our faith is the salvation of our soul (I Pet. 1:9).

Think on these things and have a great day.

Day Four – On the Defense

We touched a bit about the sword of the Spirit being a defensive weapon, and not an offensive one. By just the context of its usage we can determine that—

Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

Why do we put on the full armor of God (v. 11)?

Does it say anywhere about rushing forward and attacking?

Why do we take up the full armor of God (v. 13)?

And after having done everything, what do we do (v. 13)?

Is this ambiguous in any way?

And elsewhere in Scripture—

James 4:7-8

⁷ **Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.** ⁸ **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.**

The word “resist” in v. 7 is the Greek word *anthistemi* (436), which means to stand against. It is the same word used in Ephesians 6:13.

What will happen when we resist the devil?

But we are told to do something before that. What is it?

We are told to do something after we resist the devil. What is it?

What happened to Jesus when he successfully thwarted Satan’s temptations with the word of God? Read it below—

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

We should desire the company of these angels, not the company of the enemy! But remember that we are in Satan’s domain; he is the ruler of this world. So resist him, and he will flee from you. Our victory rests in overcoming our adversary. Our victory in this battle *today* determines our final victory in that Coming Day. So stand firm, be steadfast, and *keep your armor on*.

Note that in the temptation account Jesus did not *strike* Satan with the Word of God. He defended Himself with it. Although we know that Jesus was capable of delivering a death blow to Satan at that time, He did not. Do you know why? The reason is stated in Hebrews—

Hebrews 2:9

But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

According to this verse, was Jesus above or below the status of angels while on earth?

He was being entirely obedient to the Father when He humbly defended Himself against the devil. He was submitting to the order that God had set. And the same holds true for us. We are not to strike the Lord’s anointed ones, *no matter how wrong they may be*, because the Lord strictly forbids it.

I Samuel 26:7-9

⁷ **So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him.** ⁸ **Then Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time.”** ⁹ **But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be without guilt?”**

Saul had been anointed as the first king of Israel, but due to his disobedience to God, God took His Spirit from him. Saul continued to rule the nation, but was ruthless and evil. He had tried on many occasions to kill David because David had been anointed as king and was to succeed Saul. Saul did not want that to happen. Eventually Saul was killed, and the very man who killed Saul (*an Amalekite*) took his crown and brought it to David, expecting a reward. But David knew what God had said about touching His anointed. David killed the man who killed Saul.

Did David have cause to kill Saul?

Does he kill Saul?

Why doesn't David kill Saul (v. 9)?

Applying this to us today, do we ever have cause to strike Satan?

If we rail against him and strike at him, is it okay? Why or why not?

At the present time, Satan's is God's anointed one (Ezek. 28:14). We are *not* to move offensively toward him; but we are to defend ourselves. The battle is the Lord's and He will strike down His anointed one when it is time.

Let's end this day with an example of what *not to do* from one of Jesus' disciples—

Matthew 26:48-53

⁴⁸ Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him." ⁴⁹ And immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁵⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

(In Luke's account of this same story, we read that Jesus touches the man's ear and heals him.)

Did Jesus approve of what this disciple did?

Why not?

Whose battle was it?

Do you think that the disciple had good intentions in aggressively taking up his sword like that?

But what does God think about that?

That's it for today.

Day Five – No Greater Weapon

This is our last day together! Study well.

There is no greater weapon than the Word of God. Let me emphasize that—there is no greater weapon of defense than God's Word!

Psalm 138:2 A Psalm of David

I will bow down toward Thy holy temple, and give thanks to Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth; for Thou hast magnified Thy word according to all Thy name.

What does God say about His Word?

We read this concerning the Word of God—

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- The Word of God is living.
- The Word of God is active.
- The Word of God is piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit.

God's Word is His Spirit, and His Spirit is life. There is *nothing* more powerful than that.

John 6:63

[Jesus speaking] **“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”**

Who gives life?

What are Jesus' words?

Read a description of Jesus from the book of Hebrews—

Hebrews 1:3

And he is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

How does Jesus uphold all things?

Remember how man first became a living being? Read it again below—

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

What did it take to give man life?

“Breath” and “spirit” are the same words, remember?

Psalms 119:113-116

¹¹³ I hate those who are double-minded, but I love Thy law. ¹¹⁴ Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Thy word. ¹¹⁵ Depart from me, evildoers, that I may observe the commandments of my God. ¹¹⁶ Sustain me according to Thy word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

The power of God's Word will ultimately be the victor over all and God will accomplish it in His timing, in His way. We read about Israel's restoration in the Old Testament, in a vision that is seen and recorded by the Prophet Ezekiel—

Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹ The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. ² And He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. ³ And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, Thou knowest.” ⁴ Again He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’ ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. ⁶ And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the Lord.’” ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.”’” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, and exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will open your grave, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened

your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴ And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it,” declares the Lord.”

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the words “breath,” “Spirit,” and “wind.” Each one of these words is the same Hebrew word *ruach* (07307).

What is the first thing that the Lord tells Ezekiel to do (v. 4)?

What does the word of the Lord say (through Ezekiel) (vv. 4-5)?

What will bring the dry bones back to life (v. 5)?

In v. 8 we read that when the pieces of the body came together, “there was no breath in them.” What does the Lord tell Ezekiel to do (v. 9)?

What does the Lord say (v. 9)?

What causes them (the resurrected Jews from the Old Testament) to come to life?

We get an explanation of the whole vision recorded in vv 11-14. What does the Lord say will bring Israel back to life (v. 14)?

After they come to life, what will God do with them (v. 14)?

Then notice what God says about how He works this. He *speaks it* and then He *does it*. Awesome, isn’t it?

We can also read about the power of the sword in the Book of Revelation—

First at the judgment seat—

Revelation 1:14-16

¹⁴ And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Why is Jesus described as having a “sharp two-edged sword” coming out of his mouth at the judgment seat?

Then at the end of Man’s Day, when Jesus comes down from heaven, to the earth, and casts the devil into the abyss for a thousand years—

Revelation 19:13-20:2

¹³ And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and he will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on his thigh He has a name written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” ¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; ¹⁸ in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.” ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against the army. ²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. ¹ And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...

What is Jesus called (v. 13)?

What will Jesus use the sharp sword that comes from His mouth for (v. 15)?

What else will the sword do (v. 21)?

The Word of God is powerful; the Word of God is just. It is trustworthy, it is true, and *it is life*.

Psalms 12:6-7

⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. ⁷ Thou, O Lord, wilt keep them...

Write down your thoughts.

We've gone forwards and backwards through the Bible, looking at most every book, tying thoughts together, and learning much in the process. There may have been times when you struggled with what you read or heard, and there may have been times when things were not quite clear. However, I trust that each one of you has learned *something* during the course of this study, and I praise God and give glory to Him for that. While we know that God's Word needs to be studied and it takes hard work from each individual, we must also know that *nothing* comes solely from our own efforts—God is the ultimate Teacher.

It is stated at the very beginning of God's Word how we are to partake of His Word and it is a truth that we cannot deny (no matter how much we may dislike it).

Genesis 3:17-19

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

John 6:31-35, 51

³¹ "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said therefore to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever (165): and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Here's your encouragement. You have acquired knowledge. I hope that you have believed what God has said and put it into practice in some way. Maybe you just did it once, or maybe you've allowed God to change a part of yourself that you knew He wanted to change. *Each time you do that it is an act of righteousness, a good work, and that is pleasing to the Lord.*

So I would like to encourage you to examine and think on the things that you have learned, and persevere in acquiring yet more knowledge. And most importantly, continue to be a *doer* of the Word, and not a *hearer only*.

Psalms 119:105

Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.

Learn it and live it.

Believe it and do it.

And do not stop seeking, no matter what!

Appendix

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Old Testament Lexicon¹

Information taken from Power Bible CD software available through
Phil Lindner 1-800-243-7124 or
www.powerbible.com

0127. 'adamah

from 119; soil (from its general redness):--country, earth, ground, husband(-man) (-ry), land.

0119. 'adam

to show blood (in the face), i.e. flush or turn rosy:--be (dyed, made) red (ruddy).

0776. 'erets

from an unused root probably meaning to be firm; the earth (at large, or partitively a land):--X common, country, earth, field, ground, land, X nations, way, + wilderness, world.

0974. bachan

a primitive root; to test (especially metals); generally and figuratively, to investigate:--examine, prove, tempt, try (trial).

01254. bara'

a primitive root; (absolutely) to create; (qualified) to cut down (a wood), select, feed (as formative processes):--choose, create (creator), cut down, dispatch, do, make (fat).

01870. derek

from 1869; a road (as trodden); figuratively, a course of life or mode of action, often adverb:--along, away, because of, + by, conversation, custom, (east-)ward, journey, manner, passenger, through, toward, (high-) (path-)way(-side), whither(-soever).

01869. darak

a primitive root; to tread; by implication, to walk; also to string a bow (by treading on it in bending):--archer, bend, come, draw, go (over), guide, lead (forth), thresh, tread (down), walk.

02706. choq

from 2710; an enactment; hence, an appointment (of time, space, quantity, labor or usage):--appointed, bound, commandment, convenient, custom, decree(-d), due, law, measure, X necessary, ordinance(-nary), portion, set time, statute, task.

¹ It must be noted that the definitions we read of the Greek and Hebrew words are *man-made* definitions, and thus subject to error. The Strong's definitions are extremely useful tools in the study of Scripture, but should never be used in substitution of God's Word. It is always necessary to study the context of each word within God's Word, and study its usage throughout the Scriptures to get its actual meaning.

02710. chaqaq

a primitive root; properly, to hack, i.e. engrave (Judges 5:14, to be a scribe simply); by implication, to enact (laws being cut in stone or metal tablets in primitive times) or (gen.) prescribe:--appoint, decree, governor, grave, lawgiver, note, portray, print, set.

03742. karuwb

of uncertain derivation; a cherub or imaginary figure:--cherub, (plural) cherubims

04428. melek

from 4427; a king:--king, royal.

04427. malak

a primitive root; to reign; inceptively, to ascend the throne; causatively, to induct into royalty; hence (by implication) to take counsel:--consult, X indeed, be (make, set a, set up) king, be (make) queen, (begin to, make to) reign(-ing), rule, X surely.

04473. mimshach

from 4886, in the sense of expansion; outspread (i.e. with outstretched wings):--anointed.

04886. mashach

a primitive root; to rub with oil, i.e. to anoint; by implication, to consecrate; also to paint:--anoint, paint.

04687. mitsvah

from 6680; a command, whether human or divine (collectively, the Law):--(which was) commanded(-ment), law, ordinance, precept.

06680. tsavah

a primitive root; (intensively) to constitute, enjoin:--appoint, (for-)bid, (give a) charge, (give a, give in, send with) command(-er, -ment), send a messenger, put, (set) in order.

04941. mishpat

from 8199; properly, a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or (participant's) divine law, individual or collective), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly, justice, including a participant's right or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style:--+ adversary, ceremony, charge, X crime, custom, desert, determination, discretion, disposing, due, fashion, form, to be judged, judgment, just(-ice, -ly), (manner of) law(-ful), manner, measure, (due) order, ordinance, right, sentence, usest, X worthy, + wrong.

08199. shaphat

a primitive root; to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication, to vindicate or punish; by extension, to govern; passively, to litigate (literally or figuratively):--+ avenge, X that condemn, contend, defend, execute (judgment), (be a) judge(-ment), X needs, plead, reason, rule.

05254. nacad

a primitive root; to test; by implication, to attempt:--adventure, assay, prove, tempt, try.

05377. nasha'

a primitive root; to lead astray, i.e. (mentally) to delude, or (morally) to seduce:--beguile, deceive, X greatly, X utterly.

05713. `edah

feminine of 5707 in its techn. sense; testimony:--testimony, witness.

05707. `ed

contracted from 5749 ; concretely, a witness; abstractly, testimony; specifically, a recorder, i.e. prince:--witness.

05749. `uwd

a primitive root; to duplicate or repeat; by implication, to protest, testify (as by reiteration); intensively, to encompass, restore (as a sort of reduplication):--admonish, charge, earnestly, lift up, protest, call (take) to record, relieve, rob, solemnly, stand upright, testify, give warning, (bear, call to, give, take to) witness.

05769. owlam

or lolam {o-lawm'}; from 5956; properly, concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequently, adverbial (especially with prepositional prefix) always:--alway(-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, (n-))ever(-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+ without end).

05956. alam

a primitive root; to veil from sight, i.e. conceal (literally or figuratively):--X any ways, blind, dissembler, hide (self), secret (thing).

06231. `ashaq

a primitive root; to press upon, i.e. oppress, defraud, violate, overflow:--get deceitfully, deceive, defraud, drink up, (use) oppress((-ion)), -or), do violence (wrong).

06490. piquwd

or piqud {pik-kood'}; from 6485; properly, appointed, i.e. a mandate (of God; plural only, collectively, for the Law):--commandment, precept, statute.

06485. paqad

a primitive root; to visit (with friendly or hostile intent); by analogy, to oversee, muster, charge, care for, miss, deposit, etc.:--appoint, X at all, avenge, bestow, (appoint to have the, give a) charge, commit, count, deliver to keep, be empty, enjoin, go see, hurt, do judgment, lack, lay up, look, make, X by any means, miss, number, officer, (make) overseer, have (the) oversight, punish, reckon, (call to) remember(-brance), set (over), sum, X surely, visit, want.

06601. pathah

a primitive root; to open, i.e. be (causatively, make) roomy; usually figuratively (in a mental or moral sense) to be (causatively, make) simple or (in a sinister way) delude:--allure, deceive, enlarge, entice, flatter, persuade, silly (one).

06666. tsadaqah

From 6663; rightness (abstractly), subjectively (rectitude), objectively (justice), morally (virtue) or figuratively (prosperity):--justice, moderately, right(-eous) (act, -ly, -ness).

06663. tsadaq

a primitive root; to be (causatively, make) right (in a moral or forensic sense):--cleanse, clear self, (be, do) just(-ice, -ify, -ify self), (be turn to) righteous(-ness).

06884. tsaraph

a primitive root; to fuse (metal), i.e. refine (literally or figuratively):--cast, (re-)fine(-er), founder, goldsmith, melt, pure, purge away, try.

06924. qedem

or qedmah {kayd'-maw}; from 6923; the front, of place (absolutely, the fore part, relatively the East) or time (antiquity); often used adverbially (before, anciently, eastward):--aforetime, ancient (time), before, east (end, part, side, -ward), eternal, X ever(-lasting), forward, old, past.

06923. qadam

a primitive root; to project (one self), i.e. precede; hence, to anticipate, hasten, meet (usually for help):--come (go, (flee)) before, + disappoint, meet, prevent.

07307. ruwach

from 7306; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions):--air, anger, blast, breath, X cool, courage, mind, X quarter, X side, spirit((-ual)), tempest, X vain, ((whirl-))wind(-y).

07306. ruwach

a primitive root; properly, to blow, i.e. breathe; only (literally) to smell or (by implication, perceive (figuratively, to anticipate, enjoy):--accept, smell, X touch, make of quick understanding.

07411. ramah

a primitive root; to hurl; specifically, to shoot; figuratively, to delude or betray (as if causing to fall):--beguile, betray, (bow-)man, carry, deceive, throw.

07686. shagah

a primitive root; to stray (causatively, mislead), usually (figuratively) to mistake, especially (morally) to transgress; by extension (through the idea of intoxication) to reel, (figuratively) be enraptured:--(cause to) go astray, deceive, err, be ravished, sin through ignorance, (let, make to) wander.

08199. shaphat

a primitive root; to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication, to vindicate or punish; by extension, to govern; passively, to litigate (literally or figuratively):--+ avenge, X that condemn, contend, defend, execute (judgment), (be a) judge(-ment), X needs, plead, reason, rule.

08269.

from 8323; a head person (of any rank or class):--captain (that had rule), chief (captain), general, governor, keeper, lord, ((-task-))master, prince(-ipal), ruler, steward.

08323. sarar

a primitive root; to have (transitively, exercise; reflexively, get) dominion:--X altogether, make self a prince, (bear) rule.

08398. tebel

from 2986; the earth (as moist and therefore inhabited); by extension, the globe; by implication, its inhabitants; specifically, a partic. land, as Babylonia, Palestine:--habitable part, world.

02986. yabal

a primitive root; properly, to flow; causatively, to bring (especially with pomp):--bring (forth), carry, lead (forth).

08451. towrah

or torah {to-raw'}; from 3384; a precept or statute, especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch:--law.

03384. yarah,

or (2 Chr. 26:15) yara; {yaw-raw'}; a primitive root; properly, to flow as water (i.e. to rain); transitively, to lay or throw (especially an arrow, i.e. to shoot); figuratively, to point out (as if by aiming the finger), to teach:--(+) archer, cast, direct, inform, instruct, lay, shew, shoot, teach(-er,-ing), through.

New Testament Lexicon²

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www.powerbible.com

96. **adokimos**

from 1 (as a negative particle) and 1384; unapproved, i.e. rejected; by implication, worthless (literally or morally):--castaway, rejected, reprobate.

1384. **dokimos**

from 1380; properly, acceptable (current after assayal), i.e. approved:--approved, tried.

1380. **dokeo**

a prolonged form of a primary verb, doko (used only in an alternate in certain tenses; compare the base of 1166) of the same meaning; to think; by implication, to seem (truthfully or uncertainly):--be accounted, (of own) please(-ure), be of reputation, seem (good), suppose, think, trow.

1166. **deiknuo**

a prolonged form of an obsolete primary of the same meaning; to show (literally or figuratively):--shew.

165³ **aion** (This is the noun form of the word; the adjective form of the word is <166> aionios.)

1. Forever, an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity
2. The worlds, universe
3. Period of time, age

The English word “age” is from the Greek word “aion” which means:

1. A lifetime: the period of an individual’s existence on earth
2. A segment of time: such as this present age or the age to come (singular)
3. A very long time: such as the age of mankind
4. Perpetuity of time: eternity (especially if used in plural form)
5. Occasionally “aion” is translated “world” or “universe”

² It must be noted that the definitions we read of the Greek and Hebrew words are *man-made* definitions, and thus subject to error. The Strong’s definitions are extremely useful tools in the study of Scripture, but should never be used in substitution of God’s Word. It is always necessary to study the context of each word within God’s Word, and study its usage throughout the Scriptures to get its actual meaning.

³ There is an Appendix article titled “Eternity—Is it Eternal or Age-lasting” which may be helpful to you in understanding the uses of this word in Scripture. The context is necessary in understanding which definition this word denotes—whether it is used in the sense of eternal or age-lasting.

166⁴ aionios (See the noun form of the word <165> aion.)

1. Without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be
2. Without beginning
3. Without end, never to cease, everlasting

Vines describes this word as meaning a duration, either a) undefined, but not endless or b) undefined because it is endless. This word often is used in the singular form in the NT and would have to do with *an age (age-lasting)*, and would **not** mean eternal.

225. aletheia

from 227; truth:--true, X truly, truth, verity.

227. alethes

from 1 (as a negative particle) and 2990; true (as not concealing):--true, truly, truth.

2990. lanthano

a prolonged form of a primary verb, which is used only as an alternate in certain tenses; to lie hid (literally or figuratively); often used adverbially, unwittingly:--be hid, be ignorant of, unawares.

436. anthistemi

from 473 and 2476; to stand against, i.e. oppose:--resist, withstand.

473. anti

a primary particle; opposite, i.e. instead or because of (rarely in addition to):--for, in the room of. Often used in composition to denote contrast, requital, substitution, correspondence, etc.

2476. histemi

a prolonged form of a primary stao stah'-o (of the same meaning, and used for it in certain tenses); to stand (transitively or intransitively), used in various applications (literally or figuratively):--abide, appoint, bring, continue, covenant, establish, hold up, lay, present, set (up), stanch, stand (by, forth, still, up).

570. apistia

from 571; faithlessness, i.e. (negatively) disbelief (lack of Christian faith), or (positively) unfaithfulness (disobedience):--unbelief.

571. apistos

from 1 (as a negative particle) and 4103; (actively) disbelieving; (passively) untrustworthy (person), or incredible (thing):--that believeth not, faithless, incredible thing, infidel, unbeliever(-ing).

4103. pistos

from 3982; objectively, trustworthy; subjectively, trustful:--believe(-ing, -r), faithful(-ly), sure, true.

3982. peitho

a primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy, to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively, to assent (to evidence

⁴ There is an Appendix article titled "Eternity—Is it Eternal or Age-lasting" which may be helpful to you in understanding the uses of this word in Scripture. The context is necessary in understanding which definition this word denotes—whether it is used in the sense of eternal or age-lasting.

or authority), to rely (by inward certainty):--agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) conflent, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield.

684. apoleia

from a presumed derivative of 622; ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal):--damnable(-nation), destruction, die, perdition, X perish, pernicious ways, waste.

622. apollumi

from 575 and the base of 3639; to destroy fully (reflexively, to perish, or lose), literally or figuratively:--destroy, die, lose, mar, perish.

575. apo

a primary particle; "off," i.e. away (from something near), in various senses (of place, time, or relation; literal or figurative):--(X here-)after, ago, at, because of, before, by (the space of), for(-th), from, in, (out) of, off, (up-)on(-ce), since, with. In composition (as a prefix) it usually denotes separation, departure, cessation, completion, reversal, etc.

3639. olethros

from a primary ollumi (to destroy; a prolonged form); ruin, i.e. death, punishment:--destruction.

863. aphiemi

from 575 and hiemi (to send; an intensive form of eimi, to go); to send forth, in various applications (as follow):--cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.

575. apo

a primary particle; "off," i.e. away (from something near), in various senses (of place, time, or relation; literal or figurative):--(X here-)after, ago, at, because of, before, by (the space of), for(-th), from, in, (out) of, off, (up-)on(-ce), since, with. In composition (as a prefix) it usually denotes separation, departure, cessation, completion, reversal, etc.

906. ballo

a primary verb; to throw (in various applications, more or less violent or intense):--arise, cast (out), X dung, lay, lie, pour, put (up), send, strike, throw (down), thrust.

1093. ge

contracted from a primary word; soil; by extension a region, or the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application):--country, earth(-ly), ground, land, world.

1108. gnosis,

from 1097; knowing (the act), i.e. (by implication) knowledge:--knowledge, science.

1097. ginosko

a prolonged form of a primary verb; to "know" (absolutely) in a great variety of applications and with many implications (as follow, with others not thus clearly expressed):--allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know(-ledge), perceived, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.

1343. dikaiosune

from 1342; equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification:--righteousness.

342. dikaios

from 1349; equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):--just, meet, right(-eous).

1349. dike

right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):--judgment, punish, vengeance.

1347. dikaiosis

from 1344; acquittal (for Christ's sake):--justification.

1344. dikaioo

from 1342; to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent:--free, justify(-ier), be righteous.

1342. dikaios

from 1349; equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):--just, meet, right(-eous).

1349. dike

right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):--judgment, punish, vengeance.

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right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):--judgment, punish, vengeance.

1384. dokimos

from 1380; properly, acceptable (current after assayal), i.e. approved:--approved, tried.

1380. dokeo

a prolonged form of a primary verb, doko of the same meaning; to think; by implication, to seem (truthfully or uncertainly):--be accounted, (of own) please(-ure), be of reputation, seem (good), suppose, think, trow.

1492. eido

a primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent 3700 and 3708; properly, to see (literally or figuratively); by implication, (in the perfect tense only) to know:--be aware, behold, X can (+ not tell), consider, (have) know(-ledge), look (on), perceive, see, be sure, tell, understand, wish, wot. Compare 3700.

1515. eirene

probably from a primary verb eiro (to join); peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity:--one, peace, quietness, rest, + set at one again.

1818. exapatao

from 1537 and 538; to seduce wholly;--beguile, deceive.

1537. ek

a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause; literal or figurative; direct or remote);--after, among, X are, at, betwixt(-yond), by (the means of), exceedingly, (+ abundantly above), for(-th), from (among, forth, up), + grudgingly, + heartily, X heavenly, X hereby, + very highly, in, ...ly, (because, by reason) of, off (from), on, out among (from, of), over, since, X thenceforth, through, X unto, X vehemently, with(-out). Often used in composition, with the same general import; often of completion.

538. apatao

of uncertain derivation; to cheat, i.e. delude;--deceive.

1922. epignosis

from 1921; recognition, i.e. (by implication) full discernment, acknowledgement;--(ac-)knowledge(-ing, -ment).

1921. epiginosko

from 1909 and 1097; to know upon some mark, i.e. recognize; by implication, to become fully acquainted with, to acknowledge;--(ac-, have, take)know(-ledge, well), perceive.

1909. epi

a primary preposition; properly, meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution (with the genitive case), i.e. over, upon, etc.; of rest (with the dative case) at, on, etc.; of direction (with the accusative case) towards, upon, etc.;--about (the times), above, after, against, among, as long as (touching), at, beside, X have charge of, (be-, (where-))fore, in (a place, as much as, the time of, -to), (because) of, (up-)on (behalf of), over, (by, for) the space of, through(-out), (un-)to(-ward), with. **In compounds it retains essentially the same import, at, upon, etc. (literally or figuratively).**

1097. ginosko

a prolonged form of a primary verb; to "know" (absolutely) in a great variety of applications and with many implications (as follow, with others not thus clearly expressed);--allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know(-ledge), perceived, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.

2091. hetoimasia

from 2090; preparation;--preparation.

2090. hetoimazo

from 2092; to prepare;--prepare, provide, make ready.

2092. hetoimos

from an old noun heteos (fitness); adjusted, i.e. ready;--prepared, (made) ready(-iness, to our hand).

2098. euaggelion

from the same as 2097; a good message, i.e. the gospel;--gospel.

2097. euaggelizo

from 2095 and 32; to announce good news ("evangelize") especially the gospel:--declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel).

2095. eu

neuter of a primary eus (good); (adverbially) well:--good, well (done).

32. aggelos

from aggelos (to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an "angel"; by implication, a pastor:--angel, messenger.

2315. theopneustos

from 2316 and a presumed derivative of 4154; divinely breathed in:--given by inspiration of God.

2316. theos

of uncertain affinity; a deity, especially (with 3588) the supreme Divinity; figuratively, a magistrate; by Hebraism, very:--X exceeding, God, god(-ly, -ward).

4154. pneo

a primary word; to breathe hard, i.e. breeze:--blow. Compare 5594.

2518. katheudo

from 2596 and heudo (to sleep); to lie down to rest, i.e. (by implication) to fall asleep (literally or figuratively):--(be a-)sleep.

2596. kata

a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), in varied relations (according to the case (genitive, dative or accusative) with which it is joined):--about, according as (to), after, against, (when they were) X alone, among, and, X apart, (even, like) as (concerning, pertaining to touching), X aside, at, before, beyond, by, to the charge of, (charita-)bly, concerning, + covered, (dai-)ly, down, every, (+ far more) exceeding, X more excellent, for, from ... to, godly, in(-asmuch, divers, every, -to, respect of), ... by, after the manner of, + by any means, beyond (out of measure, X mightily, more, X natural, of (up-)on (X part), out (of every), over against, (+ your) X own, + particularly, so, through(-oughout, -oughout every), thus, (un-)to(-gether, -ward), X uttermost, where(-by), with. In composition it retains many of these applications, and frequently denotes opposition, distribution, or intensity.

2837. koimao

from 2749; to put to sleep, i.e. (passively or reflexively) to slumber; figuratively, to de cease:--(be a-, fall a-, fall on) sleep, be dead.

2749. keimai

of a primary verb; to lie outstretched (literally or figuratively):--be (appointed, laid up, made, set), lay, lie.

2889. kosmos

orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally)):--adorning, world.

3063. loipon

something remaining (adverbially):--besides, finally, furthermore, (from) henceforth, moreover, now, + it remaineth, then.

3809. paideia

tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction:--chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture.

3811. paideuo

from 3816; to train up a child, i.e. educate, or (by implication), discipline (by punishment):--chasten(-ise), instruct, learn, teach.

3816. pais

a boy (as often beaten with impunity), or (by analogy), a girl, and (genitive case) a child; specially, a slave or servant (especially a minister to a king; and by eminence to God):--child, maid(-en), (man) servant, son, young man.

3844. para

a primary preposition; properly, near; i.e. (with genitive case) from beside (literally or figuratively), (with dative case) at (or in) the vicinity of (objectively or subjectively), (with accusative case) to the proximity with (local (especially beyond or opposed to) or causal (on account of):--above, against, among, at, before, by, contrary to, X friend, from, + give (such things as they), + that (she) had, X his, in, more than, nigh unto, (out) of, past, save, side...by, in the sight of, than, (there-)fore, with. In compounds it retains the same variety of application.

3850. parabole

from 3846; a similitude ("parable"), i.e. (symbolic) fictitious narrative (of common life conveying a moral), apothegm or adage:--comparison, figure, parable, proverb.

3846. parabollo

from 3844 and 906; to throw alongside, i.e. (reflexively) to reach a place, or (figuratively) to liken:--arrive, compare.

3844. para

a primary preposition; properly, near; i.e. (with genitive case) from beside (literally or figuratively), (with dative case) at (or in) the vicinity of (objectively or subjectively), (with accusative case) to the proximity with (local (especially beyond or opposed to) or causal (on account of):--above, against, among, at, before, by, contrary to, X friend, from, + give (such things as they), + that (she) had, X his, in, more than, nigh unto, (out) of, past, save, side...by, in the sight of, than, (there-)fore, with. In compounds it retains the same variety of application.

906. ballo

a primary verb; to throw (in various applications, more or less violent or intense):--arise, cast (out), X dung, lay, lie, pour, put (up), send, strike, throw (down), thrust.

4024. perizonnumi

from 4012 and 2224; to gird all around, i.e. (middle voice or passive) to fasten on one's belt (literally or figuratively):--gird (about, self).

4012. peri

properly, through (all over), i.e. around; figuratively with respect to; used in various applications, of place, cause or time (with the genitive case denoting the subject or occasion or superlative point; with the accusative case the locality, circuit, matter, circumstance or general period):--(there-)about, above, against, at, on behalf of, X and his company, which concern, (as) concerning, for, X how it will go with, ((there-, where-)) of, on, over, pertaining (to), for sake, X (e-)state, (as)

touching, (where-)by (in), with. In comparative, it retains substantially the same meaning of circuit (around), excess (beyond), or completeness (through).

2224. zonnumi

to bind about (especially with a belt):--gird.

4100. pisteuo

from 4102; to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), i.e. credit; by implication, to entrust (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ):--believe(-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with.

4102. pistis

from 3982; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself:--assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

3982. peitho

a primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy, to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively, to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty):--agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) conflent, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield.

4105. planao

from 4106; to (properly, cause to) roam (from safety, truth, or virtue):--go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way.

4106. plane

objectively, fraudulence; subjectively, a straying from orthodoxy or piety:--deceit, to deceive, delusion, error.

4151. pneuma

from 4154; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit:--ghost, life, spirit(-ual, -ually), mind.

4154. pneo

a primary word; to breathe hard, i.e. breeze:--blow.

4415. prototokia

from 4416; primogeniture (as a privilege):--birthright.

4416. prototokos

from 4413 and the alternate of 5088; first-born (usually as noun, literally or figuratively):--firstbegotten(-born).

4413. protos

foremost (in time, place, order or importance):--before, beginning, best, chief(-est), first (of all), former.

5088. tikto

a strengthened form of a primary teko tek'-o (which is used only as alternate in certain tenses); to produce (from seed, as a mother, a plant, the earth, etc.), literally or figuratively:--bear, be born, bring forth, be delivered, be in travail.

5043. teknon

a child (as produced):--child, daughter, son.

5046. teleios

complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neuter (as noun, with 3588) completeness:--of full age, man, perfect.

5047. teleiotes

from 5046; (the state) completeness (mentally or morally):--perfection(-ness).

5048. teleioo

from 5046; to complete, i.e. (literally) accomplish, or (figuratively) consummate (in character):--consecrate, finish, fulfil, make) perfect.

5056. telos

from a primary tello (to set out for a definite point or goal); properly, the point aimed at as a limit, i.e. (by implication) the conclusion of an act or state (termination (literally, figuratively or indefinitely), result (immediate, ultimate or prophetic), purpose); specially, an impost or levy (as paid):--+ continual, custom, end(-ing), finally, uttermost.

5265. hupodeo

from 5259 and 1210; to bind under one's feet, i.e. put on shoes or sandals:--bind on, (be) shod.

5259. hupo

a primary preposition; under, i.e. (with the genitive case) of place (beneath), or with verbs (the agency or means, through); (with the accusative case) of place (whither (underneath) or where (below) or time (when (at))):--among, by, from, in, of, under, with. In the comparative, it retains the same general applications, especially of inferior position or condition, and specially, covertly or moderately.

1210. deo

a primary verb; to bind (in various applications, literally or figuratively):--bind, be in bonds, knit, tie, wind.

5287. hupostasis

from a compound of 5259 and 2476; a setting under (support), i.e. (figuratively) concretely, essence, or abstractly, assurance (objectively or subjectively):--confidence, confident, person, substance.

5259. hupo

a primary preposition; under, i.e. (with the genitive case) of place (beneath), or with verbs (the agency or means, through); (with the accusative case) of place (whither (underneath) or where (below) or time (when (at))):--among, by, from, in, of, under, with. In the comparative, it retains the same general applications, especially of inferior position or condition, and specially, covertly or moderately.

2476. histemi

a prolonged form of a primary stao stah'-o (of the same meaning, and used for it in certain tenses); to stand (transitively or intransitively), used in various applications (literally or figuratively):--abide, appoint, bring, continue, covenant, establish, hold up, lay, present, set (up), stanch, stand (by, forth, still, up).

5463. chairō

a primary verb; to be "cheer"ful, i.e. calmly happy or well-off; impersonally, especially as salutation (on meeting or parting), be well!--farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hall, joy(- fully), rejoice.

5546. Christianos

from 5547; a Christian, i.e. follower of Christ!--Christian.

5547. Christos

from 5548; anointed, i.e. the Messiah, an epithet of Jesus!--Christ.

5548. chrīo

probably akin to 5530 through the idea of contact; to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service!--anoint.

5590. psuche

from 5594; breath, i.e. (by implication) spirit, abstractly or concretely (the animal sentient principle only; thus distinguished on the one hand from 4151, which is the rational and immortal soul; and on the other from 2222, which is mere vitality, even of plants: these terms thus exactly correspond respectively to the Hebrew 5315, 7307 and 2416):--heart (+ -ily), life, mind, soul, + us, + you.

5594. psucho

a primary verb; to breathe (voluntarily but gently, thus differing on the one hand from 4154, which denotes properly a forcible respiration; and on the other from the base of 109, which refers properly to an inanimate breeze), i.e. (by implication, of reduction of temperature by evaporation) to chill (figuratively):--wax cold.

Eternity—Is it Eternal or is it Age-lasting?

By Cindy Zeigler

There is no single word in the Greek language that expresses the idea of eternity. The writers of the New Testament, however, had several different ways they could indicate the thought of *eternity* in the Greek language. The Greek mind thought in terms of “ages” —

- the past ages (**plural** [eternity past]),
- the present age (**singular** [Man's Day]),
- the age to come (**singular** [the Messianic Era]), or
- the ages of the ages (**plural** [eternity future]).

Eternal

The idea of “eternity” (a noun) or “eternal” (an adjective form of the noun) can be expressed in one of three different ways in the Greek text of the New Testament:

1) One way in which the Greek writers could express “eternity” or the idea of “eternal” was through a double use of the Greek noun *aion*, with the noun used in a **plural form** both times (each use of the noun preceded by the definite article “the” and introduced by the preposition *eis* [meaning “into,” “unto,” or “with respect to”]). Thus, the Greek phrase *eis tous aionas ton aionion* would be literally translated “unto [or, ‘with respect to’] the ages of the ages,” and is often translated in English texts “forever and ever.” The use of a plural form of the noun *aion* (i.e., *aionas*) duplicated in this manner would indicate “endless ages,” or “eternity.” Two of the passages which use this phrase are Hebrews 13:21 and I Peter 4:11.

Hebrews 13:21 “...equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which ispleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

I Peter 4:11 “Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoeverserves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

2) Another way in which the writers of the New Testament expressed the idea of “eternity” (noun) or “eternal” (the adjective form of the noun) was through simply using the plural form of the noun, *aionas*. In this form of usage, the plural noun would be preceded by the preposition *eis* “with respect to” and the definite article *tous* “the” — *eis tous aionas*, literally meaning *with respect to the ages*, and translated “forever.” This would be a somewhat shortened form of the preceding double use of the plural noun *aionas* and would express, essentially, the same thing as above. Two examples are found in Romans 9:5 and Romans 11:36:

Romans 9:5 “whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

Romans 11:36 “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

3) And yet another way in which the New Testament expressed the idea of “eternity” or “eternal” is through *the context of the passage* wherein the idea of eternity is expressed. Although *the singular form of the noun or adjective is used*, the context itself must be relied upon to reveal that the idea of plural ages (eternity) was intended in the text. Examples of this are found in the following passages:

I Peter 1:24 For, “ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER [singular form].” And this is the word which was preached to you.

Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal [singular form] God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever [plural form]. Amen.

In these instances, the use of the word *aion* or a form thereof, is singular; yet it is obvious that the intention of the use of the word is eternal—it is the context which makes it obvious. In the first example of the use of the singular form, “but the Word of the Lord abides forever” is juxtaposed to things in nature which obviously do not abide forever. And in the second example of the use of the singular form, “eternal God” is self-evident—God is eternal.

Age-Lasting

However, in many instances in the New Testament the *singular form* of the word *aion* was intended to indicate the idea of a *singular age*, or *age-lasting*, as opposed to the idea of a *plurality of ages* or *eternity*.

One way in which the idea of a singular age can be seen, again, is through the *context of the passage*. The context of the passage itself can indicate that “age-lasting” was the idea intended when the Greek writers used the singular form of the word *aion* (even though the English translators have mis-translated the word, thereby indicating plural ages). Some good examples of this problem with the English translation can be seen in the following passages.

Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE”; 6 just as He says also in another passage, “THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER [*aion*] ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.”

Mark 10:17 And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and began asking Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal [*aionios*] life?”

The context of both of these passages would reveal that the subject matter at hand would be dealing with *the age to come*, not with *eternal ages*. In the first passage, Jesus will be a King/priest after the order of Melchizedek, during the coming age. The passages, which deal with Christ as a King/Priest, deal with the age to come—or the Millennial Era—not with the eternal ages. This is true throughout all of Scripture.

In the next passage, Mark chapter ten, a man asks Jesus about how to receive his inheritance in the age (*aion*, singular) to come. The fact that the inheritance—not the free gift—being the issue at hand is one of the indicating factors that the passage is dealing with the singular age to come, not with eternal life. The man asked what *he must do*; and Jesus spoke of obedience. Jesus' answer had to do with things beyond simple faith, relative to eternal salvation. His answer had to do with things concerning the man's work performed through faithful obedience. Note that "faith" is involved throughout, though connected with works (*cf.* Heb. 11:6). The inheritance in the coming age (singular age) has to do with a reward for obediently serving the Lord (*cf.* Col. 3:23-25). Keep the man's question within the context of Jesus' answer and it becomes easy to see that the free gift of *eternal* life is **not** the issue at hand, but rather life in the age to come. The conclusion of the passage leaves nothing to question.

Mark 10:29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age [aion] to come, eternal [aionios] life.

Here the translators correctly translated the singular noun, "and in the age to come"; but when it came to the exact use of the same singular noun forming an adjective, for unknown reasons, they indicated a plural use, "eternal life." Obviously the noun and its adjective form hold exactly the same intent. It should read, "and in the age to come, age-lasting life."

Salvation—Eternal or Age-Lasting

As pertaining to salvation, the Greek New Testament writers dealt with different aspects of salvation. Sometimes they dealt with salvation with respect to eternity, and other times they dealt with salvation with respect to the coming age.

- The former (salvation with respect to eternity) would deal with the free gift of eternal life; the latter (salvation with respect to the age to come) would have to do with the prize, or the inheritance, in the coming age.
- The former necessitates faith based on the finished work of Jesus Christ, with no works involved; the latter necessitates faithfully *working out* one's own salvation with fear and trembling.
- The former has to do with the present age extending into the ages (plural) to come; the latter has all to do with our actions during the present age (singular), with the result of these actions having to do with the age to come (the Messianic Era).

The key to properly interpreting which aspect of salvation any given passage is dealing with is determining if the passage is dealing with faith alone based on the finished work of Jesus Christ (pertaining to the free gift), or if the passage is dealing with an individual's works, emanating out of faithfulness, connected with the reward of the inheritance. If the passage deals with faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and the gift of eternal life, then the passage is dealing with the salvation which we presently possess and the ages (plural) to come □ the free gift. But if the passage is dealing with an individual's actions, connected with loss or gain, then it is dealing with a salvation which is yet to be revealed and the reward in the age (singular) to come. One is eternal; the other is age-lasting.

The most concise example of a passage which deals with faith and the gift (of eternal life) is found in Acts chapter sixteen.

Acts 16:30 “...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved...”

Due to the fact that this passage has to do with faith in Jesus Christ and nothing additional, it has to do with *eternal* salvation — life which begins at the moment of faith and extends into the ages (plural) to come.

But there are many passages in the New Testament, which deal with the future salvation, the salvation which is to be inherited (Heb. 1:14); this is the salvation which, has to do with the coming age, and the kingdom of Jesus Christ (*cf.* I Pet. 1:1-10). Along with the noted cross references, Matthew 19:29, Galatians 6:8, and I Timothy 6:12 are a few of the passages dealing with life in the age (singular) to come.

Yet, woefully, the translators translated the singular form of the Greek word into the English as “eternal” in these passages, which has contributed to confusion among Christians concerning salvation. Notice *works* connected with *aionios* life in these passages.

Matthew 19:29 “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal [*aionios* (lit., age-lasting)] life.”

Galatians 6:8 “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal [*aionios* (lit., age-lasting)] life.”

I Timothy 6:12 “Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal [*aionios* (lit., age-lasting)] life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

These passages are dealing with works, not faith alone.

In conclusion, there are two aspects of salvation that must be understood:

- 1) There is an aspect of salvation which we presently possess through faith alone—the free gift for all of eternity, and
- 2) There is an aspect of salvation towards which we are to strive—the potential profit or loss connected with the coming age.

This confusion must be set straight if we are to properly understand the intent of the inspired New Testament writers concerning our salvation.

The Book of Ephesians

Chapter 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

8 which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him

11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of yoursalvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

Chapter 2

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

11 Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—

12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household,

20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Chapter 3

- 1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
- 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;
- 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.
- 4 And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,
- 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;
- 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,
- 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.
- 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,
- 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things;
- 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.
- 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.
- 13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.
- 14 For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,
- 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
- 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;
- 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
- 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.
- 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
- 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 4

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love,

3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

8 Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

17 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart;

19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,

22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE of you, WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.

26 **BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN**; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

28 Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Chapter 5

- 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;
- 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.
- 3 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints;
- 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
- 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
- 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon those who are sons of disobedience.
- 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;
- 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light
- 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
- 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
- 11 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;
- 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
- 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.
- 14 For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”
- 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,
- 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
- 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,
- 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
- 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
- 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
- 22 wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respects her husband.

Chapter 6

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise),

3 THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

9 And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.

11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

22 And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible.



