

Section 1; **THE HABITATION** Chapter One
“*That We Should Be...*” Ephesians 1:1-12

THE HABITATION

(*A Verse by Verse Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians*)
By Leroy Surface



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THE HABITATION

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Foreword

Just as the apostle Paul reveals the “*foundation*” of the church in His letter to the Romans, in his letter to the Ephesians he reveals the “*house*” that God builds **on** the foundation. It is a “*holy temple*” that Paul calls “*an habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Ephesians 2:21:22). It is “*fitly framed*” (put together) by the powerful working of God in every child of God who has received the Holy Ghost. It should be noted that while the term “*Holy Spirit*” is used only twice in the book of Ephesians and the term “*Holy Ghost*” is never used, there are twelve references to “*Spirit*” in this letter that refer to the Holy Ghost. In fact, this letter to the Ephesians reveals more about the purpose and working of the Holy Ghost in the children of God than any of the other New Testament epistles. When I began writing this commentary, I assumed I had a good comprehension of its message. I can tell you today that my “*journey*” through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians has been one of the truly wonderful and enlightening experiences of my lifetime. I can well understand Paul’s prayer for the believers at Ephesus that God would give them “*...the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling...*” (Ephesians 1:17-18). According to Paul’s words in Ephesians 1:13-14, he wrote this epistle to those faithful “*saints in Ephesus,*” who both trusted in Christ and had received the Holy Ghost but had no comprehension of *why* God had given them His Spirit. If Paul’s “*prayer*” is not answered for us in this twenty-first century, we will never know those things that Paul calls “*the mystery of Christ.*”

My first “*sensation*” as I began to “*see*” was that I had entered into a room filled with all manner of good things. I spent days examining the things I was seeing in this first chapter before I noticed that there was another door in the room. I walked through that door into a second room that was filled with treasures that were even more wonderful than the first. I then noticed a third door that opened to still another room that was filled with even greater and more wonderful treasures beyond anything I had ever seen. I spent several weeks searching through these rooms before I discovered there was yet another door, and when I stepped through that door, I found there were no more walls. It seemed I had stepped into eternity with treasures too wonderful to describe. It was then that I began to truly understand the words of Paul when he spoke of the “*...unsearchable riches of Christ*” (Ephesians 3:8).

My next sensation as I began to see further was that I was seeing a series of “*mountain peaks*,” which I will call “*pinnacles*.” There are six of these “*pinnacles*” in the book of Ephesians, all of which are different views of the same “*mountain*.” One of these “*pinnacles*” will be found in each of the six chapters of Paul’s letter. Even though they are different views of the same mountain, the glory seems to increase as we see them over and over again. Perhaps the key to this letter is found in Ephesians 1:12: “*...that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.*” The remainder of the letter is dedicated to revealing what these people “*were*” and all God did through the “*working of His mighty power*” that they should “*be*.” I pray that God will give me utterance to put into words those things I have seen, and write them in this commentary for the edification and understanding of all who read it. I pray that God will enlighten the eyes of the reader to see and understand in their heart that which the apostle Paul calls “*the mystery of Christ.*” May God bless you as you *begin the journey*.

Table of Contents

1:	That We Should Be	1
2:	The Fullness of Him	9
3:	His Workmanship	16
4:	An Habitation of God	24
5:	The Mystery of Christ	27
6:	Filled into All Fullness	32
7:	The Fullness of Christ	38
8:	The Vanity of the Mind	47
9:	The Christian Walk	53
10:	His Glorious Bride	62
11:	Various Admonitions	66
12:	The Church Triumphant	68

Introduction to Section One

Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians by giving a litany of things God has done, beginning “*before the foundation of the world*” and culminating on the Day of Pentecost, to have a people whose very existence on earth would be “*to the praise of His glory.*” Paul leaves no doubt concerning who those people are in the **twelfth** verse of this chapter that says “...*that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.*” These words designate those Jews who followed Jesus in life, believed upon Him in resurrection, and were baptized with the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. They were about a hundred and twenty in number, plus those who also received the Holy Ghost for some time afterward. Paul included himself in this number as “*one born out of due time*” (I Corinthians 15:8). These were the ones who “*turned the world upside down*” in their generation. We should keep in mind as we study these first twelve verses that Paul is specifically speaking of the things God has done that He might have a people among the Gentiles just like those who “...*first trusted in Christ.*”

“**That We Should BE...**”

1-2 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

In his introduction, Paul gives a specific “*address*” for his letter: it is “*to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.*” This epistle is not written to unbelievers, or to casual believers. It is to “*saints* (holy ones),” and to the “*faithful in Christ Jesus.*” The precious “*pearls*” of the gospel cannot be given to any other.

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

“...blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” Paul seems to begin by pronouncing a “*blessing*” upon God Himself. It is, however, a term of adoration, for the word “*blessed*” in this usage means “*adorable.*”

“...who hath blessed us...” In this phrase, the word “*blessed*” is translated from the Greek word “*eulogeo,*” which Strong’s Greek Dictionary defines as “*to speak well of, i.e. (religiously) to bless.*” It is the same Greek word our English word “*eulogy*” is derived from, and it was translated in the New Testament as both “*blessed*” and “*praise.*”

“...with all spiritual blessings...” The phrase “*all spiritual blessings*” refers to all the redemptive promises that were spoken by all the prophets of God from the beginning until the death and resurrection of Christ. Most special among those promises are the covenant blessings that God “*swore by Himself*” to give to Abraham and “*his seed,*” saying, “*...in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed; thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*” This is the covenant of blessing that cannot fail for those who come to Christ “...*to lay hold on the hope that is set before them* (Hebrews 6:18).”

“...in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...” The promised blessings “*in heavenly places*” are all spiritual and are fulfilled upon a “*spiritual people.*” God sought to bless the children of Israel with these same blessings (“...*ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation...*” Exodus 19:5-6), but could not because they were “*carnal*” (Deuteronomy 5:29), and “*sold under sin*” (Romans 7:14). All these blessings are presently upon those who “*sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:6)

Section 1; THE HABITATION Chapter One
"That We Should Be..." Ephesians 1:1-12

This is only the third verse of this epistle, yet Paul has already used the term “*in Christ*” two times. He will either use or imply these words ten times in the first twelve verses of this chapter. “*In Christ*” is certainly a major theme of this epistle because He is the dwelling place of the children of God. They have no other dwelling. Psalms ninety one (“*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high...*”) is prophetic of those who would, under the New Covenant, “*dwell in Christ*” (“*Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation...*” Psalms 91:9). There are several things we need to understand about that wonderful secret place (in Christ) that is prepared for the believer.

The apostle John speaks to this issue in I John 3:5-6: “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*” In **verse five** there are two defining statements: “*He was manifested to take away our sins*” and “*In Him is no sin.*” If we “*know*” what John “*knew*,” we know that Jesus “*took our sin away.*” We have no sin, and in Him is no sin. It follows that “*whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.*” It is an absolute statement of truth. The next phrase, “*whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him,*” establishes that those who “*continue in sin* (Romans 6:1-2)” are not “*in Christ,*” for “*in Him is no sin.*”

In the **fifteenth chapter of John**, Jesus spoke concerning those who would “*abide in Him*” saying, “*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing* (John 15:5),” and again, “*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*” (John 15:7). The “*secret*” to a life filled with the blessings and goodness of God is to “*abide in His Son.*” Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10 that we are “*created in Christ Jesus.*” We are “*born again*” of the Spirit of God “*in Christ.*” The secret is simply to “*continue*” in Christ, for that is where our life is found.

“...who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...” Every spiritual blessing, for the children of God, is found only in Christ Jesus. It should be noticed, however, that these “*blessings*” are “*in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*” Paul tells us in Colossians 3:1 to “*...seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*” The “*things above,*” which we are told to seek, are found only “*in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*” Paul will reveal in this epistle how God raises believers up to “*sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:6). “*All spiritual blessings,*” that is, all the promises of God are set before the believer as encouragement to “*seek those things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God,*” for it is there, and only there, that God has blessed us.

Paul writes this letter from the viewpoint of one who “*sits in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” and enjoys the “*spiritual blessings*” that are provided for the children of God. In Ephesians 3:8 he speaks of them as “*the unsearchable riches of Christ.*” They are provided for every believer, but not every believer partakes of them. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:9-10, “*...as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*” This text is a direct reference to the “*spiritual blessings*” that await us “*in heavenly places.*” We may hear about them; we may read what Paul said concerning them; but no one can comprehend these marvelous blessings unless the Spirit reveals them, and certainly no one can possess them unless the Holy Ghost is working in them.

Beginning in **verse four** and continuing through the **eleventh verse**, Paul describes the blessings God bestowed upon those “*who first trusted in Christ (twelfth verse)*” to raise them up to sit with Christ in heavenly places. These same blessings are set before those in every generation who “*also trust in Christ.*”

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

“...**chosen us in Him...**” The church, that is, the redeemed whether Jew or Gentile, was chosen “*in Christ*” long before the nation of Israel was chosen. We were “*chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.*”

“...**before the foundation of the world...**” It is important to note that Paul did not say, as some think, “...*before the creation of the earth.*” The word “*world,*” which he speaks of here, is translated from the Greek word “*kosmos,*” which is properly defined as “*orderly arrangement.*” In its broadest sense it speaks of the entire universe and all that is in it. It was created and arranged by God to operate in perfect order and “*harmony*” and **not** “*chaos,*” hence the definition “*orderly arrangement.*” The narrow sense of the word speaks of the “*world*” that had its beginning with the transgression of Adam and has been under the rule of our adversary, Satan, ever since. Paul calls it “*this present evil world*” (Galatians 1:3), which is inherently temporary. It is also the “*orderly arrangement*” of fallen man, which is ending in “*chaos*” and **not** “*harmony.*” The “*world*” had its beginning with the entrance of sin and will end with the judgment at the “*great white throne.*”

Paul’s reference to “*Before the foundation of the world*” speaks of the period of man’s innocence in the paradise of God. God had created man in His image and in His likeness. The “*breath of God* (the Holy Ghost)” was the life of man. Man was “*crowned (adorned) with glory and honor*” and he was “*holy and without blame*” until the moment sin entered his heart and nature through disobedience. Time began with the entrance of sin and the founding of “*this present evil world.*” Four thousand years passed before the **Son of God** was born of a woman. He, though made in the “*likeness of men*” (Philippians 2:7), was the “*image of the invisible God*” (Colossians 1:13-15). He came into the world to redeem us from the world and restore us to His likeness. Everything God had “*foreknown*” and “*predestined,*” He had also “*created*” in Adam. In redemption God would have exactly what He purposed from the beginning: a “*new creation,*” created in His image and after His likeness. Thus we are “*chosen in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him (God the Father) in love.*”

“...**that we should be holy and without blame before him in love...**” If God chose a people in Christ that would be holy and without blame before Him in love, then the existence of such a people must have been the purpose and the result of the redemption. Paul confirms this saying, “*And you...hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight*” (Colossians 1:21-22).

“...**before him in love...**” The term “*before him*” is translated from the Greek word *katenōpion* and means “*directly in front of.*” The phrases “*in his sight*” and “*in his presence*” also come from this same Greek word. These phrases do not speak of a special way that God “*views*” us, but in fact they speak of us standing directly in front of God.

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

“...**having predestinated us...**” The first **twelve** *verses* of this epistle are among the most powerful ever written concerning those things Jesus accomplished in His death, burial, and resurrection for the redemption of fallen man. In these twelve verses we find the only two instances where the word “*predestinated*” is used in the Bible. The word “*predestinate*” is also used only two times in the Bible: “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called...*” (Romans 8:29-30). There was never an individual born into this world (a descendent of fallen

Section 1; THE HABITATION Chapter One
"That We Should Be..." Ephesians 1:1-12

Adam) that was predestined to either eternal life or eternal damnation. Neither does God “foreknow” that any individual will ultimately be damned. This is proven in Romans 8:29, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...*” He “foreknew” nothing else. All that He foreknew was man in His image and likeness. When sin entered through Adam’s transgression, God’s “foreknowledge” did not change; He would yet have a creation (a “new” creation; II Corinthians 5:17) in the image and likeness of His Son. This is what He predestined. In this fifth verse of Ephesians chapter one, God predestined that He would receive many sons through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus. Isaiah prophesied this about seven hundred years before Calvary. “*He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken*” (Isaiah 53:8). Jesus, being “cut off out of the land of the living,” died without a generation to declare. He had no natural seed, but two verses later Isaiah says, “*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand*” Isaiah 53:10). Jesus died without seed, but He was raised again with much seed.

A thousand years before Calvary, David prophesied of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in the twenty-second chapter of Psalms. In the last two verses of the chapter, he prophesied the result of Calvary: “*A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness* (preach the gospel of Christ-crucified; Romans 3:25-26) *unto a people that shall be born (born again), that he hath done this*” (Psalms 22:30-31). These prophecies of our redemption and the New Creation, which were given by David and Isaiah as well as other Old Testament prophets of God, all issued from the “foreknowledge of God.” This is what He also “predestined” in Christ Jesus.

“...according to the good pleasure of his will...” In this verse we also see the first of fifteen instances where the words “according to” are used in this letter. These are translated from the Greek word “*kata*,” which means “down” but is also translated “after,” “after the manner,” “against,” “concerning,” “like as,” and numerous other words and phrases. The meaning of the word seems to vary according to the context in which it is used. For example, the phrase “*walk after (kata) the Spirit*” in Romans 8:1 indicates either the “source” or the “manner” of the walk. In this verse the phrase is “...predestined us...**according to the good pleasure of His will.**” What He “predestined” is the same as “*the good pleasure of His will*,” which, in this verse, is “*the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself*.” It seems to this writer that the phrase used before the words “*according to (kata)*” must equal the phrase used afterwards. This is most important to understand if we are to see the power of the revelation that was given to Paul.

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

It is “...to the praise of the glory of His grace” that we are the children of God. It is in His grace that He has “made us accepted in the beloved (in Christ).” It is of the utmost importance that we understand the phrase “made us accepted.” Many have ignorantly believed, to their own hurt, that sinners are accepted in Christ. The truth is, according to Romans 6:3-6, sinners may be “*baptized into His death*” where the “old man of sin” is “*crucified with Christ*,” but the one who continues in sin is never “*in Christ*.” Our entrance into Christ is through His death. The phrase “made us accepted” is translated from two Greek words. The first is “*charitoo*,” which means “*to grace*.” The second is “*hemas*,” which simply means “*us*.” This verse actually says, “...to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein **He hath graced us in the beloved.**”

“Graced in the beloved” The apostle John recalls the “glory” of the Son of God in John 1:14 saying, “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only*

Section 1; THE HABITATION Chapter One
"That We Should Be..." Ephesians 1:1-12

begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." In describing the "glory" of the Son of God, John simply says he was "full of grace and truth." Two verses later (John 1:16) John says, "*And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*" Jesus was "full of grace and truth," and it is out of His fullness the children of God are filled. John explains it with the phrase "grace for grace," meaning from the Greek wording "grace opposite grace." For every attribute of grace in Jesus Christ there is a corresponding attribute of grace in the children of God. It is in the "glory of His grace" that the believer is "graced in the beloved."

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

The definition of the word "redemption" is "ransom in full." Christ's blood is the price of our redemption. To fully understand redemption, however, we must go to other places where Paul gives more detail. Redemption frees a person from one thing and transfers them to another. For example, in Colossians 1:13-14, Paul says it is the Father "...who hath **delivered us from** the power of darkness, and hath **translated us into** the kingdom of his dear Son: *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*" In Titus 2:14, Paul says it is Jesus Christ "...who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us from all iniquity, and purify** (us) **unto Himself** a peculiar people." In I Peter 1:18-19, Peter tells us it is the "precious blood of Christ" that has redeemed us "**from** your (and our) *vain conversation* (behavior)...." Having been "delivered," we are "free" from the "power of darkness;" having been "redeemed," we are "free" from "all iniquity" and "vain behavior," according to the words of the apostle.

"...the forgiveness of sins..." The word "forgiveness" is translated from the Greek word "aphesis," which means "freedom." New Covenant forgiveness is far more than that of the Old Covenant. Old Covenant forgiveness came with a command to "go and sin no more" (The entire ministry of Jesus before Calvary was yet under the Old Covenant). New Covenant forgiveness comes with redemption "from" sin. We are delivered; we are free indeed! Free to serve God because of the "riches of His grace" that is ours "in the beloved."

"Freedom from Sin" The Greek word "aphesis," which means "freedom," is used throughout the New Testament. It is translated as both "liberty" and "deliverance" in Luke 4:18 and as "remission" in nine out of ten usages in the New Testament. Every place the English word "forgiveness" is used in the New Testament it is translated from the Greek word "aphesis," which without exception means "freedom." Understanding the usage of this single Greek word in the gospel gives a much clearer understanding of the power and absolute nature of the gospel to "free the people (Romans 6:6-7)" from sin.

"...according to the riches of his grace..." The words "according to" are used in the last phrase of this seventh verse, indicating that "the riches of His grace" is the source of our forgiveness and the cause of our freedom from sin. Notice that the sixth verse speaks of the "...*glory of His grace,*" and the seventh verse speaks of the "...*riches of His grace.*" Peter gives a powerful insight into both the "riches" and the "glory" of "His grace" when he says, "...*of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*" (I Peter 1:10-11). A prime example of what was revealed to the prophets is found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah where he describes perfectly "the sufferings of Christ" and in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah where he describes "the glory that should (would) follow," which began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The things that Isaiah and other prophets of God saw were so wonderfully glorious to them that they "searched diligently...what, or what manner of time..." was signified in their visions. They "inquired" and "searched diligently." They questioned, "...what is this..., and when shall it be?" Peter said that God revealed to them "...that

Section 1; THE HABITATION Chapter One
"That We Should Be..." Ephesians 1:1-12

not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (I Peter 1:12).

"His grace" is manifested both in "the sufferings of Christ" and "the glory that follows" for all who trust in Him. It is in "the riches of His grace" that we are forgiven, justified and sanctified in His sufferings. It is in "the glory of His grace" that we are "graced (filled with grace) in the beloved" and "filled with His glory" as on the Day of Pentecost.

8-9 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

These verses should literally be translated "*Who hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, to make known unto us the mystery of His will....*"

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

“...all things...” A relatively simple search of any Greek lexicon of the Bible will confirm that the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament never use a word for "things." The gospel of Jesus Christ is not about the redemption, reconciliation, giving, or receiving of "things." It is about the redemption and reconciliation of lost people, lost souls. Paul is not saying that the "mystery of His will" is to gather together "all things" into Christ but to gather "all peoples" (both Jews and Gentiles; Ephesians 2:13-18) into Christ. It must also be noted that Paul did not say that everyone will be "gathered together" in salvation, even though it is God's will that it would be so. Jesus Christ died for "all," and it is the Father's will to "gather all into Christ." This is what Paul is actually saying, and this is why we must preach the gospel to "every creature (all people)."

Verse ten then reveals what the "mystery of His will" is. It is that "...He might gather together in one, *all...in Christ....*" This is spoken of in other places as "reconciliation." II Corinthians 5:19 says, "...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself..." and in Colossians 1:21-22 we read, "...and you, that were sometime (at one time) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight."

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

“...in whom...” Notice how Paul repeatedly speaks of that which is "in Christ." In **verse three** we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings...in Christ." In **verse four** we are "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." In **verse six** we are "accepted in the beloved." **Verse seven;** "In whom we have redemption through His blood...." **Verse ten** reveals the "will of God" to "gather all...in Christ," and **verse eleven states** "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Everything we need is "in Christ Jesus." Everything He accomplished for us through His death, burial, and resurrection is "in" Him, "by" Him, "through" Him, and "for" Him. He "worketh all things (everything He does) after the counsel of His own will...."

“...we have obtained an inheritance...” In this verse Paul is referring back to his statement in **verse three** that says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The magnitude of that which is expressed in the words "...all spiritual blessings..." is beyond the capacity of the human mind to comprehend. In Ephesians 3:8, Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Certainly, as Paul said in I Corinthians 2:9-10, "...eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God

Section 1; THE HABITATION Chapter One
"That We Should Be..." Ephesians 1:1-12

hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit...." Not only is our "inheritance" revealed to us by the Holy Ghost, it is also "...freely given to us of God (I Corinthians 2:12)" by the working of that same Spirit. It was due to the inheritance, which the early church obtained through the working of the Holy Ghost in them, that they "*turned the world upside down*" for Jesus Christ.

"...predestined according to the purpose of Him..." The children of God are predestined "according to" the purpose of God, indicating that the destiny of the children of God is the same as His "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11).

"...who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will..." God is the one who "*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.*" His "eternal purpose" and the "*counsel of His own will*" is the basis of every work of God. Everything God did in **verses three through eleven** was for the purpose revealed in the **twelfth verse**:

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

In only ten words the apostle summarizes the "*purpose of God*" in our redemption: "*That we should be to the praise of His glory....*" It was for this purpose that Christ died for us. We, who were sinners and enemies of God by nature, are "*justified*" at His cross, "*sanctified*" by His blood, and "*glorified*" by the Holy Ghost. The word "*be*" means simply "*to exist.*" The very existence of a people who are "*holy, and without blame before Him in love* (verse four)" is "*to the praise of His glory.*" No one can fashion their own life to be such. It is "*by faith*" to those who have "*trusted in Christ.*"

"...who first trusted in Christ..." Who are these Paul speaks of "*who first trusted in Christ?*" He speaks of a people whose very existence on earth brings praise and glory to God. They are "*a new creation*" (II Corinthians 5:17) such as was not seen since the fall of the first "*creation*" in Adam. They have a "*new heart and a new spirit*" (Ezekiel 36:26-27), which is a "*divine nature*" (II Peter 1:4). They are a flesh and blood manifestation and demonstration of the Spirit and power of God (I Corinthians 2:4).

Who are these of whom Paul speaks? Paul identifies them as "***we...who first trusted in Christ.***" He is speaking of the hundred and twenty who received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost and of himself as "*one born out of due season*" (I Corinthians 15:8). Each of these, including Paul, saw Jesus Christ after he was raised from the dead. They were his witnesses and "*with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all*" (Acts 4:33). "*And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*" (Mark 16:20). Paul counted himself to be the "*last* (I Corinthians 15:8)" and the "*least* (I Corinthians 15:9)" of those "*who first trusted in Christ.*" These are those holy apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5) who "*turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6)" in their generation. Those who "*first trusted in Christ*" were all Jews, and though few in numbers, they were the "*remnant*" of Israel that Jesus had gathered to Himself as the beginning of His church. They were the "*very small remnant*" Isaiah had prophesied of in Isaiah 1:9. As we shall see in the six "*pinnacles*," they are identified as "...*His body, the fullness of Him...*" in the first chapter; "...*an habitation of God through the Spirit...*" in the second chapter; "*filled into all the fullness of God*" in the third; "*the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*" in the fourth; as His "*glorious bride*" in fifth, and as "*the church triumphant,*" in the closing verses of this letter. They did the same works that Jesus did by the same Spirit (the Holy Ghost) that worked in Him. They were a visible manifestation of the invisible God, for they were His church, His body, and His bride.

The most important word in this twelfth verse is the word "*trusted.*" It is the key to everything these men and women were who "*turned the world upside down*" in their generation. Paul explains every-

Section 1; THE HABITATION Chapter One
"That We Should Be..." Ephesians 1:1-12

thing God did from the beginning to bring forth such a people in **verses three through eleven**. Hear again the claims of the apostle, “*God...hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 1:3), *chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world*” (verse 4), and “*predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ*” (verse 5). They were “*graced*” in the beloved, “*redeemed*” through His blood, and “*forgiven and freed*” from all their sins (verses 6-7). Paul continues to say (in verses 8-9) that God “*hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will.*” He continues, “*...in whom we have obtained an inheritance* (in the Holy Ghost), *being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*” (verse 11). He concludes his claim (verse 12) with words that show the ultimate purpose of all that God predestined in His people, “*That we should be to the praise of His glory.*”

After listing ten things that God did to have a people who are “*...to the praise of His glory,*” there is only one thing he identified that the first believers did: they “*trusted in Christ.*” They trusted in “*Christ-crucified,*” and they trusted in “*Christ-glorified.*” Everything God had prepared for His children from the beginning was “*freely given*” to these who “*first trusted in Christ*” and will be given to those who “*also trust in Him*” (Ephesians 1:13).

The very existence of these who “*first trusted in Christ*” was such that God was glorified. Every limitation was taken off God by what He had made them to be. Jesus told His disciples in John 14:12, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*” Certainly this was fulfilled in those who were “*filled with the Holy Ghost*” on the Day of Pentecost. God had made them to be everything Paul speaks of in this epistle. They were the first of the “*people of destiny;*” *they were* the first of the “*children of promise*” because they were the first who “*trusted in Christ.*” They were the “*pattern* (I Timothy 1:16)” of what God will do for all those who “*believe on Jesus Christ unto life everlasting.*” They were what Christ had made them to be.

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One

"The Fullness of Him" Ephesians 1:13-23

Introduction to Section Two

Beginning in the **thirteenth verse**, Paul speaks to those Gentiles in Ephesus who “*also trusted*.” They must be brought to understand that the purpose of God for them is the same as it was for those first apostles and prophets who brought the gospel to them. Beginning in the valley of their experience, he will quickly bring them to the first of the “*pinnacles*” in **verse twenty three** that reveal the church as “...*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*” We will see this “*journey*” repeated several times throughout this epistle.

“The Fullness of Him”

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

“...**in whom ye also trusted...**” In the **first twelve verses** of this epistle, Paul has spoken in the “*first person, plural*,” repeatedly using the words “*we*” and “*us*.*”* Beginning in this **thirteenth verse**, he begins to use the “*second person*” pronouns, “*you*” and “*ye*.*”* Why he does this is not apparent until the second chapter of this epistle where he reveals that God has taken the Jews that “*first trusted*” and the Gentiles who “*also trusted*” and made of them “*one new man in Christ*” (Ephesians 2:15). Almost two thousand years later, we must understand that what God did for those who “*first trusted in Christ*,*” he will do for all who “*also trust in Christ*.*”**

“... **after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...**” The gospel message is the “*word of truth*.*”* This is the same “*truth*” that Jesus said would make you “*free indeed*” (John 8:32-36).

“...**after that ye believed...**” The Gentiles had “*heard the word of truth*” in Paul’s preaching of the gospel of Christ and believed it. “*After*” they believed they were “*sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*.*”* This speaks of the same “*baptism with the Holy Ghost*” the hundred and twenty Jews received on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts 10:44-46, the record is given of the first incidence of Gentiles being saved and baptized with the Holy Ghost: “*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (the Jews) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*”

It should be pointed out that Paul said “*after that ye believed*” not “*when ye believed*.*”* The “*baptism with the Holy Ghost*” is an experience to be received subsequent to believing. This is confirmed in Acts 19:1-6 where Paul found “*certain disciples*” while he was in Ephesus and asked them the question, “*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*”

“...**sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...**” The word “*sealed*” is translated from the Greek word “*sphragizo*,*”* which Strong’s Concordance defines as “*to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation (literally or figuratively).*” It is derived from the root word “*sphragis*,*”* which Strong’s Dictionary defines as “*a signet (as fencing in or protecting from misappropriation); by implication, the stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy, or genuineness)*.*”* Ezekiel 9:1-6 gives a record of the time just before Jerusalem was destroyed by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. In a vision from God, Ezekiel saw the destroying angels come to Jerusalem with their swords in their hands. There was one among them who was dressed in linen and carried a writer’s ink horn. God told this angel to “...*go through the midst of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for (because of, or against) all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof*” (Ezekiel 9:4). In the sixth verse, God commanded the destroying angels to “...*slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctu-*

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One

"The Fullness of Him" Ephesians 1:13-23

ary." God had put His "mark" (the Hebrew word means "signature") upon the righteous in Jerusalem. These were not slain when Jerusalem was destroyed because of its sins. Instead, they were taken away to Babylon for their own good to be preserved and blessed (Jeremiah 24:5-7). Among them were Daniel, Mordicai, Esther, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. There was no literal "mark" in their foreheads, but God had put His "signature" on them, and they were protected and blessed in everything they did, even in the midst of captivity.

There is a similar event prophesied in the book of Revelation. Revelation 7:2-4 gives this account in a portion of John's vision. "*And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand....*" We find these who were "sealed...in their foreheads" again in Revelation 14:1; "*I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*" The "seal" is "The Father's name." The value of the "seal" is fully understood in Revelation 9:4 when the "locusts out of the pit" are given power to torment men "...but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

The "seal of God" is the "signature of God," which denotes both ownership and approval. Matthew 3:16-17 gives the record of when the Holy Ghost first came upon Jesus; "...*the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son (ownership), in whom I am well pleased (approval).*" In Acts 2:22, when using the fact that the Holy Ghost has fallen upon the hundred and twenty as proof of the resurrection of Jesus and that He is the Son of God, Peter said, "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him....*"

“...sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...” The phrase "...that holy Spirit of promise..." proves that the "seal of God" is the "promise of the Father" that Jesus spoke of in Acts 1:4. Jesus told the believing Jews to "wait for the promise of the Father" and explained what He meant in the next verse; "*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*" (Acts 1:5). These Gentiles at Ephesus were "sealed" with a mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost just as the hundred and twenty had been on the Day of Pentecost. A partial record of their "day of Pentecost" is given in Acts 19:6: "*And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.*"

It should be understood that the Holy Ghost is *not* sent to seal us; the Holy Ghost **is** the seal of God. It is the "Spirit of your Father" (Matthew 10:20), the "witness" that you are His child (Romans 8:16). It is the signature of God upon His people.

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

Every child of God knows that we have an "inheritance" waiting for us in heaven. Peter said, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*" (I Peter 1:3-4). According to the promise in Romans 8:23, we "...wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." We rejoice in that "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour (savior) Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13) when our "mortal bodies" will "put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:53).

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One

"The Fullness of Him" Ephesians 1:13-23

We long to see that glorious day Paul tells us about in I Thessalonians 4:17 when we shall be “...caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” All these things are realities of our inheritance that await us at the coming of the Lord. What most Christians do not understand is that the inheritance that awaits us “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” is to be the present possession of the children of God.

“...the earnest of our inheritance...” The word “earnest” is translated from the Greek word “arrhabon,” which is “a pledge.” The “inheritance” spoken of in this verse is not that which is in “reserve” for us in “heaven” but that which is waiting for us right now “in heavenly places.” When the Holy Ghost comes into a believer, He brings an “advance portion” of the inheritance with a “guarantee” to bring us into the fullness. He is not the “advance portion,” but He brings the advance and will bring us into the fullness if He is neither “quenched (I Thessalonians 5:19)” nor “grieved (Ephesians 4:30)” by the believer.

In Hebrews 6:13-14 Paul says, “...when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.” With the “oath” that God “swore,” He became the both the “guarantor” and the “guarantee” of the promise. God made Himself to be the “collateral” of the promised blessing. Due to the fact that God “swore by Himself,” Paul said that it was “impossible for God to lie (change His mind),” and the promises became “immutable.” If it became necessary, God must “give Himself” in order to keep His promise to Abraham and his seed. We read in John 3:16 that God “...gave His only begotten Son.” Paul tells us in Hebrews 7:22 that Jesus was “made a surety (a pledge or guarantee) of a better covenant” by an “oath” that God swore. Jesus gave Himself to die for us, and God raised Him from the dead to give us that “better covenant” of promise.

God gave Himself **for** us when His Son died on the cross. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:19 “...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself....” God also gives Himself **to** us by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. God “swore by Himself” in the covenant of blessing to Abraham and his seed, and He has “given Himself” to bring us into the blessing.

The “holy Spirit of promise” is received with a mighty “baptism,” just as the “hundred and twenty” received it on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and the “twelve” received it in Ephesus (Acts 19:6). Jesus said, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). In Acts 4:31-33 there is a record of a second great outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Jerusalem: “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. ...And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” Two things were very obvious about those who were “filled with the Holy Ghost” in this second outpouring: it was “great power” and “great grace” that was upon them all. The book of Acts is a record filled with accounts of the miraculous works of God that were done by those who were full of the Holy Ghost.

“...until the redemption of the purchased possession...” The key to understanding this verse is found in the Greek word “eis,” which means “to or into (indicating the point reached or entered)” and was improperly translated as “until.” The Greek word “eis” was used sixteen hundred and ninety three times in the New Testament and translated “until” in this verse alone. The word “until,” which the KJV translators used, indicates a lifetime of waiting until we die to receive the promise. What Paul actually tells us in this verse is that the “holy Spirit of promise” is “the pledge of our inheritance into the redemption of the purchased possession.” The difference is like the difference between night and day. The word “until” indicates a promise to be received in heaven, but the word “into” indicates a promise to be possessed in this present life. The term “purchased possession” comes from the Greek word “pe-

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One
"The Fullness of Him" Ephesians 1:13-23

ripoiesis" which means "*acquisition.*" The Holy Ghost is given to bring us "*into*" the fullness of everything Jesus "*acquired*" in the redemption.

"...unto the praise of his glory..." Remember the list of things found in verses three through eleven that God did for those who "*first trusted in Christ.*" Paul said He did it all in order that "...we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." God has done the same things for those who have "*also trusted*" and gives them the Holy Spirit of promise to bring them "*into*" the full inheritance, in order that they would be "...to the praise of His glory" who "*also trusted in Christ.*" Peter told his generation in Acts 2:39, "...the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

If all that was "*lost in the fall (of Adam)*" is not restored in the redemption made by Jesus Christ, then heaven itself would be nothing more than a miserable eternal existence with the same sin problems that have destroyed earth. If Jesus has redeemed all that was lost, it is the possession of the children of God just as it was the possession of Adam before the fall. It is our inheritance that we have in Christ Jesus, and it is for this present life. He has given us the "*earnest of the Spirit* (the Holy Ghost)," which is our guarantee of all that Christ has purchased with His precious blood.

15-16 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Paul addressed this epistle to the "*saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus*" (Ephesians 1:1). He knew they were such when he heard of their "*faith*" in Jesus and their "*love*" unto all the saints. It is because they are faithful saints that Paul not only gives thanks for them, but also makes special prayer in their behalf.

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

These who had "*believed*" and afterwards had been "*sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*" yet had a need to receive "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation*" in the knowledge of Christ. All too often "*saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost*" has been considered an "*end*" instead of a beginning. These were faithful saints, but they needed the "*spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.*" Simply stated, they had received the "*Holy Spirit of Promise,*" but they did not really know what they had received or what the Holy Ghost had come to do. It is to this end that Paul prays for them, that:

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

The children of God must receive their spiritual understanding directly from God because it cannot be taught by the precepts of man. It is a fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, taught His disciples for over three years, yet His last discourse with them the night before He died for us began with the question, "*Do ye now believe (John 16:31)?*" When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, and just shortly before His ascension, the scripture says in Luke 24:45, "*Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures...*" What Jesus could not do in three years of teaching, He did in a moment of time after His resurrection; He "*opened their understanding, to understand the scriptures.*" As Paul expressed it, He "*enlightened the eyes of their understanding that they might know...*"

"That ye may know..." The Greek word translated "*know*" actually means "*to see*" and because you see, "*to know.*" It is not, however, by the seeing of our natural eyes that we will ever "*see*" to "*know.*" Paul quoted Isaiah in I Corinthians 2:9, saying, "*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*" The eyes, ears, and heart of the natural man have never seen, heard, or understood the things of God.

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One

"The Fullness of Him" Ephesians 1:13-23

Such things cannot be taught through fleshly means. Instead, as Paul continued in the tenth verse, “*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*”

“...what is the hope of His calling...” There are three things Paul prays for the believer to know, two of which are listed in this verse. All three pertain to the “*Holy Spirit of promise,*” which is the “*earnest of our inheritance* (verses thirteen and fourteen).” The first of these is “*what is the hope of His calling.*” The definition of the Greek word “*elpis,*” which was translated “*hope,*” is “*expectation or confidence.*” The Greek word for “*calling*” (*klesis*) speaks of “*an invitation.*” God has given us an “*invitation.*” Paul explains this in II Thessalonians 2:13-14, “*...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The natural mind cannot grasp the magnitude of this saying and what it means for our present existence. The call of the gospel to the sinner is an invitation to sit with Christ in heavenly places and share His glory. To the sinner, it is a call to repentance and faith, but it is “*through*” repentance and faith that he is saved from his sins. The “*call*” is to death with Christ at the cross, but it is an “*invitation*” to come “*through death*” into “*life in Christ.*” It is an invitation to “*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*” and “*enter with boldness into the holiest...*” (Hebrews 10:19-22). He that sends the invitation sits in the heavens. He is calling us to “*sit with Him in heavenly places.*” He has sent the Holy Ghost to work in us and bring us into those “*...heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*”

The “*hope of our calling*” in this life is to be “*glorified together with Christ*” by the working of the Holy Ghost in us. Romans 8:16-17 says, “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*” Remember the prayer of Jesus in John 17:1; “*Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee.*” It is foolish to think that any person can “*glorify God*” if God has not first “*glorified*” that same person through the working of the Holy Ghost in them. That is what it means to “*obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

“...and what (is) the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...” Remember that Paul said the “*holy Spirit of promise*” is the “*earnest (pledge, guarantee) of our inheritance.*” This “*pledge*” is received through the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Paul’s prayer for these believers was that they would know, both by understanding and possessing, the fullness and the richness of His inheritance, of which they had received the “*earnest (the pledge).*”

19-22 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

“...what is the exceeding greatness of his power...” Obviously this speaks of the working of the Holy Ghost in those He has filled. God does nothing except by His Spirit. The “*exceeding greatness of His power*” is the same “*power*” that “*moved upon the face of the waters*” in the first creation; it is the same power that “*raised Christ from the dead,*” and that same “*power*” will also “*quicken our mortal bodies*” (Romans 8:11). It is “*exceeding great power.*”

“...to us-ward who believe...” The term “*to us-ward*” is an unusual term used by the translators to denote the origin, direction, and destination of the “*greatness of His power.*” It is “*from God;*” it is

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One

"The Fullness of Him" Ephesians 1:13-23

"toward us." Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). This great power is to "us" who believe.

"...according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ..." The words "according to" in this verse indicate that the "exceeding greatness of His power" which is "to us-ward who believe" is the same as that "mighty power which He wrought in Christ."

"...when he raised him from the dead..." Notice that Paul did not speak of the "...working of His mighty power that He wrought in Christ when He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and 'raised Lazarus from the dead.'" He speaks of something much greater. This is the first of five things that God "wrought in Christ" for us. He "raised Christ from the dead," and He "quickened us together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5).

"...and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places..." This is the second thing that God "wrought in Christ" for us. He set Christ in His throne in the heavenly places, and He "...made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

"...far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named..." This is a position of great authority. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-19, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore...." The Greek word "exousia" which was translated as "power" in this verse should be understood as "authority." All "power" is of God; all "authority" belongs to Jesus Christ. He sits in the throne of His Father; He is "far above." As we sit with Him, we also sit in a place of great authority, far above principalities, powers, might, dominion, etc. This is the third thing that God "wrought in Christ" for us.

"...and hath put all things under his feet..." This is the fourth thing that God "wrought in Christ" for us. It is an obvious truth as we "sit in heavenly places in Christ...far above all principality and power" that everything we sit above is under our feet. This is the great victory that God has given us "in Christ" by the working of the Holy Ghost in us.

"...and gave him to be the head over all things to the church..." This is the fifth and most marvelous thing that God has "wrought in Christ" for us. Christ is our head just as we, the church, are His body by the wonderful working of the Holy Ghost in us. I Corinthians 12:12 tells us, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." The body of Christ is complete, with Jesus as the head and His church, full of the Holy Ghost, as His body. We are one with Him.

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

FIRST PINNACLE OF GLORY: This verse brings us to see "first pinnacle of glory" which is identified in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. It is the "glorious church" of Ephesians 5:27. It is "His body," of which Jesus is the head, and of which we are "members in particular" through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It is "**the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.**" This verse, perhaps better than any other, defines "what is the hope of His calling."

"...His body, the fullness of Him..." These words identify the first "pinnacle of glory" in Paul's letter. Consider the power of these simple words. There is no "higher ground" for His church than to be "*the fullness of Him*." Due to the magnitude of this simple statement, we must pause to consider several things. In our comment on the twelfth verse we questioned who Paul had in mind when he spoke of those "...who first trusted in Christ." Now, we must understand who or what he is calling "...*the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*" The words we use have meaning. If Paul is speaking of the visible church of today, which is weak and sinful, then these words have absolutely no meaning at all. It is obvious that Paul is speaking once again of those who "first trusted in Christ." They, the "hundred and

Section 2: THE HABITATION Chapter One

“The Fullness of Him” Ephesians 1:13-23

twenty” plus Paul, as “one born out of due season,” and others whom the Lord added to their number constituted a “body” made up of many members, which was the “fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” These were those who “turned the world upside down” in their generation.

The “saints at Ephesus,” were both “saved” and “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Even so, Paul prayed for them to receive “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ” and for “the eyes of their understanding to be enlightened” so they could both “see” and “know” the wonderful riches of Christ. If this advanced spiritual state was necessary for them to grasp the simple truth of what Paul was saying, how much more necessary is it that every believer also receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost before they can be what Paul said the church is. It is a gross error to teach a carnal body of “believers” who have never received the Holy Ghost that they are “...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

“...that filleth all in all...” How is it possible that any “body of believers” could be “the fullness of Christ?” The answer is simple. Christ is the one who “filleth all in all.” He “daily loadeth us...” (Psalms 68:19). It is by “the working of His mighty power” in us, just as it also “wrought (or worked) in Christ” (Ephesians 1:19-20). The word “fullness” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “pleroma,” which means “repletion,” or, “abundant supply.” The word “filleth” is translated from the Greek word “pleroo,” which means “to make replete,” or “to abundantly supply.” The implication of such language is that the “body” (of Christ) is “abundantly supplied” by Christ, each and every day, through the Holy Ghost. He not only supplies our necessity but He “fills us” to be the “store” from which Christ would be given to the lost world around us. Peter said to the lame man, “...such as I have, give I thee....” Peter was “abundantly supplied” into such “fullness” by the working of the Holy Ghost in him that he had the authority to give of that which he had also received. The working of the Holy Ghost in us will do for us all that it did in Christ when He was raised from the dead. He will raise us up to sit with Christ in heavenly places, “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion...,” which is a position of great authority over all the power of the enemy. As we continue our journey through this letter to the Ephesians, do not forget the glory of this wonderful “pinnacle” of the church, “which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Introduction to Section Three

It is somewhat difficult to see exactly who Paul is speaking of in several places in this chapter. He begins in verses one and two by addressing the past of those Gentiles who “*also trusted*” (Ephesians 1:13) in Christ. In the third verse he returns to speaking of those “*who first trusted in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:12). Paul reveals that what God has done for those “*who first trusted*” is a “*pattern*” of what He will do for everyone who “*also trusts in Christ*.”

“His Workmanship”

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

The phrase “*hath he quickened*” does not belong in this verse but was “*borrowed*” from the fifth verse. Paul actually said in this verse, “*And you were dead in trespasses and sins....*” The previous verse (Ephesians 1:23) spoke of those Jews who “first trusted in Christ” as being “*...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*” This next verse speaks of the state of the Gentiles at the same time God was pouring out His Spirit in Jerusalem and Judea saying, “*And you were dead in trespasses and sins.*” In just one verse Paul brings us from the glorious “*pinnacle*” of the previous verse (“*...His body, the fullness of Him...*”) to the “*pit*” of the past lives of those Gentiles who “*also trusted*” in Christ. In this chapter he will show how God redeems them from the “*pit*” and brings them to the second “*pinnacle*,” which is found in the **last verse** of this same chapter.

Notice in this verse and the next, he is again speaking in the second person. He is speaking to the Gentiles who “*also believed*.” It was the Gentiles who had been “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” but Christ redeemed them from sin. The Jews had been in bondage “*under the elements of the world*” (the law: Galatians 4:3), but Christ also “*redeemed them*” who were “*under the law*” (Galatians 4:5). The Jews were also sinners “*by nature*,” but they were restrained from sinning by the Law of Moses while the Gentiles were totally given over to every sinful desire.

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

“...in time past...” Paul is showing the difference in their “*past*” and their “*present*,” their past being before they “*trusted in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:13). In the past they had walked “*according to the course of this world.*”

“...according to the course of this world...” The “*world*” is on a course that ultimately leads to damnation. The “*course*” is ever changing, but it is always downward and away from God. Many who profess Jesus Christ also follow the fads, fashions, and fancies of this present world. They find their “*life*” in the “*things*” of the world: in its “*treasures*” and its “*pleasures*.” For those who are “*quickened*” with Christ, He is their life. The words “*according to*” in this verse indicate that in these believer’s past, their “*walk*” had been the same as the “*course of this world.*” They had been walking the “*course*” that leads to destruction.

“...according to the prince of the power of the air...” The “*prince of the power of the air*” is the same as the “*prince of this world*” in John 12:31 and the “*god of this world*” in II Corinthians 4:4. It is none other than “*Satan*,” our adversary, “*the devil*.” He may appear as an “*angel of light*” and his ministers as “*ministers of righteousness*” (II Corinthians 11:13-15), but his “*ways*” forever lead to destruction (Matthew 7:13). Before these Gentiles in Ephesus were converted to Christ, that evil “*prince*” had been the source of their walk.

“...the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience...” The “*world*” is under the control of that spirit which Paul identified as “*the prince of the power of the air.*” He said it is “*the spirit that*

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two *"His Workmanship"* Ephesians 2:1-10

now worketh in the children of disobedience." The word "disobedience" is translated from the Greek word "apeitheia," which means "**disbelief; (obstinate and rebellious).**" This is different from the Greek word "apaistia," which means "faithlessness," and is correctly translated as "unbelief." Certainly not every "unbeliever" is possessed by unclean spirits, but those who have encountered Jesus Christ through the gospel and have been drawn to Him by the Holy Ghost yet have willfully rejected Him, refusing to believe, have opened themselves to demonic control. This was the case of the Jews in Paul's generation who not only rejected Jesus Christ but also refused to repent and believe afterward when the gospel was preached to them. These are the ones Paul called "*the children of disobedience.*" The same "spirit" that once ordered the lives of the Gentiles now gained full control over those who had heard, but refused to believe.

"...children of disobedience..." The phrase, "*children of disobedience*" is used here and only two other places in the Bible. Ephesians 5:6 and Colossians 3:6 both tell us that the "*wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.*" Before any person hears the truth of the gospel they are "*unbelievers.*" They cannot believe because they have never heard. Paul asked the question in Romans 10:14, "*How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?*" In such cases, unbelief is not willful but because of ignorance. Any person who hears the truth of the gospel and does not receive it in faith becomes a "*disbeliever,*" meaning they "*refuse to believe.*" It was these who Jesus spoke of in Mark 16:16 when He said, "...*but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" It was these "*disbelievers*" who crucified Christ, martyred the apostles, and have persecuted the saints of God for all time. While we all walked in unbelief and were slaves to sin before we heard the gospel of our salvation, those who "*hear*" and refuse to believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, make themselves the enemies of God as they obstinately continue in "*disbelief.*" They destroy themselves as they ignorantly open their hearts and minds to be totally possessed by unclean spirits. Just as Jerusalem was destroyed for their rejection of Jesus Christ less than ten years after Paul wrote this letter, entire nations have since been destroyed. Jerusalem saw the wonderful works that Jesus did (Acts 10:38), yet they hated Him. In this twenty-first century it is America and the western world that has become the "*children of disobedience,*" and as such our culture has been both possessed and destroyed by demonic powers.

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

"...among whom also we all..." With this statement Paul turns his discussion back to those Jews "*who first trusted in Christ.*" He brings out the truth that those who God used to "*turn the world upside down*" had been "*the children of wrath, even as others*" when Jesus first called them. He assures the Gentiles at Ephesus that God did not pour out His Spirit because they were an elite group, or because they were Jews. They had once walked in the desires of the flesh and of the mind just like the Ephesians had.

Jesus did not call His disciples out of the "*elite*" of Israel. Instead, he called "*unlearned and ignorant men*" (Acts 4:13), who happened to be fishermen. He called "*tax collectors,*" who were the most hated men in Israel. He even called harlots and publicans to follow Him. While they were all Jews, they were for the most part "*outcasts*" in the eyes of the religious elite, who despised and hated them. Among those who were the closest to Him was one whom Jesus had cast out seven devils. Even Peter, when he met Jesus for the first time, fell down at His knees and cried "*depart from me, for I am a sinful man*" (Luke 5:8). It was such as these that Jesus called to follow Him, and they "*forsook all*" to do so.

The words "*among whom*" should have been translated "*in which,*" speaking of the same "*course of the world*" that the Gentiles had walked in. The Greek word that was translated "*conversation*" in this verse is different than the word that is most commonly used, which means "*behavior*" or "*citizenship.*" The Greek word used here means "*remain*" or "*live.*" Paul is simply saying that "*we all...,*" speaking

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two
"His Workmanship" Ephesians 2:1-10

of those who God was using to turn the world upside down, "...*have a past in which we lived in the lusts of our flesh, and fulfilled the desires of our fleshly minds, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*" With this saying, Paul establishes that there was no intrinsic difference between those Jews who "first trusted in Christ" and the Gentiles who "also trusted."

4-5 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

In this verse Paul is showing that it is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the first believers were changed from being "*by nature the children of wrath*" into being "*the children of God*" with a "*new heart*" and a "*divine (godlike) nature*" (II Peter 1:4). He is setting forth the pattern of what God will do for all who will come to Him through Christ Jesus.

“...but God...” The word “but” as used in this verse indicates an “*interruption*” to the normal course of human events. Paul began this chapter by reminding the Gentile believers of their past life as idolaters who walked “*according to the course of this world,*” which is under the dominion of Satan as the “*god of this world.*” He does not leave the Gentiles alone in this condemnation because in the third verse he says, “*Among whom (In which) we all had our conversation (lives) in times past in the lusts of our flesh...and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*” His next words, “*But God*” indicate the turning point of all history. God interrupted the natural course of things. God intervened in the affairs of man. The words point to the cross of Christ where redemption and reconciliation was made for man.

“...who is rich in mercy...” God is “rich.” He is “rich in grace” (Ephesians 1:7), He is “rich in glory” (Ephesians 3:16), and in this verse He is “rich in mercy.” “*Mercy*,” according to the definition of the Greek word that was used, is “*active compassion*.”

“...for His great love...” The word “for” in this phrase is translated from the Greek word “*dia*,” which “denotes the channel of an act” and should be understood as “*through*.” “*His great love*” is the “*channel*” through which He saves sinners and raises them up to share His glory.

“...wherewith He loved us...” speaks of the death of the Son of God on the cross. In every place the love of God is spoken of in the New Testament, it is proven by the death of His Son Jesus Christ who gave Himself to “*...take away the sin of the world.*” Paul said in Romans 5:8, “*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” John 3:16 says, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son....*” Again, John said in I John 3:1, “*Behold, what manner of love is this the Father hath bestowed upon us....*” We were all dead in sins when Jesus died for us. He died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6); He died for sinners (Romans 5:8); and He died for His enemies (Romans 5:10). He “*died for us*” because He is “*rich in mercy*” (abundant in compassion).

It is a gross error to believe that God loves sinful man so much that He gives them eternal life. His love for sinners is always expressed in the “*past tense*” as in these phrases, “*...wherewith He loved us*” and “*...for God so loved the world....*” Wherever the “*love of God*” is expressed in the past tense with the word “*loved*,” it always points to the cross where Jesus died for us. He loved sinful man enough to give Himself to save us from our sin. The creator of heaven and earth “*...humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8)*” as the only way to free us from our sin. “*What manner of love is this (I John 3:1)?*” “*All that believe... (Acts 13:39)*” have died with Him in His death and are “*quickened*” with Him in His resurrection. This is grace, and it’s “*by grace we are saved.*”

“...even when we were dead in sins...” These **two verses** begin with the words “*But God, who is rich in mercy....*” A better translation of what Paul actually said is, “*But God, being abundant in compas-*

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two “*His Workmanship*” Ephesians 2:1-10

sion, through His great love....” God’s “*compassion*” upon man, which brought Jesus to the cross, was not based upon the fact that sinners and rebels were going to Hell. Instead, it was because “*man*,” whom God had created in His own image, was “*dead in sin*,” a “*slave*” and a “*prisoner*” to sin and could not save himself. David asked the question of God in Psalms 8:4, “*What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*” Paul quotes David in Hebrews 2:6-8 but comes to this conclusion in verse eight: “*But now we see not yet all things put under him.*” Man lost the image and glory of God through the disobedience of our common ancestor, Adam, just as Paul says in Romans 5:12, “...by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin....” Both justice and compassion required that there must be “*another man*” to “*save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). Hebrews 2:9 identifies that “*man*” as our savior Jesus Christ: “*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*”

“...hath quickened us together with Christ...” The very foundation of the church rests on the solid rock of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “*Our old man is crucified with Him*” (Romans 6:6), and “*God...hath quickened us together with Christ,*” is the solid foundation that is laid on the solid rock. The Greek word for “*quickened*” is “*zoopoieo*,” which means “*to revitalize*” and is translated as “*make alive*,” “*give life*,” and “*quicken*.” The words “*together with*” are translated from the Greek word “*sun*,” which denotes “*union*” and should be understood as “*in union with*.” In Romans 6:6, our old man is crucified “*in union with*” Christ. In this verse, “*we*,” whether Jew or Gentile, are “*quickened in union with’ Christ.*” Remember that Peter said we are “*begotten again (born again) unto a lively hope by (through) the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*” This is what it means to be “*quickened together with Christ.*” The “*fact*” that Jesus died on the cross and rose again the third day does absolutely nothing for anyone without the “*faith*” that we have died to sin “*with Him*” and have been made alive to God “*in Him.*”

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

At this point Paul seeks to give insight into what is accomplished for the believer by the working of His mighty power (the Holy Ghost) in the believer. Again, those believers who “*first trusted in Christ*” are the pattern of what the Holy Ghost will do for those who “*also trust*” in Christ.

This verse is a direct reference to the words of Paul in the previous chapter, verses nineteen through twenty-two: “*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church....*” Everything God did for Christ when He “*raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand....*” He did by the “*working of His mighty power*,” which is “*The Holy Ghost.*” Paul will show that what God did for Jesus, He will also do for us through the “*working of His mighty power*” in us.

“...and hath raised us up together...” The Greek word that is translated as “*raised*” in this text is defined by Strong’s Greek Dictionary as “*to waken (transitively or intransitively), i.e. rouse (literally, from sleep, from sitting or lying, from disease, from death; or figuratively, from obscurity, inactivity, ruins, nonexistence).*” This is different from the Greek word for “*quickened*” that was used in the previous verse, which means to “*give life*.” It indicates a second work of God in our full salvation that can only be accomplished by the coming of the Holy Ghost to “*awaken us*” through His mighty working in us. The last phrase of the fifth verse and this first phrase of the sixth seem to say, “*God...hath given us*

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two
"His Workmanship" Ephesians 2:1-10

life in union with Christ, and roused us from death (or sleep) to sit with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It seems redundant to say we are "given life" in one phrase and "roused from death" in the next, but there are other scriptures that say the same thing. The prophet Hosea gives a wonderful insight into God's work at Calvary in Hosea 6:1-2: "*Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us* (give us life): *in the third day he will raise us up* (rouse us from among the dead), *and we shall live in his sight.*" This is an amazing preview of Calvary, but the view is of *our* death and resurrection "with Christ." Notice the prophet said He will "revive us" at the dawning of the third day (after two days) and will "raise us up" in the same day. The difference is best understood as the difference between "waking up" and "getting out of bed," except for the fact that we were "dead" and not just "asleep."

The second example is found in verses ten and eleven of the eighth chapter of Romans. Verse ten says, "...if **Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness**" (Romans 8:10). This verse relates to the phrase in the fifth verse of our text that says "God...hath quickened us together with Christ." God has given life to us who were dead: it is "*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" The apostle John says, "...this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:11-12). Whether you have life or not is contingent upon whether Christ is in you or not. A sad concession is made in this tenth verse of Romans eight, however, that "*the body is dead because of sin.*" The body is not "sinful," it is "dead" because of (through) the disobedience of the first man, Adam. This is a "metaphor" of a man who lives in a body that is so totally paralyzed that he can do absolutely nothing. They have life, but that life cannot be expressed because of the paralysis of their body. You may have Christ "...dwelling in your heart by faith" (Ephesians 3:17), yet find it impossible to please God because you are still walking in the flesh (according to human nature). God has "given you life," but you are still in the tomb. Someone must roll the stone away. You are like one that has been awoken but can't get out of bed. This reveals our great need for the "*promise of the Father,*" a mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost that will "*roll the stone away*" and "*rouse you*" from "*lying in the tomb*" to "*sit in the throne*" with Christ. Many who stop short of receiving the promise of the Father (the baptism with the Holy Ghost) end up as one who is in a deep coma and the doctors have pronounced them to be "*brain dead.*" They are alive, they know they are alive, but they cannot so much as blink an eye or wiggle a toe to show they are alive. They are screaming "*I'm alive*" even as they hear the preparations for their funeral, but no one can hear their scream.

Paul continues this thought in his letter to the Romans saying, "**But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you**" (Romans 8:11). This verse speaks of the working of the Holy Ghost in those in whom He dwells to "quicken" the "dead body" that was spoken of in the previous verse. He "rouses us from the dead," and the "living man" that was in the "dead body" stands up and walks, talks, and functions in every way that God has purposed that he should.

"...and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." This speaks of the Holy Ghost which "roused us up" also working in us to seat us "*far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion....*" Here the child of God is lifted up into authority "*over all the power of the enemy.*" Being lifted up into heavenly places in Christ, the powers of darkness are put under our feet so that we can walk in the victory of Jesus Christ.

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

The early church was set forth as a pattern of what God's purpose for His church has been in every age that would follow. To this day the riches of God's grace are revealed to us by what He did in and

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two *"His Workmanship"* Ephesians 2:1-10

through those first believers. Even so it is God's purpose to reveal His grace to others by what he does in and through the believers of our generation.

"...that..." This verse begins with the word "that," taken from the Greek word "hina," which means "in order that." The Holy Ghost working in us "...makes us to sit in heavenly places in Christ...**in order that**... *He might show the exceeding riches of His grace....*" What God does in those who "trust in Christ" will be seen by the world around them. The "new heart" and the "new spirit" He gives will be manifested as drastic changes in their nature as they begin to walk in the "divine." Those who knew them best will be affected the most. They will know that this is a "new man," a "new creation in Christ Jesus."

"...in the ages to come..." The phrase "in the ages to come" does not speak of future eternity; instead, it speaks of all the years since that time, until and including this present age in which we live. From the gospel perspective, everything changed with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 3:4-5 Paul speaks of the "mystery of Christ, **which in other ages was not made known....**" In Colossians 1:26, Paul speaks of the "mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." The "ages to come," from the apostle's perspective, speak of that time period from the ascension of Christ until His second coming. It is "now" that God saves sinners from sin unto salvation. He brings them from death unto life, from darkness unto light, and raises them to sit in heavenly places in Christ.

"...He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace..." Remember that "God is rich." His "intervention" in the affairs of fallen humanity began because He is "rich in mercy (active compassion; verse four)." It is He who is "rich in mercy" that will now show the "exceeding riches of His grace" upon all who have "trusted in Christ" (Ephesians 1:12-13). He reveals "the exceeding riches of His grace" for the entire world to see "in His kindness toward us...."

Peter gives a powerful insight into "His grace" in I Peter 1:10-11 when he says, "...of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of **the grace** that should come unto you: Searching **what, or what manner of time** the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand **the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.**" (Editor's note: Read again the comments on Ephesians 1:7 under the heading "...according to the riches of His grace...") The "grace of God" is manifested in both "the sufferings of Christ" and "the glory that follows." The "sufferings of Christ" is grace and kindness "toward sinners." The "glory that follows" is grace and kindness bestowed by the Holy Ghost "upon all them who believe." In either case, God's "grace" is "amazing."

"...in His kindness toward us (upon us) **through** (in) **Christ Jesus...**" The word "toward" in this verse was translated from the Greek word "epi," could have been translated correctly as either "toward" or "upon," according to the usage in the verse. The word "through," which the translators derived from the Greek word "en," should have been translated as "in." This phrase is more correctly understood as "...in His kindness **upon us in** Christ Jesus." The grace and kindness of God is "toward" those who are "dead in sins," but it is manifest "upon" those who trust in Him and "abide" in Christ.

Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians about nineteen hundred and fifty years ago. He passed from this life before Jerusalem was destroyed in seventy A.D. He knew nothing about the apostate church that ruled over the nations for a thousand years of what we call "the dark ages." He understood by the Spirit that "perilous times (II Timothy 3:1)" would come along with a "falling away (apostasy; II Thessalo-

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two “*His Workmanship*” Ephesians 2:1-10

nians 2:3-4),” but he never lived to see the fullness of what these things meant. What he did know in the day that he wrote this letter is that Christ had a church which was “...*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23). It was made up of those who “*first trusted in Christ*,” who also “*turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6)” in their generation. For almost two thousand years (the “*ages to come*” from Paul’s viewpoint) the entire world has marveled at the “*great power*” and “*great grace*” that was upon those first believers. “*And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all*” (Acts 4:33). It is upon those who “*first trusted in Christ*” that the “*exceeding riches of His grace*” is seen, even unto this present day.

The promise of being such a people is given to all who “*also trust in Christ*.” It is a promise that Paul spent his lifetime giving to the Gentiles (and us) through the gospel, calling them “...*to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Thessalonians 2:14). Peter told the people of his generation “...*the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*” (Acts 2:39). That certainly includes you and me.

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

“... by grace are ye saved...” The phrase connects directly to “*His kindness toward us*” in the previous verse. It was the “*grace of God*” that gave His Son to die for us, and it is the “*grace of God*” that keeps us. We “*stand in grace*” (Romans 5:2), and it is “*by grace*” that we “*serve God acceptably...*” (Hebrews 12:28) and “*labour more abundantly*” (I Corinthians 15:10). God gives “*full salvation* (completion in Christ);” He gives it “*by grace*,” and we receive it “*through faith*.” We must believe the gospel record which God gives of His Son (I John 5:10-11) when He died for us on the cross. It is the message of “*Christ-crucified*.”

“...through faith...” The word “*through*” is translated from the Greek word “*dia*,” which indicates the “*channel*” of an act. It is “*through faith*” that we “*pass from death unto life*” (I John 3:14). In Romans 5:2, faith is our “*access*” into “*this grace wherein we stand*.”

“...it is the gift of God...” This is the first mention in the book of Ephesians of the “*gift*.” We will see that everything a child of God is, and everything they have, is a “*gift of God*.” Paul asked the question of those who seemed to be “*puffed up*” in I Corinthians 4:7, “...*what hast thou that thou didst not receive?*” In this verse, “*grace*” is a gift, “*salvation*” is a gift, and “*faith*” is also a gift. Paul makes it clear that it is “*not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*” that is given to all who “*trust in Christ*.”

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

In Romans 11:6 Paul says, “...*if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*” The previous verse, “...*by grace are ye saved...*,” eliminates the slightest possibility of man’s works for salvation. There is no place for boasting because the person God saves is both hopeless and helpless to save themselves.

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

“...we are his workmanship...” Everything that the first believers were and did was a result of what God did in them and not a result of their own works. Even so every child of God must also be “*His workmanship*.”

“...created in Christ Jesus...” Ephesians 1:4 says, “...*He hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*” What He “*chose*” before the foundation of the world, He has now “*created in Christ Jesus*” and “*ordained*” to “*walk*” in His works. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:17, “...*if any man be in Christ, he is a new crea-*

Section 3: THE HABITATION Chapter Two *"His Workmanship"* Ephesians 2:1-10

ture....” A child of God is not the product of spiritual evolution, but of “*new creation.*” We are not the result of a process; we are “*new creations,*” created “*in Christ Jesus.*” In Ephesians 4:24, Paul speaks of the “...*new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*” In Romans 8:29, Paul says that God has “*predestined*” a people “...*to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” Christ Jesus is the “*mold*” in which the new creation is cast. We are “*created in Christ Jesus*” in “*His image*” and in “*His likeness.*”

“...unto good works, which God hath before ordained...” The words “*before ordained*” were translated from the Greek word “*proetoomazo*” and should have been translated “*prepared beforehand.*” These “*good works*” were not prepared for us to “*do*” but to “*walk in.*” Before God made man in the last part of the sixth day of creation, He had finished every other work of creation. There was nothing left for man to do but to enjoy the works of God’s hands. In Hebrews 2:7 Paul speaks of man as God created him, “*Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.*” God created man just in time to enter into the seventh day of rest, which did not end until Adam disobeyed God.

When Jesus spoke in Matthew 11:28, “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...*” He is giving an invitation to those who are overburdened with religious ceremony and activity to enter the “*secret place*” of God where every work is finished. That “*secret place*” is “*in Christ.*” Hebrews 4:3 says, “*We which have believed do enter into rest....*” In the same verse he tells us “...*the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*”

“...that (in order that) we should walk in them...” This is the first of seven times that Paul speaks of our “*walk*” in this letter to the Ephesians. First and foremost we must remember that our “*walk*” as the children of God is not in what we “*do*” but in what He has “*done.*” We do not ignore the fact that He ordained us to “*do*” His works in this present world. Jesus said to His disciples just the night before He died on the cross, “...*he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*” (John 14:12-13). The works Jesus spoke of in this text are “*supernatural*” in nature and can only be done by those who are at rest in Christ with the Holy Ghost “*working in them*” to “*do His works.*”

In this letter to the Ephesians, Paul often uses those who “*first trusted in Christ* (Ephesians 1:12)” as an example and pattern for those who “*also trusted*” (Ephesians 1:13). In I Timothy 1:12-16, Paul speaks of Christ’s “*grace*” and “*longsuffering*” to him as a “...*pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*” The same one that had been “...*a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious...*” and “*the chief of sinners*” (Saul of Tarsus) was “*apprehended*” by Christ, brought through “*the death of the cross,*” made “*alive in Christ,*” and “*filled with the Holy Ghost.*” The “*Holy Ghost,*” which “*worked in him mightily*” made him to be the greatest among the apostles of Christ. The example and pattern shows that Paul and the early church were not “*special cases.*” What God did in those who “*first trusted in Christ*” He will do in those who “*also trust in Christ.*” It is a mistake, however, to view a weak and sin-laden church as “*His workmanship.*”

Introduction to Section Four

A mystery is revealed in the last twelve verses of this chapter. Paul will summarize the mystery in verse six of chapter three: "*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*" The Gentiles did not become Jews, nor did the Jews become Gentiles. It is at the cross of Christ that "*our old man is crucified*" (Romans 6:6). It is at the same cross that both Jew and Gentile die to their past and God makes "...*of twain (of two) one new man*" in Christ (verse fifteen).

In the last verse of this chapter we will see a second "*pinnacle of glory.*" Preceding each "*pinnacle*" Paul relates all that God has done for us, "...*that we should be....*" In this case it is that both Jew and Gentile should be "...*builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*" Paul shows that it is by the cross of Christ and the precious blood He shed that the enmity between Jews and Gentiles was destroyed for all who trust in Christ. This entire second chapter is given to show what God has done to take man from being "*dead in trespasses and sins*" to being "*the habitation of God.*" It is just one more glimpse of the wonderful things our God has wrought.

A Habitation of God in the Spirit

11-12 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

The "*time past*" of the Gentiles, which Paul speaks of in **verse eleven**, is the time before Christ died to "*take away the sin of the world*" John 1:29). Before Christ, the Gentiles had no covenant of their own. Their only option was to convert to Judaism. They were "*far off*" from God, "...*without Christ, without promise, without hope, and without God in the world,*" but Christ died for them also. Before we (Gentile believers) "*received Christ*" we were "*ungodly sinners,*" enslaved to Satan and to sin. We were also worshipers of our own selves, but we could not save ourselves from our sin. Certainly this should magnify the meaning of **verse eight**, "*for by grace are ye saved...it is the gift of God.*"

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes (at onetime) **were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

Oh what a difference He has made! We who "*in time past*" were Gentiles, "*far off*" from God, are "*made near by the blood of Christ.*"

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Notice the subtle changes in Paul's words, from "*we*" Jews to "*ye*" Gentiles and now to "*our peace,*" because He "...*hath made both one.*" From this point on, Paul no longer speaks in terms of "*we*" and "*ye*" but of "*us*" who believe. It is here that it is made clear "...*there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:28). Notice also that He who "*is our peace*" has also "*broken down the middle wall of partition between us....*" This "*wall of partition*" is revealed in verse fifteen to be the Law of Moses.

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain (of two) **one new man, so making peace;**

The "...*wall of partition*" and the "*enmity*" are both identified as *being "...the law of commandments contained in ordinances,"* that is, "*the Law of Moses.*" In Galatians 3:19, Paul says the law "...*was*

Section 4: THE HABITATION Chapter Two
"An Habitation of God in the Spirit" Ephesians 2:11-22

added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.” In Galatians 3:23 he says, “*...before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*” The Law of Moses was “*imposed*” (Hebrews 9:10) upon Israel to keep them separate from the Gentile nations until Christ would come. Moses’ Law served as a “*wall of partition*” which brought “*enmity*” between the Jew and the Gentile. It was “*abolished in His flesh*” at the cross, where He established a “*New Covenant*” in His own blood, in which “*all the nations of the earth*” would be blessed (Genesis 22:18).

“...for to make in Himself of twain (of two) one new man...” This great truth will be repeated in several different ways in the next verses. “*Of twain...*” speaks of both Jew and Gentile, but in Christ there is **neither** Jew nor Gentile; there is only the “*new man*,” the church, which is the body of Christ and which is “*created in Christ Jesus.*” This could never be true while the Law of Moses was in effect.

“...one new man...” This “*one new man*” is the “*perfect (complete) man*” spoken of in Ephesians 4:13: “*...till we all (both Jew and Gentile) come in (into) the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*” This is the “*one new man*” that God created for Himself in Christ Jesus.

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Paul continues the theme of “*both Jew and Gentile.*” They are both reconciled to God “*in one body by the cross*” where the “*enmity (the Law of Moses)*” is also slain. In Colossians 1:21-22 Paul says, “*And you (Gentiles), that were sometime (at one time) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he (Christ) reconciled (to God) in the body of his flesh through death....*” It is “*by the cross*” that both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God. It is through our death “*with Christ*” on the cross that “*our old man (whether Jew or Gentile) is crucified with Him*” (Romans 6:6).

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

In this verse, Paul seems to be referring to a prophecy from Isaiah 57:19: “*I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.*” He indicates that this prophecy is fulfilled at Calvary where Jesus “*...made peace through the blood of His cross*” (Colossians 1:20). Paul also says that “*...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1), and “*...He is our peace...*” in **verse fourteen** (of this chapter). Peace is preached to every person in every nation through the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul calls “*the gospel of peace*” in both Romans 10:15 and Ephesians 6:15. Peace with God is given to “*everyone that believeth*” (Romans 1:16), but Isaiah concluded his prophecy speaking of those who have no peace: “*But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*” (Isaiah 57:20-21).

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6). Jesus is the only way to God for both Jew and Gentile. This theme of “*both Jew and Gentile*” will continue throughout this epistle. It was true in the first century, and it is still true today. Those who believe there are “*two ways,*” one for the Jew and another for the Gentile, are mistaken. It is only *through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost* that either Jew or Gentile may come to the Father.

19-20 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Section 4: THE HABITATION Chapter Two
***"An Habitation of God in the Spirit"* Ephesians 2:11-22**

In Paul's day the church was basically a Jewish church. In the eleventh chapter of Romans, Paul likens it to a "good olive tree" with the "Gentiles" grafted in among the natural "Jewish" branches (Romans 11:17-25). Paul was sent by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He called himself an apostle of the Gentiles. He reassures those Gentiles who believe that they are no longer "strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." They are built into the same building where the apostles and prophets were placed as foundation stones and where "Jesus Christ Himself" is the "chief corner stone."

Today the church is seen as a "Gentile church," with the Jews looked upon as "strangers and foreigners." Most of the church today will not evangelize the Jew, just as most Jews refused to evangelize the Gentile in Paul's day. It is the same church today as it was then, but the "middle wall of partition" has been raised once again, and the "enmity" exists unto this day. This should not be so. There is only one body (Christ) for both Jew and Gentile, and there is no other way of salvation. The same message that a remnant of Jews preached to the Gentiles in the first century must today be preached to the Jews by the Gentiles. To wait until "after the rapture" will be too late.

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

The words "in whom" speak of Jesus Christ, the "chief corner stone." In Him "all the building (every believer, whether Jew or Gentile) fitly framed together growth into an holy temple." This is the church of Jesus Christ; it consists of both Jew and Gentile, "fitly framed together" in Christ, and the building will not be complete until this is so.

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

“...builded together...” In Christ, both Jews and Gentiles who "trust in Christ" are "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

“...for an habitation of God through (in) the Spirit...” The word "for" in this phrase is translated from the Greek word "eis," which means "into." To understand the difference between "for" and "into" in this verse, I recall Solomon, who built a temple "for" God. Even as Solomon dedicated it, he questioned whether or not God would dwell in it. "...will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built" (II Chronicles 6:18). God accepted Solomon's temple as a temporary dwelling place. The Church that Jesus built was not built "for" God to dwell in; it is built "into" the dwelling place of God. The Greek word translated "habitation" simply means "dwelling place," but in its root, it carries the meaning of a "permanent dwelling."

SECOND PINNACLE OF GLORY: It is in this verse that we find the second "pinnacle of glory." Strip off the hangings carnal theology has draped over the gospel of Christ and you will see that the church which was "created in Christ Jesus" was created to be "the habitation of God." The "tabernacle in the wilderness," the "ark of the covenant," and even "Solomon's temple" were just fleshly images of the glorious reality of God inhabiting His church. In Ephesians 1:23, Paul says the church is "...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." The "habitation of God" can be no less.

Introduction to Section Five

The apostle Paul uses the word “*mystery*” seventeen times in his epistles. He speaks of the “*mystery of His will*” (Ephesians 1:9), “*the mystery of the gospel*” (Ephesians 6:19), “*the mystery of the faith*” (I Timothy 3:9), and “*the mystery of godliness*” (I Timothy 3:16). In this lesson, Paul begins revealing the “*mystery of Christ*” (Ephesians 3:4), which is the sum of all mysteries and is revealed in God’s “*eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 3:11). He specifically speaks of the “*mystery of His will*,” which was introduced in Ephesians 1:9 and explained in detail in Ephesians 2:14-22, when he says in **verse six** of (this chapter) **chapter three**, “*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*”

The “*mystery of Christ*” was hidden for four thousand years, from the time of Adam until it was revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is the “*mystery of Christ*” that was revealed through the life and ministry of the first church which “*turned the world upside down*” in their generation. It is obvious to this writer that the “*mystery*” has once again been lost, but it is yet “*hidden in God*” for those who diligently seek to know Him

The Mystery of Christ

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

“**...for this cause...**” This is a phrase Paul will use two times in this one chapter. He has established in the second chapter, “*the cause*” for which Jesus called him and which he best explains in the **sixth verse of this chapter**: “*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*” It is a “*cause*” the apostle is willing to suffer and even die for.

“**...the prisoner of Jesus Christ...**” Perhaps a better translation would be “*For this cause, I am Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ...,*” or, “*For this cause, I Paul am the prisoner of Jesus Christ etc.*” It was for the “*cause*” of gathering the Gentiles into Christ through the preaching of the gospel that Paul suffered imprisonment. He was a prisoner of the Gentiles at Philippi, a prisoner of the Jews at Jerusalem, and a prisoner of Caesar at Rome, but he never considered himself as such. Instead, he referred to himself as “*the prisoner of Jesus Christ,*” as one captured, captivated, and constrained (II Corinthians 5:14) by the love of Christ to do His will. At the time he wrote this epistle to the Ephesians, he was imprisoned at Rome.

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

In Matthew 24:45 Jesus said, “*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*” This seems to best explain the position Paul held as a “*prisoner of Christ*.” The “*gospel of Jesus Christ (the grace of God)*” was committed to Paul to “*dispense (preach)*” to the Gentiles. The word translated “*dispensation*” actually means “*administration*” and indicates that Paul was an “*administrator*” of the gospel. He was a “*dispenser*” of grace to the Gentiles through the revelation of the gospel of Christ.

3-4 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

In Galatians 1:11-12, Paul tells that he received the gospel “*by revelation of Jesus Christ.*” In this verse he is speaking about another “*mystery*,” which he will reveal in the **sixth verse**.

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Section 5: THE HABITATION Chapter Three

"The Mystery of Christ" Ephesians 3:1-12

Over four thousand years had passed since the fall of Adam. God's will and purpose for man had never been seen in all that time. The prophets had been given glimpses of it in their dreams and visions from the Lord, but only after Christ had died for the sin of the world could the mystery be revealed in its fullness.

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

God had chosen the Jews "*in Abraham*" almost two thousand years before Paul's day. They were the people who had received the oracles, the covenants, and the promises from God. They were the ones to whom Christ came according to the flesh (Romans 9:4-5). They fully believed that salvation was only for the Jews, and if a Gentile were to be saved, he must become a proselyte Jew. This is only a small part of the "*mystery of Christ*" that Paul reveals in this verse, but it was revolutionary to the Jew of that day, "***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.***" This same "*mystery*" remains among most Christians unto this day, "***That the Jews should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.***" Is this not amazing!

The apostle Paul speaks of a "*prior claim.*" Israel was "*chosen in Abraham*" two thousand years before Paul's day, which gave them a valid claim to an earthly inheritance. The "*church* (both Jew and Gentile)," however, was "*chosen in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4).

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

God revealed His mystery (secret) to Paul and made him a minister of the gospel to bring it to pass. The Greek word Paul used for "*minister*" is "*diakonos*," which we interpret as "*deacon*." It is derived from "*diako*," which means "*to run on errands*." We view Paul as the greatest of all apostles. Paul viewed himself as an "*errand boy*" for Christ. In fact, there is no difference between the two, for the simplest definition of "*apostle*" is "*sent one*." He referred to himself as both a "*prisoner of Christ*" and a "*servant of Jesus Christ*." As a trustworthy servant, he was sent to "*gather*" the Gentiles "*into Christ*" (Ephesians 1:8-10) through the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no higher honor than to be a *servant of Jesus Christ*, *sent* to do His work.

...according to the gift of the grace of God... This is the second time in this epistle that Paul mentions a "*gift of grace*." The first time it was the "*grace*" that saves "*through faith*" (Ephesians 2:8). In this verse he speaks of the grace of Christ which was given to him to fulfill the ministry God had called him to. His ministry was to reach the Gentiles with the gospel and gather them into Jesus Christ. In II Timothy 1:9-10, Paul told Timothy that God "...*hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour (savior) Jesus Christ....*" The "*holy calling*" Paul is speaking of is the call to ministry. It is not based upon the human abilities or talents of the individual but rather on the "*purpose and grace*" of God, which was given to us **in** Christ "*before the world began* (before Adam disobeyed God)" but was never seen in man until the appearing of Jesus Christ. All true ministry is "*supernatural* (beyond the natural abilities of man)." Jesus Christ is the only perfect example of true ministry, but he gave us a "*pattern*" in those who "*first trusted in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:12).

...given unto me by the effectual working of His power... With these words, Paul relates to the power he spoke of in Ephesians 1:19-20, "...*the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe which is according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead....*" It was the "*working of His mighty power (the Holy Ghost)*" in Paul that

Section 5: THE HABITATION Chapter Three “The Mystery of Christ” Ephesians 3:1-12

made him the minister of Christ and gave him grace equal to the ministry. It was **not** Paul’s talents or abilities that made his ministry great. The people of his day said of Paul, “...*his letters...are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible*” (II Corinthians 10:10), yet this man’s ministry was far beyond others, even unto this day. What was the secret of Paul’s great ministry? It was “*the gift of the grace of God, given...by the effectual working of His power,*” which is *by the Holy Ghost.*

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Paul accepted no credit whatsoever for the ministry God had given him. He spoke of himself as “*less than the least of all saints.*” In I Corinthians 15:9 he said, “...*I am the least of the apostles,*” then in the following verse he makes an incredible statement that almost sounds contradictory; “*but I laboured more abundantly than they all.*” How can we reconcile such humility with such a boast? Paul does so with the full context of I Corinthians 15:10; “*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*” All credit for the great ministry of the apostle Paul was due to the “*grace*” God had given him to “*preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*”

“**...this grace...**” Peter tells us of the Old Testament prophets who had “*enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you (them and us): Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” (I Peter 1:10-11). The “*grace of God*” is not only manifested in the “*sufferings of Christ,*” but also in “*the glory that follows.*” Today the common thought concerning “*grace,*” which is held by multitudes, is actually the licentious doctrine that Jude warned of in Jude 1:4; “*...there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness....*” The premise that grace is the “*unmerited favor*” of God to receive sinners into heaven, as such, is a flagrant, monumental error. Jesus dying for all is unmerited favor. Grace *is* “*unmerited favor*” to save sinners “*from their sin,*” but it is much more than that. In Romans 5:2, we have “*access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.*” In Hebrews 12:28 we have **grace** to “*serve God acceptably...,*” while in I Corinthians 15:10 we are given **grace** to “*labour more abundantly.*” In II Corinthians 12:9, Paul discovers that God’s “*grace*” is “*sufficient strength*” for every kind of tribulation or persecution.

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

In I Thessalonians 1:5 Paul says, “...*our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.*” The “*grace of God,*” that was given to Paul “*by the effectual working of His Power,*” was not “*in word only, but also in power*” (I Thessalonians 1:5). Not only must the Gentiles “*hear*” the gospel, they must also “*see*” the “*fellowship of the mystery.*” The Greek word translated “*fellowship*” is “*koinonia,*” which means “*partnership*” or “*participation.*” The “*fellowship of the mystery*” that must be seen is revealed in Colossians 1:26-27; “*Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” Consider for a moment the “*fellowship,*” the “*partnership,*” and the “*participation*” of “*Christ in you.*” With such grace given to us nothing is impossible, unless His grace is “*bestowed in vain* (I Corinthians 15:10)” upon us.

“**...which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God...**” Isaiah prophesied, “*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he (God) hath prepared for him (the person) that waiteth for him*” (Isaiah 64:4).

Section 5: THE HABITATION Chapter Three

"The Mystery of Christ" Ephesians 3:1-12

This “present evil world (Galatians 1:4)” began when Adam disobeyed God. Sin has polluted the hearts of men from that time until now. Adam’s own children never saw him when he was “*in the image and likeness of God,*” or when he was “*crowned with glory and honour.*” That which God had predestined, purposed, chosen, and ordained that man would be was lost in the fall of Adam, never to be seen on earth again until the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the visible “*image of the invisible God,*” who was manifested among men. Those who “*first trusted in Christ,*” including Paul, were “*members in particular*” of the body of Christ, which Paul said, “*...is the fullness of Him who filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23). God’s image and glory was seen in Adam before the fall. It was seen in Christ during His time on earth, and it was seen in those who first trusted in Christ. The purpose of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles was that they would also “*see*” the “*mystery*” which was revealed in him (Galatians 1:15-16). The gospel cannot be preached in word only but must be seen through the “*manifestation of the truth* (II Corinthians 4:2)” in those who preach it.

10-11 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

“...to the intent that ...” The phrase, “*to the intent that,*” which was translated from the Greek word “*hina* (in order that),” denotes the purpose and intentions of God in giving grace to man.

“...now...” The word “*now*” speaks of a change in the situation. In times past, darkness had ruled, but that was “*then*”... and this is “*now.*”

“...unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places...” Many scholars view the “*principalities and powers in heavenly places*” to be only the angels of God. This could well be the case but it should be noted that Paul uses the same terminology for the ones we “*wrestle against* (Ephesians 6:12)” and for those we are made to sit “*far above*” in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:21).

“...might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...” “Now,” even the “*principalities and powers in heavenly places*” will understand the “*manifold wisdom of God*” when they see His church. It is not a sinful church; it is “*a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle*” (Ephesians 5:27). It is “*...to the praise of His glory...*” (Ephesians 1:12). It is “*...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23). In Ephesians 2:22, it is “*the habitation of God through the Spirit.*” It is the church He “*breathed*” life into on the day of Pentecost. When the principalities and powers in heavenly places see, in the church, the “*glory that follows* (I Peter 1:11)” the sufferings of Jesus Christ, they understand why the creator was “*made flesh*” (John 1:14), for the “*suffering of death*” (Hebrews 2:9). The angels will understand and rejoice. The demons will understand and tremble.

“...according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord ...” The “*eternal purpose*” has eternally been **in** Christ. It was first manifested in Adam, who was created in the image and likeness of God. His “*purpose*” in creating man was to have a “*flesh and bone*” image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). God never “*purposed*” the transgression and fall of Adam; neither did God’s eternal purpose change when Adam transgressed. It was still to be found but only “*in Christ.*” The purpose of Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection from the dead was to restore man to the “*eternal purpose*” of God. In II Timothy 1:9, Paul speaks of God who has “*...called us with an holy calling... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began....*”

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

“...by the faith of him...” In Christ Jesus we have “*boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*” The phrase gives insight to “*saving faith.*” Paul says in Galatians 2:16, “*Knowing that a man*

Section 5: THE HABITATION Chapter Three
***"The Mystery of Christ"* Ephesians 3:1-12**

is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ...." Notice that he says, "*we have believed in Jesus Christ.*" We have "*trusted in Christ*" that (in order that) we might be "*justified by the faith of Christ.*" It is the "*faith of Christ*" that justifies the believer. The "*faith of Jesus Christ*" should never be understood (as some erroneously teach) as Jesus "*believing for us.*" Instead, the "*faith of Christ*" is a synonymous term with the "*doctrine of Christ*" and the "*gospel of Christ.*" It is the gospel truth of all that Christ Jesus did for the redemption of mankind, culminating in His death on the cross. It is the "*truth*" Jesus spoke of in John 8:32 that will "*make you free*" from sin. This is "*the faith of Him.*"

Introduction to Section Six

Section six will bring us to the **third "pinnacle of glory"** that Paul reveals in his letter to the Ephesians. In this lesson he uses the analogy of a "*plant*" that is "*rooted and grounded*" in the love of Christ. As a result of where its roots are, the "*plant*" is filled with the "*love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*" It is only then that the plant can be fruitful and "*filled into all the fullness of God.*" The "*plant*" is an analogy of a child of God, as Paul also said in I Corinthians 3:9, "...*ye are God's husbandry....*" When we are "*filled*" with the love of Christ, we will also be "...*filled into all the fullness of God*" in the fruit of righteousness and holiness through the working of the Holy Ghost in us. All limitations are removed from God, who is able to do "*exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*"

Filled into All Fullness

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Paul's "*cause*" is such that no sacrifice is too great. Speaking of his "*tribulations*," Paul says in Acts 20:24, "...*none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*" In this verse, his "*course*" was to fully preach the gospel among the Gentiles in every nation, regardless of the tribulations.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The "*cause*" has not changed. It is a "*cause*" for which Paul has already laid his life down for, as "*a living sacrifice*" (Romans 12:1); it is a "*cause*" which he is willing to die for. It is a "*cause*" for which he is the "*prisoner of Jesus Christ*" (**verse one** of this chapter); it is also a "*cause*" that is the focus of all his prayers. If the words, "*I bow my knees unto the Father....*" indicate that he "*prays*" for them, it is also an indication of something far beyond a simple prayer. "*This is the cause*" for which he has totally surrendered his will to God. In Isaiah 45:22-23, God speaks through the prophet, saying "*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself...that unto me every knee shall bow...*" Paul tells us in Philippians 2:9-10 that God has highly exalted Jesus "...*and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow....*" In Judaism, Saul of Tarsus had found a "*cause*" he was willing to fight for; it was a "*cause*" to bind Christians in chains and imprison them and a "*cause*" to kill them for. In Christ, he found a "*cause*" he was willing to suffer for, to be cast into chains and prison for, and to die for. His "*cause*" was to gather the Gentiles of every nation into Christ Jesus through the wonderful invitation of the gospel of Christ. What a wonderful change Jesus makes when men bow their knees to Him.

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The "*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" is also the "*Father*" of all who believe the gospel. We bear His name (Revelation 3:12).

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

This is the second time in this letter that Paul mentions his "*prayers*" for the saints at Ephesus. In the first chapter he prayed for God to give them "...*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his call-*

Section 6: THE HABITATION Chapter Three
"Filled into All Fullness" Ephesians 3:13-21

ing, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (is), And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe..." (Ephesians 1:17-19). In this verse, Paul begins his prayer for them to be "...strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man..." and concludes, in verse nineteen, with the words "...that (in order that) ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Everything between the beginning and the conclusion of his prayer indicates that which is absolutely essential to every person who receives the "fullness" of what God has prepared for them.

"...that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory..." Paul is asking God to "give" something to these Gentile saints which would be received from the "riches of God's glory." He is not asking for something new or different, but for an "increase" of that which they have already received in the Holy Ghost.

"...to be strengthened with might by (through) his Spirit in (into) the inner man..." The Greek word "krataioo," which was translated as "strengthened" in this verse actually means "to increase in vigor." The word "vigor," as defined by the "American Heritage Dictionary," is "The capacity for natural growth and survival, as of plants or animals." Through the working of the Holy Ghost in them, their "inner man," who in this case was also the "new man," would have the "capacity" for spiritual growth.

The word "krataioo" is used only four times in the New Testament. The first time is found in Luke 1:80, referring to John the Baptist when he was a small child; "...the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." The second time the word was used is in Luke 2:40, where it refers to Jesus from the age of eight days to twelve years, saying, "...the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." The prophet Isaiah actually prophesied of the childhood of Jesus when he said in Isaiah 53:2, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant...."

"...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith..." The word "that" which is used in this phrase is italicized and does not belong in the text. Neither is there a Greek word for "may" in this verse. This phrase should have been translated simply as, "...Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith." It is an established truth that Christ dwells in the hearts of the children of God. In I Peter 1:23, Peter says we are "...born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The "incorruptible seed" is Christ. The "word of God which liveth and abideth forever," is also Christ, as John said in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...." "Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith..." speaks of the incorruptible seed, of which we are "born again."

In I Corinthians 3:6-9 Paul says, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry...." With these words, Paul establishes an analogy of the children of God as "plants" in a "garden" which belongs to God. It is interesting to note that a "plant," in contrast to an "animal," will never cease to grow as long as it has life.

"...that ye, being rooted and grounded in love..." This phrase speaks of a "tender plant," with its "roots" spreading out into the fertile soil. The "love of Christ" is the fertile soil that every child of God must be "rooted and grounded" in. In the natural, a "seedling" will be "rooted" in a greenhouse environment, after which it is "grounded" in fertile soil outside the greenhouse where it will face the "elements" of sun, wind, and rain. It is in that environment that it will become strong and fruitful. Every child of God must be both "rooted" and "grounded" in the love of Christ.

Section 6: THE HABITATION Chapter Three
"Filled into All Fullness" Ephesians 3:13-21

Love, in this **seventeenth verse**, is identified in the **nineteenth verse** as “*the love of Christ.*” It speaks of that “*manner of love...the Father has bestowed upon us*” (I John 3:1) when Jesus died for us on the cross. In Romans 5: 8 Paul says, “*...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” In every place the love of God is spoken of in the New Testament epistles, it always refers to Jesus’ death on the cross for us. That is the “*love*” in which every child of God must be “*rooted and grounded.*”

“...may be able...” The words “*be able*” are translated from a Greek word that means, “*...to have full strength.*” There are three preconditions that must exist if we are to “*have full strength.*” First, Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith; second, we must be “*rooted and grounded in love* (the love of Christ),” and third, we must be “*strengthened with might by His Spirit* (the Holy Ghost) *in the inner man.*” Jesus Christ is the “*incorruptible seed*” every child of God is born of. Being “*rooted in love*” we receive our “*roots*” in the love of Christ. Being “*grounded in love,*” our roots grow deeper, and the plant grows upward, ever reaching towards the “*sunlight*” of His glory and drinking in the “*rain*” of His Spirit. The “*love of Christ*” which was bestowed upon us at Calvary, is the fertile soil we are “*rooted and grounded*” in. We are “*strengthened with might by (through) His Spirit in (into) the inner man,*” which speaks of those who have received the Holy Ghost and have been “*enabled*” through the working of “*His mighty power*” in them.

“...to comprehend...” The word “*comprehend*” is translated from the Greek word “*katalambano*,” which means, “*to take eagerly, i.e. seize, possess.*” It is the same word Paul used for “*apprehend*” in Philippians 3:12, “*...I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*” It goes beyond the modern usage of the English word in that it is more than a “*mental comprehension;*” it is the “*possession*” of that which is “*comprehended.*” The analogy in these verses, however, is not that of a conquering army, “*possessing*” the kingdom through great conflict and struggle. Instead it is that which was given by David in Psalms 1:3; “*...he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season....*” The child of God who is “*rooted and grounded*” in the love of Christ can draw life from no other source. They will both “*possess*” and “*be possessed*” in the love of Christ.

“...with all saints...” These words are to be understood in the light of Ephesians 2:19; “*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*” These Gentiles had been “*strangers and foreigners,*” but they were “*born again*” into the “*household of God*” to be “*fellowcitizens with the saints.*” They entered as new born babies into the household of God to live and mature among those who had “*first believed.*” They were not to continue forever as a “*culture of babies*” as so many have, but they were to lay hold on and receive from God the same things Peter, Paul, John, and the rest of the saints, who “*first trusted in Christ,*” had received. These were the second generation of the “*church;*” if they do not receive from God the same things the first generation received, the church which Jesus built would be no more.

“...what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height...” It should be noticed that this **eigh-**
teenth verse, “*...may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height...,*” is sandwiched between the words “*...rooted and grounded in love...*” in the **seventeenth verse**, and the words “*...and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge...*” in the **nineteenth verse**. The subject is still the love of Christ. It becomes the “*possession*” of those who are “*rooted and grounded in love.*” The love of Christ is the first among the “*fruit of the Spirit*” in Galatians 5:22. It’s “*increase*” in the child of God can know no boundaries because its “*breadth, and length, and depth, and height*” cannot be measured.

“...and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge...” In Paul’s first prayer for the saints at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:17-23), there are **three questions** that can only be answered by the revelation of

Section 6: THE HABITATION Chapter Three
"Filled into All Fullness" Ephesians 3:13-21

the gospel of Christ. **1.** “*What is the hope of His calling?*” **2.** “*What is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints?*” **3.** “*What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe?*” And, in Paul’s second prayer, there is a fourth question we must consider; **4.** “*What is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ?*” Paul quickly tells us that it is “*beyond knowledge.*” It is “*...the unsearchable riches of Christ*” of verse eight. It may become the “*possession*” of the child of God, but no man will ever discover its measure.

The word “*know*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*ginosko*,” which indicates an “*absolute knowledge.*” The word “*knowledge*” is translated from the Greek word “*gnosis*,” which means “*knowing.*” The power of this statement is that it is a human impossibility to have an “*absolute knowledge*” of something that is “*beyond knowing.*” We may understand, through the revelation of the Spirit, “*what*” Christ has done for us, but to understand the love of Christ that caused Him to do it is “*beyond knowledge.*” We were sinners, ungodly, even enemies of God who were unworthy of the least of His favors, yet Paul said, “*...for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins....*” The children of God are to “*know*” that which cannot be taught; they are to “*know*” that which is beyond human education; no Bible scholar can give it to them, how much less can this writer express that which is unknowable, yet it is God’s purpose that His children should “*know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*”

If to “*know the love of Christ*” in its breadth, length, depth, and height is “*beyond knowledge,*” the only potential for anyone to know it is to “*possess it.*” How is it possible to possess such great love? It is only those who are “*rooted and grounded in love*” who will also “*possess*” it as their possession. It is the “*fruit*” of those whose “*root*” is in Him who “*loved us and gave Himself for us*” (Galatians 2:20).

“...that ye might be filled with (into) all the fullness of God...” It is in these words that we find the ultimate object of Paul’s prayer for the believers. Being “*filled*” with the love of Christ that passeth knowledge is prerequisite to being “*filled (into) all the fullness of God.*” Christ, the “*incorruptible seed,*” must “*dwell in our hearts by faith.*” Those who are “*rooted and grounded*” in “*the love of Christ*” will also be “*filled*” with the love of Christ. Everyone has “*roots,*” and everyone has “*fruit.*” The quality and abundance of the “*fruit*” is determined by where the “*root*” is.

“...be filled...” The word “*filled*” is translated from the Greek word “*pleroo*,” which means, “*to make replete.*” The definition of “*replete*” is “*abundantly supplied.*” Paul’s prayer is that we would be “*abundantly supplied into all fullness.*”

“...with (into) all the fulness of God...” It is difficult to understand why the translators used the word “*with*” in this phrase. It is translated from the Greek word “*eis*,” which means “*to*” or “*into.*” It is used sixteen hundred and ninety three (1693) times in fourteen hundred and fifty two (1452) different verses, but it is translated only one (1) time as “*with.*” It is evident that Paul actually said, “*...that (in order that) ye might be abundantly supplied into all the fullness of God.*” I see a danger that some will use this translation to reinforce an error that says we are “*becoming gods,*” which, in the view of this writer, is a heretical belief. The correct understanding of this verse is best understood in comparison to the words of the apostle John. John 1:14 says, “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*” Two verses later, John 1:16 says, “**“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”** Notice that Jesus was “*full of grace and truth,*” and “*of His fullness* (of grace and truth) *have all we received.*” This text indicates that for every “*grace*” that was in Jesus Christ there is corresponding *portion* of grace in the children of God. This is true from the moment of our “*new birth.*” We have received “*of His fullness,*” but the potential is to be “*filled (abundantly supplied) into all the fullness of God.*” Notice the difference between “*of His fullness*” in John 1:16 and “*into all the fullness of God*” in our text. In our “*new birth*” we receive a “*limited portion*” **of His fullness.** Those who “*follow on to know the*

Section 6: THE HABITATION Chapter Three
"Filled into All Fullness" Ephesians 3:13-21

Lord (Hosea 6:3)" are "abundantly supplied" **into** all fullness by the Holy Ghost. It will not come by our efforts, but will appear as the wonderful "fruit" of those whose "root" is in the love of Christ.

Paul's analogy of the child of God as a "plant" in the garden of God is beautiful indeed. The plant is "born" of the "incorruptible seed," which is "*Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith.*" It is "rooted and grounded" in the love of Christ which was bestowed upon man at Calvary. It receives its capacity for "growth" through "*His Spirit in the inner man.*" The plant is filled with the love of Christ because that is where its roots are. In the end of the analogy, the plant (the child of God) has become a beautiful fruit tree, filled "*into all the fullness of God*" with every manner of good fruit. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3).

There is danger in the "methods" people tend to employ when seeking to "possess" the promises. Paul tells us in Hebrews 6:12 to "...be not slothful, but followers of them who **through faith and patience inherit the promises.**" Remember in Ephesians 1:12, it was those who "first trusted in Christ" who "turned the world upside down" in their generation because they "...trusted in Christ." Notice the words of Paul, "...**I apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.**" Christ "apprehends" us before we "apprehend" Him. He first loved us. He gave Himself for us. We have been "called (invited)" by the gospel "...to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 2:14), which is the "high calling of God" that Paul spoke of in Philippians 3:14. We, like Paul, are to "apprehend" that for which Christ "apprehended us." We are to "seek those things above" that Christ "seeks" to give us. He sends the Holy Ghost to "work mightily in us" (Ephesians 1:19-20), to "raise us up together, and make us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." All praise belongs to the Lord because it is by "His working," and not "our works," that we are "...filled into all fullness...."

THIRD PINNACLE OF GLORY: It is in the last phrase of the nineteenth verse that we see the "third pinnacle of glory" where Paul says, "...that ye might be filled with (into) *all the fullness of God.*" View it carefully. See how being "*filled into all the fullness of God*" fits with the previous pinnacles and fulfills the words of Ephesians 1:12, "...that we should be to the praise of His glory...."

First Pinnacle of Glory: "*That we should be...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*" (Ephesians 1:23).

Second Pinnacle of Glory: "*That we should be...builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*" (Eph. 2:22).

Third Pinnacle of Glory: "*That we should be...filled into all the fullness of God*" (Ephesians 3:19).

The scriptures I have indicated as "pinnacles of glory" each give an insight into what the first church really was. Paul did not write these things as a goal to aim at, or perhaps as the way things "ought to be" according to his thinking. There is nothing in this letter to the Ephesians that was not the present reality of the "church" that "turned the world upside down" in the first generation after Calvary. It is the "pattern" for the church in every generation, which was given in order that we might know what Christ died for and what the Holy Ghost is given for. As Peter said on the Day of Pentecost to those who believed, "...the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). The promise is most certainly to us also.

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

No one questions the ability of God to "do" anything he chooses to do. When I read this verse, however, I think of Psalms 78:41: "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and **limited the Holy One of**

Section 6: THE HABITATION Chapter Three
"Filled into All Fullness" Ephesians 3:13-21

Israel.” The psalmist was speaking of the children of Israel in the day God would have given them the land of promise (Numbers, chapters 13-14). God certainly could have given them the land, but the people set limitations on God through their unbelief. They limited God when they “*turned back*” into the wilderness. Not even God could give them the land when, in their unbelief, they refused to enter. God’s ability to “*do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” is limited or released “*according to the power that worketh in us.*” If the “*power that worketh in us*” is the same as “*...the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places...*” (Ephesians 1:19-20), then all limitations are removed. God will do “*exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.*”

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The ultimate purpose of God in those “*who first trusted in Christ,*” was that they “*...should be unto the praise of His glory...*” (Ephesians 1:12). In this verse, this same purpose is transferred to the Gentiles who “*also trusted*” (Ephesians 1:13). That same glory is given to be “*in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages;*” that is, in every generation until the return of Jesus Christ and then for all eternity.

Introduction to Section Seven

It is in the **thirteenth verse** of this chapter that we see the **fourth pinnacle of glory**, which is “...*the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” revealed in His body, the church. When Paul speaks of the church in Ephesians 1:23 as “...*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all,*” he was speaking of the present reality of those holy “*apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers*” who “*first trusted in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:12). In this chapter, that “*fullness*” is the hope that is set before those “*who also trust in Christ.*”

The Fullness of Christ

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy (appropriately) **of the vocation** (the calling) **wherewith ye are called,**

“...**beseech you that ye walk...**” Ephesians 2:10 says we are “*created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them.*” In the next three chapters, beginning with this verse, Paul will speak six times of the believer’s “*walk.*” We are to “*walk worthy of the vocation* (the calling) *wherewith...ye (and we) are called...*” The word “*worthy*” is translated from the Greek word “*axios,*” which means “*appropriately.*” It is impossible for any man to walk or be “*worthy*” of such a high calling, but we can and must walk “*appropriately*” by the grace which He has given us.

2 With all lowliness (humility) **and meekness** (gentleness), **with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;**

Jesus said, “*I am meek and lowly in heart...*” (Matthew 11:29), which defines the “*appropriate walk.*” Our walk is to be with humility, gentleness, and “*longsuffering.*” In this verse “*forbearing one another in love*” defines “*longsuffering.*” The Greek wording actually says, “...*putting up with one another.*” As we have shown in previous chapters, the church at Ephesus was made up of both Jew and Gentile believers. Just as God had spiritually “*made both one*” in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16), in the natural, two totally different cultures were being merged into one “*community.*” This is the point where **theology ends and walk begins.** We should always keep in mind that if we are “*putting up with*” other believers, they are also “*putting up with us.*”

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

To “*endeavour*” is to “*make a prompt and earnest effort,*” in this case, to “*keep the unity of the Spirit.*”

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Verses four through six are expressing one thought and are better understood as follows: “*There is only one body, and only one Spirit, etc.*” There is not a particular “*body*” for Jews and another particular “*body*” for Gentiles. There is only one body, “*the body of Christ,*” and it is **only** by “*one Spirit* (the Holy Ghost)” that we are baptized into that “*one body.*” Every believer must of necessity receive the “*one Spirit (the Holy Ghost)*” and endeavor to keep the unity of that same Spirit. In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prayed that the Gentile believers would “*know what is the hope of your (or their) calling.*” Paul now shows that both Jew and Gentile are called in the same hope because they are both “...*called...to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Thessalonians 2:14).

5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

“...**one Lord...**” Why this scripture should be such a bone of contention between many believers, I have never understood. The words “*one Lord*” must speak of Jesus Christ, just as “*one Spirit*” (previous verse) speaks of the Holy Ghost, and just as “*one God and Father of all*” (next verse) speaks of

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

"the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Concerning this controversy, Paul says in I Corinthians 8:6-7, *"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge."* He also says in I Timothy 2:5, *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*

"...one faith..." Certainly the *"one faith"* is *"the faith of Jesus Christ."* Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life and died on a Roman cross. He was in the grave for three days and was afterward raised from the dead, which was witnessed by more than five hundred at one time. After this, He ascended back to heaven from whence He came and where He sits at the right hand of God and will return again to this earth to reign for a thousand years before delivering the kingdom up to His Father. His *"pre-existence"* was eternally as the *"Word"* which was *"with God"* and *"was God."* The *"Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"* a savior, who God *"highly exalted"* to be both Lord and Christ (Philippians 2:9-11; Acts 2:36). There is absolutely no other name by which we can and must be saved, but by the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). This, and all Jesus accomplished for us in the redemption, is *"the faith of Jesus Christ."*

"...one baptism..." Hebrews 6:2 speaks of the *"doctrine of baptisms."* The first *"doctrine of baptism"* was the *"baptism of John,"* who baptized the people in water *"unto repentance"* and preached that they should believe upon Him who was to come. After the resurrection of Jesus, Peter and other apostles continued this as water baptism *"in the name of Jesus."* The second *"doctrine of baptism"* is found in Romans 6:3. It is called *"baptism into His death."* It is a baptism, not of water and not administered by man but by faith in the truth of the gospel. The result of this *"baptism"* is revealed in Romans 6:6, which says, *"...our old man is crucified with Christ...."* The third *"doctrine of baptism"* is being *"baptized with the Holy Ghost."* This doctrine was taught by both John the Baptist and by Jesus Christ. John was first, saying, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost..."* (Matthew 3:11). In Acts 1:5 Jesus said, *"...John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."* It was only after the Holy Ghost first fell on the Gentiles that Peter remembered the words of Jesus. *"Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 11:16). Paul makes a shocking statement in I Corinthians 1:17 when he says, *"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."* If, as Paul clearly told the Ephesians, there is but one baptism, it must be the *"baptism"* Jesus baptizes with (Matthew 3:11). It can only be the *"baptism with the Holy Ghost,"* of which Jesus Christ is the baptizer (Matthew 3:11).

6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

There is only one God who is the Father of both Jews and Gentiles who believe the gospel of Christ. He is *"above all, through all, and in you all."* Here again, Paul is speaking of those believers in the church at Ephesus, whether Jew or Gentile.

The point of this *"discourse"* by the apostle in affirming the fact that there is *only* one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, is to show that there is *only* one church. Although it is identified by various names in the scriptures, it is most commonly spoken of as *"The Church."* It is not a hyphenated church. There is no such thing as a *"Jewish-Church,"* or a *"Gentile-Church."* Many divisions have come to the church which Jesus *"purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28), but none were by the will of God.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

John speaks of the believer receiving “*grace for grace*” (John 1:16) with Jesus Christ. There is a corresponding grace to the believer for every “*grace*” that Jesus was full of. There is grace unto salvation (Ephesians 2:8); grace wherein we stand (Romans 5:2); grace that is strength (II Corinthians 12:9); and grace to serve (Hebrews 12:28). According to I Peter 1:10-11, “*the grace*” the Old Testament prophets prophesied of “*that should (would) come unto us,*” is manifested in both “*the sufferings of Christ*” and in “*the glory that should (would) follow.*” It is relatively easy to see that the “*sufferings of Christ*” were manifest at Calvary, and the “*glory that should follow*” came on the Day of Pentecost when God first poured His Spirit upon and into the hundred and twenty. Grace for salvation is offered to sinners at the cross of Christ. Grace for ministry is given to the children of God by the wonderful working of the Holy Ghost in them. In Ephesians 3:7, Paul said, “*...I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*” This “*gift of grace*” was the Holy Ghost working in him. In the next verse, Ephesians 3:8, he says “*this grace*” was given to him to “*...preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*” This is a special “*grace*” which is given to those whom He calls for ministry.

“...according to the measure of the gift of Christ...” This is the first and only usage of the term “*the gift of Christ*.” This term cannot be understood without the last phrase of the next verse (**verse eight**) that says, “*...and gave gifts unto men...*” and connects directly to the **eleventh verse** which says, “*...and he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers....*” These are a listing of only a few of the “*gifts of Christ*.” Each carries a different “*weight*” of ministry, for which each receives sufficient grace through “*...the effectual working of His power*” (Ephesians 3:7). Each ministry bears a different “*measure*” of the “*fullness*” that is in Christ Jesus. To each He gives “*sufficient*” grace; it is grace that is equal to the ministry which Christ has given to them.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

This is a reference to Psalms 68:18-19, “*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.*” These words by David are prophetic of the victory of the Son of God at Calvary. Jesus “*ascended on high,” “led captivity captive,*” and “*received gifts for men.*” Even the words “*who daily loadeth us*” must refer to the message of Ephesians 3:19 where He “*abundantly supplies us into all fullness.*”

Look again at the words of the psalmist: “*...thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.*” Paul, when confirming the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus Christ, says, “*...he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*” He does not mention the rebellious because they never receive what the Lord has for them. In Matthew 22:14, Jesus said “*Many are called, but few are chosen.*” Jesus called many, never pleading, never begging, but simply saying “*follow me.*” Those who became His apostles and ministers “*forsook all*” to follow Him. There were many others that He called, however, who had excuses why they could not follow Him right now. “*I've married a wife...*” or, “*I've purchased a field...*” or, “*Let me first bury my father* (who was not yet dead).” There was also the rich young ruler, to whom Jesus said “*follow me,*” who walked away sorrowfully, “*because he was very rich*” (Luke 18:22-23). There was a “*gift of Christ*” awaiting each of these, but they never received it; yet, even the “*rebellious,*” if they will repent and believe the gospel, will not be turned away. No one who will “*repent, and believe the gospel*” is left out of this wonderful salvation (Mark 1:15).

9-10 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

As David had prophesied, the one who "ascended up on high" is the same one who "descended into the lower parts of the earth." He is also the one who died on the cross to take away our sin and who was buried three days in a tomb. Likewise, He is the one who sits on the throne of heaven to "fill all." It is not "things" but His people that He fills with heavenly riches. (The word "thing" or "things" is not in the Greek text.) The word "fill," used in the phrase "fill all things" is translated from the Greek word plēroō and means "to make replete," or "abundantly supply." Jesus died to take our sin away, was buried to put our old man away, was raised from the dead to give us life, then ascended to the throne to "abundantly supply all spiritual blessings" to the children of God until they are "**filled into all fullness.**" It is of the "*unsearchable riches of Christ* (Ephesians 3:8)" that He "...daily loadeth us..." (Psalms 68:19).

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

This verse connects directly to the last phrase of the **eighth verse**, which says, "...and gave gifts unto men." The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are the fulfillment of David's prophecy (Psalms 68:19). These ministry gifts are the "*gift of Christ to the church*" (**verse seven**). In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "*I will build my church.*" He had, in fact, been "*forming*" His church for over three years before Calvary. He was seeking for "*stones*" to lay in the foundation when He called to men from fishermen to tax collectors, simply saying, "*Follow me.*" It was those that answered the call and "*forsook all*" to follow Him who became the foundation stones of His church (Revelation 21:14). On the Day of Pentecost, the Lord baptized about a hundred and twenty men and women with the Holy Ghost. It came "*suddenly*," a "*sound from heaven*" as of a "*rushing mighty wind*" (Acts 2:2) and it "*filled all the house where they were sitting.*" This God did for His church, just as He had done for man in the original creation when He "*breathed the breath of life*" into Adam (Genesis 2:7). The Holy Ghost was (and is) the "*breath of life*" from God to His church, which **is** the "*new creation.*" In the first creation, God "*formed man of the dust of the ground*" (Genesis 2:7). Man was nothing more than a lifeless form until God breathed the breath of life into him. It was the "*breath of life*" from God that made man a "*living soul.*" Likewise, the church is nothing more than a "*lifeless form*" until it receives the heavenly, "*breath of life*" from God; at which time it becomes the living, breathing, "*body of Christ*" upon this earth.

Numbered among the hundred and twenty were the "*twelve apostles.*" We do not know the number of "*prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers*" there were, but we can be sure they were all in place, though not visibly so until they were filled with the Holy Ghost. The "*church that Jesus built*" was complete from the moment the Holy Ghost came to them. It functioned just as it should from that very first day, with the Lord adding to it "*daily, such as should be saved.*" They preached the gospel, they healed the sick, they cast out devils, and they raised the dead. The same works Jesus had done, these also did. It was not by any "*power*" of their own that they did these things (Acts 3:12), but by the "*authority*" they had received through the "*working of His mighty power* (the Holy Ghost)," to speak and work in the exalted name of Jesus.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

"...the perfecting of the saints..." This is the first of three functions of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The word "*perfecting*" is translated from the Greek word "*katartismos,*" which means "*complete furnishing.*" It is the fulfillment of a prophecy of David in Psalms 68:19, which says "*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.*" The words "*with benefits*" are not in the Hebrew text, but were added by the translators. There are three scriptures in this letter to the Ephesians which show that the fulfillment of this prophecy, "*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us...,*" is

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four

"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 1:23, Jesus is the one who “*filleth all in all.*” In Ephesians 4:10, He “*fills all things,*” and in Ephesians 3:19, He “*fills us into all the fullness of God.*” He “*abundantly supplies*” His church, day by day, into everything God gives. This is the first function of the ministries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) which He has given to the church.

“...for the work of the ministry...” Each of the ministries of Christ has its own unique function to serve. Each has received a different “*measure of the gift of Christ,*” but each also receives “*grace*” equal to the “*measure*” Christ has given them.

The apostles have received the greatest “*measure.*” They are to “*found*” the church; that is, they are to “*lay the foundation*” for each generation of the church. It must, however, be the same foundation that Paul laid, for he said, “*...other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*” (I Corinthians 3:11). The foundation of the church is “*Christ-crucified*” and is thoroughly revealed by Paul in Romans 5:12 through Romans 6:23. The apostles “*see Jesus*” as He is and Christ is revealed “*in*” them (Galatians 1:15-16). They are the “*wise master-builders*” of the church. However, it must always be remembered, as Paul says in Hebrews 5:4, “*...no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*” Many today have placed the title “*Apostle*” in front of their name, but they have done so to their shame and to the detriment of the church. Only Christ can bestow this great honor.

The prophets have received the next greatest “*measure.*” They are given as the “*eyes*” of the church. They are “*seers,*” set as a watchman on the wall. They see things before others can see them and sound the warning to the church. Just as the prophet Isaiah said of Christ in Isaiah 11:3, “*...he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.*” In Isaiah 42:19, the prophet spoke of Christ, saying, “*Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent?*” The “*sight*” and “*hearing*” of the prophets is by the Holy Ghost. They are not moved by the “*seeing*” or the “*hearing*” of the natural senses because they both “*see*” and “*hear*” things as they are. Many who believe themselves to be “*prophets*” are like those “*foolish prophets*” who God spoke of in Ezekiel 13:3, “*...that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!*” They go about pronouncing “*blessings*” on the ungodly, just as God foretold in Jeremiah 23:17, “*They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.*” There are others among the false prophets who also pronounce “*curses*” on the children of God, seeking to control their lives and actions for their own selfish gain. These are not the “*prophets*” Jesus gave to His church, but rather, the “*false prophets*” of which, Jesus and all the apostles warned us would come.

It should be understood that among the nine “*manifestations of the Spirit*” (the gifts of the Holy Ghost; I Corinthians 12:7-11), there is that which is called “*prophecy,*” which is one of the nine “*gifts*” that may be given to any member of the body of Christ, who is full of the Holy Ghost. This “*gift of prophecy*” should not be confused with the ministry of the “*prophet.*” The prophets may prophesy, but not everyone that prophesies is a prophet. An example of this is found in Acts 21:9-10 where Paul tells of his stay at the house of Phillip the evangelist. The four daughters of Phillip “*prophesied,*” but they were not “*prophets.*” After “*many days*” a “*prophet*” named Agabus came and foretold by word and demonstration how Paul would be “*bound*” by the Jews and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.

The evangelists are given to the church to “*preach the gospel.*” Their ministry was prophesied in Isaiah 52:7: “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*” Phillip, who was one of the seven men chosen at Jerusalem to “*serve tables,*” became the New Testament example of an evangelist (Acts 21:8). The record of the great revival he preached in Samaria, is given in Acts 8:5-8: “*Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.*

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city." When Philip left Samaria after seeing a multitude saved, the Lord sent him into the desert to preach the gospel to just one man (Acts 8:26-35).

The evangelist is a "living gospel." They are called and anointed to preach the gospel in both word and deed. They did not have the scriptures of the New Testament which we have today; instead, they proved by the scriptures of the Old Testament prophets that Jesus is "the Christ" and "the Redeemer" spoken of by all of the prophets. They were "living records" of the truth that made men free. They were themselves the "proof" that the "gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). According to the apostle Paul, the gospel is preached "...by manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Corinthians 4:2). The apostle John writes, "...the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (I John 1:2).

The "pastors and teachers" seem to be of the same category of ministry. The Greek word "poimen," which was translated "pastors," actually means, "a shepherd." This last category of ministry gifts, "pastors and teachers," is given to be the "shepherds" of God's flock. Peter, in his instructions to the elders seems to be urging them to accept the responsibility of a shepherd, when he tells them, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre (shameful gain), but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples (examples) to the flock" (I Peter 5:2-3). We need to understand that the modern title of "pastor" that is given to the overseer of a local church is not necessarily the same as that spoken of in this text. That which we call a "pastor" in our generation would have most often been a "bishop," meaning "to oversee."

"...for the edifying of the body of Christ..." The word "edifying" in this phrase is translated from the Greek word "oikodome," which properly means "architecture." It is derived from two different Greek words, "oikos (a dwelling)" and "doma (dome)," which speaks specifically of "a roof." Remember the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:20-22, "...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Although we understand that the true church is the "body of Christ," it is also the "temple of God," which Paul called "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Each member of the body of Christ is a "living stone," as Peter says in I Peter 2:5, "Ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house...." The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are themselves "living stones" which Christ has placed into His building, with the apostles and prophets eternally built into the foundation. These ministries are also "builders," as Paul says in I Corinthians 3:9, "...we (the ministries) are labourers together with God... (and) ye (the body of Christ) are God's building."

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

FOURTH PINNACLE OF GLORY: There is no higher place for the body of Christ than that which is described in this verse. Note that the verse begins with the words "...till we all come..." and ends with the phrase "...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The "working of His mighty power (the Holy Ghost)" must continue in the saints "...till we all come" in "one body" into the "fullness of Christ" which is also spoken of in the other pinnacles of glory. Each of the church minis-

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

tries are to continue in their designated work until the entire body arrives at the designated place, which is “*the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*”

The phrase “*till we all come*” speaks of “*distance*” traveled, not of “*time*” elapsed. God calls his people out of many different nations, races, cultures, traditions, religions, and numerous other diverse backgrounds, but He calls them all to come “*...to the unity of the faith.*” It may help to review the words of Paul in the first six verses of this chapter; “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:1-3). These **first three verses** indicate the beginning of the Christian walk; “*...walk worthy...with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering...endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit....*” It speaks of an “*endeavor* (an effort)...*to keep the unity of the Spirit.*” They were “*many members,*” but they were not yet “*one body.*” None were sinners, but many were clinging to past cultures which brought diversity instead of unity. Certainly we should know that our “*strength*” is “*not*” in our “*diversity,*” as some would think, or in one particular culture, as others would hold. Our strength is “*in Christ,*” where there is “*neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28). **The next three verses** (Ephesians 4:4-6) indicate the goal; “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

“...till we all come in the unity of the faith...” These words indicate the arrival to the destination, that is, “*into the unity of the faith,*” referring to the words in **verse five**, “*one faith,*” that is, “*the faith of Christ.*” He did not say, “*...till we all believe the same thing.*” A multitude can believe an error, but it will still be an error. The apostles were unwavering and uncompromising in their faith. They sought no more “*common ground*” with the Greek “*philosophers*” than they did the heathen “*devil worshipers.*” The apostle John said, “*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son*” (I John 1:3). There is only one basis for fellowship, and it is the “*one faith*” of Jesus Christ.

“...and of the knowledge of the Son of God...” This is speaking of a “*full discernment*” of the Son of God. The apostle John said, “*...we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is*” (I John 3:2). Every child of God must seek that clear discernment of Christ, which can only come through the “*spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know... (that you may see...)*” (Ephesians 1:17-18). Never has any person ever “*seen Jesus as He is*” and not been radically transformed. “*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*” (II Corinthians 3:18).

“...unto a perfect man...” This phrase indicates “*one complete man,*” which is “*the body of Christ.*” It is an error to believe that any body of people who have been assembled and organized by some man is the “*body of Christ.*” The “*church,*” as put together by man is an “*organization;*” as put together by Christ, it is an “*organism,*” the living, breathing, body of Christ on earth. In I Corinthians 12:12, Paul says, “*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*” In the next verse he says, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*” (I Corinthians 12:13). It is the mighty baptism “*with the Holy Ghost*” that breathes life into the individual members and “*baptizes*” them into that “*one body*” of Christ, which is the “*perfect man.*”

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

"...unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..." In verse seven of this chapter, Paul says this, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Every Spirit filled believer has received a "measure of the gift of Christ." While it is true that no single person is the "stature of the fullness of Christ," when the "many members" come "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man...." the sum of their "measures" reaches the stature of Christ. Remember the **last verse of the first chapter** which speaks of the church as "...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Both verses are saying the same thing.

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

The Greek word that was translated "stature" in the previous verse speaks of "maturity," both of "age" and "size." To reach the "stature of the fullness of Christ" requires "growth" in every member of the body. Paul notes the necessity for growth in this verse, "That we henceforth be no more children...." The Greek word "nepios," which was translated as "children" actually means "not speaking" and is better understood as "infants" who have not yet learned to speak. It was to "baby Christians" such as these that Paul spoke in Hebrews 5:12, saying, "...when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." These had been saved long enough to be mature, but they were still "infants," not knowing the Word and unable to speak it. They should have been "teachers," but they still needed to be taught. They should have been on "strong meat," which is "to do the will of God" (John 4:34), but they yet required milk.

Those who remain "children" in the church are "tossed to and fro." They are "carried about with every wind of doctrine." Many have been saved for years, yet they do not know what they believe or why they believe it. They are credulous, unsuspecting souls, susceptible to deception "by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." They are the "prey" of unscrupulous preachers who take advantage of them through lies and hypocrisy.

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

"...speaking the truth in love..." The words "speaking the truth" are translated from the Greek word "aletheuo," which means "to be true." What Paul actually said was "...being true in love" or, "...being the truth in love." Paul speaks of this in II Corinthians 4:1-2 where he says, "...we...have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by **manifestation of the truth** commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The apostle had become a "manifestation" of the truth he preached. Those who "are true" have become the "truth" they believe. They will "speak the truth" because they are true, and they will do it "in love." There are many, however, who "speak love" without truth. These are like the ones God spoke of in Ezekiel 33:31; "...with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness."

"...may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Those who are "true" will "grow up into Him in all things." They are "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Romans 8:29). They grow up "...into Him in all things," that is, in every way. Jesus Christ is the pattern of what a mature child of God shall be.

16 From whom (Christ) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Section 7: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:1-16

"...the whole body fitly joined together..." Paul speaks of this in I Corinthians 12:12; "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." The natural body of man has many members which are fitted and joined together by joints and ligaments. Every member is subject to the head and works together with all the other members for the mutual good of the whole body. Paul concludes, "...so also is Christ." Every **Spirit filled** child of God is a member of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:13, Paul said, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...." According to Romans 6:3, sinners are brought into Christ through baptism "into his death," and "...through death..." (Romans 6:6-7) they are no longer sinners. There remains "*the baptism with the Holy Ghost*" which baptizes them "into one body." It is the members of that "one body" that must come "in (into) the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Only then is the body "fitly joined together."

"...and compacted by that which every joint supplieth..." Just as the human body is held together by joints and ligaments, the members of the body of Christ are held together, and, according to the definition of the Greek word translated "compacted," they are "*driven together*" by the "*supply* (the contribution)" of every member.

"...according to the effectual working in the measure of every part..." When Paul uses the term, "effectual working," he is speaking of the working of the Holy Ghost in the saints. In Ephesians 3:7 he says, "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me **by the effectual working of his power.**" He explains that the Holy Ghost will work "...in the measure of every part." The words "every part" speaks of every individual member of Christ. The "measure" of every part speaks of the ministry, or, "*the gift of Christ*" which is given to every member of Christ. Paul says, "...unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." In I Corinthians 12:7 he says, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Every member of Christ who has been baptized into His body has received a "measure" of "*the gift of Christ.*"

"...maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." The Greek word "auxesis" which was translated "increase" means "growth." In Ephesians 2:21, using the analogy of the church as "*the building of God*" (I Corinthians 3:9), Paul said, "...all the building **fitly framed together** groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." In this verse he uses the analogy of the church as the "*body of Christ.*" When the body is "fitly joined together," it "grows up into Him" through the "*working of the Holy Ghost*" in the "*measure* (ministry)" of every member "*unto the edifying of itself in love.*" In the **eleventh and twelfth verses** of this chapter, Paul shows that the "*apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers*" were given by Christ for the "*edifying of the body of Christ*" until the body itself comes into that "*unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*" When the body reaches that stature, it is edified by the Holy Ghost working in the "*measure*" of every "*member.*" It has become "...*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*"

Introduction to Section Eight

The next sixteen verses (the remainder of this chapter) are given as a warning against the one thing that can hinder and even destroy the life of a child of God; it is the “*vanity of the mind*.” Eve had no sin in her nature when she “*reasoned*” with the serpent, walked away from the “*Tree of Life*,” and ate of the “*Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*.” She walked in the vain reasoning’s of her mind, and the end result was the spiritual death of both her and her husband and the fall of all humanity. The message of this letter to the Ephesians is not the foundational doctrine of death and resurrection “*with Christ*,” as is his letter to the Romans. It is a letter revealing the working of the “*holy Spirit of promise*” in those who have “*received the Holy Ghost*” and “*walk in the Spirit*.” We know that we are commanded to “*walk in the Spirit*” and not “*after the flesh*.” What we may not understand is that to “*walk after the flesh*” and to “*walk in the vanity of our mind*” is the same thing. You can do this while trying to please God with all your heart, but as Paul tells us Romans 8:8, “...*they that are in the flesh cannot please God*.”

The Vanity of the Mind

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

“**...this I say therefore...**” This lesson comes as a warning to those who hope to come into the fullness of all that God has prepared for them. It is a warning against the one thing that will absolutely stop the spiritual progress of all who fall into the snare of walking “*in the vanity of the mind*.” These Ephesians have received the “*Holy Spirit of promise*” (Ephesians 1:13); will they now “*walk in the Spirit*,” or will they “*walk in the flesh?*”

“**...walk not as other Gentiles walk...**” It is a mistake to assume that Paul is speaking of unbelieving Gentiles. Both the letter to the Galatians and I Corinthians were written to Gentile churches that had in large part turned to the vanity of the mind. One had turned to the Law of Moses, and the other had returned to lasciviousness. Paul was warning the believers at Ephesus against taking such a course.

“**...in the vanity of their mind...**” Those who “*walk in the vanity of the mind*” seek to serve God out of the natural reasoning of the human intellect. Anyone who does so will never come to the truth that Jesus said would make the one who believes it free from sin. Either they will add laws, rules, principles, etc, to keep them, or they will decide that sin is not an issue of real concern in the life of a Christian. They are subject to deception by teachers like those who came from Judea to the Gentile churches and taught, “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). Paul preached the “*circumcision of Christ*” which was a “*circumcision made without hands*” (Colossians 2:11). The churches at Galatia believed the message of the Judaizers (those who turned the Gentiles to Jewish customs), bringing fast reproof from the apostle Paul; “*For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*” (Galatians 5:3-4). Many churches are filled with such people. In fact, such people are the product of the teaching of such churches. An old proverb warns of such teachings; “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Proverbs 14:12). It “*seems to be the right way*,” but the end is always the same because it is not the “*way of life*.” It is the “*broad way*” of religion, which is a result of the “*vanity of the mind*.”

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Section 8: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
***"The Vanity of the Mind"* Ephesians 4:17-32**

“...having the understanding darkened...” Something that is “*darkened*” once had light. Paul is speaking of those who had lost the spiritual understanding that they once possessed.

“...being alienated from the life of God ...” Those who “*walk in the vanity of their mind*” are “*alienated from the life of God*.” Oh, what a sad predicament! They were still very religious, but the life of God was gone. The reality they once possessed in Christ had been replaced by a lifeless form of religion. They are like “*Cain*,” who continually approached God with a “*sacrifice*” of the “*work of his hands*,” but was never accepted by God. They may be extremely diligent to do all things in perfect order, but they are bringing the wrong sacrifice, for God will accept nothing but the “*blood of the Lamb*” (Jesus Christ). All their efforts to please God are of the flesh because the life of God is not in them. Their understanding is darkened and their hearts are blind.

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

“...being past feeling...” When a believer is turned from the reality of Christ unto the vanity of the mind they are in danger of coming into a state that Paul calls “*past feeling*.” In this condition they no longer feel the presence of God or conviction for sin. Wherever the vanity of their mind leads, they go, unaffected by God or the truth.

“...have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness...” It is in this passage that Paul comes closest to identifying which Gentiles he is speaking of. In I Corinthians Paul rebukes the Corinthians because of the fornication that was among them and for defrauding one another. They had given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness.

The Christians at Galatia were different from those at Corinth. They were embracing the law and all its commandments, but Paul warned them that they would end up in the works of the flesh. It is commonplace for those who have seemed most diligent in keeping every “*jot and tittle*” (Matthew 5:18) of the law, or principles, to “*fall*” into the most atrocious scandals of immorality imaginable. On the other hand, this seems to be the condition of the twenty first century church in general, “...*past feeling...given over unto lasciviousness...with greediness*. ”

20-21 But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been TAUGHT BY HIM, as the truth is in Jesus:

Jesus Christ is the “*author and finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:2). He is not the “*author*” of philosophy, psychiatry, or the Law of Moses. Notice the words of the apostle John in John 1:17, “*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*.” Those who “*receive Him*” also receive “*power (the privilege) to become the sons of God*” (John 1:12). These have not only been taught “**about him**,” which men can do, but they have also been taught “**BY HIM**,” which no man can do. This confirms one of the fundamentals of the New Covenant which is found in Jeremiah 31:34; “...*they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD.*”

“...as the truth is in Jesus...” These **next three verses** will indicate some things which are “*the truth* (as it) *is in Jesus*.” All of these are “*the truth*” which cannot be taught by man, but is taught by the Lord in the very essence and act of salvation.

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Section 8: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
***"The Vanity of the Mind"* Ephesians 4:17-32**

No one has to tell a “*new creature in Christ*” to cease from sin. It is not in his nature to “*continue in sin*” (Romans 6:1-2). No one has to tell him to “*put off the old man*,” because our “*old man is crucified with Christ*” (Romans 6:6); he is “*dead with Christ*,” to sin. The word “*corrupt*” is translated from the Greek word “*phtheiro*,” meaning “*to shrivel or wither.*” It generally speaks of something that is defiled or ruined. The old man (the sin nature) cannot be rehabilitated. It is corrupt and there is no good thing in it. The only answer for the old man of sin is the death of the cross. For those who are “*crucified with Christ*,” the “*old man*” and his “*deceitful lusts*” are “*dead, withered,*” and easily “*put off.*” It is just as if a person would “*put off*” their old, worn out rags and put on a new suit of clothes. These things are inherent for a child of God because they have been “*taught by Him.*”

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

The word “*renewed*” is translated from the Greek word “*ananeoo*,” which means “*to renovate.*” Notice that he did not say to “*renovate your minds,*” which would indicate the common struggle of the religious person to “*change the way you think;*” instead he says, “*be renewed (renovated) in the spirit of your mind,*” which indicates a “*change of mind.*” In I Corinthians 2:16 Paul says, “...we have the mind of Christ.” A child of God does not develop a “*new way of thinking;*” he receives a “*new mind*” which is “*renewed*” day by day by the Spirit of God.

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

Our “*old man*” is “*crucified with Christ*” (Romans 6:6) and a “*new man*” is “*quickened together with Christ*” (Ephesians 2:5). The words “*put on*” are translated from the Greek word “*enduo*,” which means “*to invest with clothing.*” The old man is put off like an old garment, and we are clothed with the new man...

“...which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness...” A child of God is a “*New Creation*” in Christ Jesus. The words “*after God*” indicate that, just as the first creation, the new creation is created in the “*image and likeness of God*” (Genesis 1:27). Paul confirms this fact in several other verses, two of which are “*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*” (Colossians 3:10) and “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren*” (Romans 8:29).

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

While it is certainly true that every child of God will cease from speaking lies to his neighbor, this does not seem to be the purpose of this admonition. “*Wherefore*” connects **this verse** with the words of the **twenty first verse**, which says, “*If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.*” The “*admonition*” is to “*put away the lie, and speak the truth (“as it is in Jesus”) with your neighbour.*” Paul addresses “*the lie*” in other places in the scripture, chief among them being II Thessalonians 2:10-12; “...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” The word “*pleasure*” is translated from the Greek word “*eudokeo*,” Strong’s #2106, meaning “*to think well of, i.e. approve [an act]; specially, to approbate [a person or thing].*” The meaning of approbate is “*To officially sanction; authorize; or approve: i.e., condone.*” Does any of this sound like the modern day church? In his “*indictment*” against Old Testament Israel (Romans 1:25), Paul also says they “...changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.” Isaiah 44:20 speaks of those who worshiped idols, saying, “...a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, **Is there not a LIE in my right hand?**” In the New Tes-

Section 8: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
***"The Vanity of the Mind"* Ephesians 4:17-32**

tament, the “*lie*” was the message of the “*false apostles*” (II Corinthians 11:13), the “*false teachers*” (II Peter 2:1), and the “*false prophets*” (I John 4:1). Put away the lie and speak the truth as it is in Jesus.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Can a child of God be angry without sinning? Yes! On two occasions Jesus drove the money changers out of the Temple, the first time with a whip (John 2:13-17), saying, “*Make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.*” His disciples watched in amazement. They saw the “*heat*” of His words and actions and remembered the scripture that says, “...*the zeal (heat) of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*” (Psalms 69:9). The second occasion was within the last week before He was crucified. It is recorded in Matthew 21:12-13; “*And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*”

Was Jesus angry? Yes! How is it possible that He was so angry, yet did not sin? The answer is found in His own words, “*my Father’s house,*” and in the words of the prophet, “*the zeal of thine house....*” Jesus was never angry in His own defense. Isaiah prophesied of Jesus’ sufferings at Calvary, saying, “*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*” (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus never spoke a word or took an action that was in His own defense. Must a child of God watch silently while little children are assaulted, or a woman is molested? No! Whatever action is necessary to stop the assault will not be sin. Contrariwise, if we are smitten on one cheek, Jesus tells us to “*offer the other also.*” We are never to take vengeance into our own hands.

The word “*angry*” in this verse was translated from the Greek word “*orgizo*,” which means “*to provoke, or enrage.*” A better understanding of this admonition can be gained when written as follows: “**Being provoked, sin not.**” In Matthew 5:22, Jesus condemned “*anger without a cause,*” saying that such are “*in danger of the judgment.*” One example Jesus gave dealing with “*provocation*” is found in Matthew 5:38-40; “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.*” Contrary to what the Law of Moses says, it is sin for a man to take “*an eye for an eye*” or a “*tooth for a tooth.*” It is also sin to “*smite*” the cheek of one who smites your cheek. Instead, Jesus instructed us to “*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*” (Matthew 5:44).

“**...let not the sun go down upon your wrath...**” It is certainly good policy to, if possible, resolve all issues in the same day they arise. Married couples, for example, should never go to sleep in anger. A closer examination of the wording in this phrase, however, gives us a better understanding of what the apostle was actually saying. The words “*let not*” were translated from the Greek word “*me,*” meaning “*not,*” when used as an adverb, and “*lest,*” when used as a conjunction. In this case it is a conjunction between two thoughts, and the entire verse should be understood this way, “*Being provoked, sin not, lest the sun go down on your wrath.*” The word “*wrath*” is translated from the Greek word “*parorgia-mos,*” which means “*rage.*” While “*anger*” can be righteous indignation, “*rage*” cannot. Rage is the sin that is forbidden to those who are provoked to anger. If your anger brings rage, the “*sun*” will go down and *you will walk in darkness.* This is a “*metaphor*” which Paul used just as Malachi did in his prophecy, “...*the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings...*” (Malachi 4:2) and just as Peter also used, “...*until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*” (II Peter 1:19).

27 Neither give place to the devil.

Section 8: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
***"The Vanity of the Mind"* Ephesians 4:17-32**

The word “*neither*” as used in this verse is derived from two different Greek words, the first being “*me*,” meaning “*lest*,” and the second being “*te*,” meaning “*also*.” According to “*Strong’s Dictionary*” this word indicates a “*continued negation*,” which connects it to the preceding verse. With this, we can better understand what Paul was actually saying; “*Being provoked, sin not, lest the sun go down on your wrath, and lest ye also give place to the devil.*” A person who “*rages*” in “*wrath*” most often seems to be “*anointed*” by the devil to say and do the things they do, just as a “*man of God*” may be *anointed* by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel. The former, however, is “*diabolical*” while the latter is “*heavenly*.” When Satan finds place in a person’s life through anger and rage, he brings bitterness, hatred, and unforgiveness into that life. The result is a tormented mind and spirit, even though they may claim to be a child of God. Oh what deception!

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Paul expressed little tolerance for professed Christians who lived off of the hard work of others. Those who in times past had been thieves, filchers, or “*moochers*” must now experience the dignity and reward of working with their own hands. He found it necessary to admonish the churches concerning this practice: “*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread*

(II Thessalonians 3:10-12).

“...that he may have to give to him that needeth...” The goal of a Christian in their own labors should never be personal riches. Rather, they should seek to be a blessing to others and to the work of God. Sadly, there are ministries and ministers who have accumulated incredible personal wealth out of the offerings which were given to “*feed the orphans*,” to “*help the poor*,” or to “*preach the gospel*.” These will receive the same reward as a common street criminal (II Peter 2:13) because their covetousness has made them to become thieves in the house of God (Luke 19:46).

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

The word “*corrupt*” is translated from the Greek word “*sapros*,” which means “*worthless*.” It is an obvious truth that no profanity or filthy language should ever be spoken by those professing righteousness, but this admonition goes beyond that. This verse draws a contrast between “*that which is good to the use of edifying*” and that which is “*worthless*” and cannot edify.

In the first year of my ministry (almost fifty years ago), I met a man from the neighborhood while doing door to door visitation. I thought within myself, “*I’ll just be a ‘regular guy.’ I’ll talk to him about hunting and fishing, so he will like me. Then, if he likes me, maybe he will come to my church, and then, maybe he will get saved.*” For over an hour I visited with him as a “*regular guy*.” We talked about things in which I had no personal interest. Nonetheless, when I stood up to leave, I invited him to visit our church. He told me bluntly, “*We will not be there. We are not into those things.*” I was cut by his words, but as my hand was on the doorknob to leave, the Holy Ghost spoke these words to me; “*If you want, you can be a ‘regular guy,’ or if you want, you can be a ‘man of God’.*” I turned again to this man and asked him simply, “*How is it with your soul?*” Instantly, tears poured from his eyes. He said, “*Preacher, I’m sick of my life. I was raised in church. I sang gospel songs on the radio when I was just a boy. My mom and dad are Christians, and my uncle pastors a Pentecostal church. I’m sick of my life.*” The very next day, in our Sunday morning service, that man and his wife were both wonderfully saved. This would never have happened, had I not made a choice to be the man of God I was called to be.

Section 8: THE HABITATION Chapter Four
"The Vanity of the Mind" Ephesians 4:17-32

There is nothing sinful about hunting or fishing, yet for me to spend my time talking about such things when a soul was in the balance, was worthless. God had sent me to this man because he was ready to turn to the Lord, but he needed a man of God to speak to him. He told me the truth that he wasn't interested in "church," but he knew he desperately needed Jesus. Paul establishes in this text that it is through the "*words of our mouth*" that God has chosen to "*minister grace unto the hearers.*" This agrees with the words of Jesus in John 6:63, "*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*"

30-31 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

These two verses must be connected in order to be correctly understood. In the phrase, "...and grieve not the Holy Spirit..." the word "not" is translated from the Greek word "me," which indicates a very weak "not," or more properly in this case, "lest." We can understand these two verses in this way; "*And lest ye grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption, let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.*" These are the things he has already warned against in **verses twenty six through twenty nine.** These things working in a "believer" will definitely "*grieve the Holy Ghost,*" by which Paul says, "*Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*" This is an extremely dangerous state to walk in.

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The words "forgiving" and "forgiven" are both translated from the Greek word "*charizomai*," which means to "*gratuitously pardon* (or freely pardon)." We are to be kind one to another and tenderhearted, "*gratuitously pardoning one another.*" The words "*for Christ's sake*" were translated from the Greek words "*en Christos*" and should have been translated, "*in Christ.*" II Corinthians 5:19 tells us that "...God was **in Christ**, reconciling the world unto Himself...." In this verse, it is "*in Christ*" that God "*gratuitously pardons*" a repentant sinner and brings them through death and resurrection "*with*" Christ, "*into*" Christ. We who abide "*in Christ*" need no other reason to forgive and pardon others than the love of Christ which the Father has bestowed upon us (I John 3:1).

Introduction to Section Nine

The first twenty verses of this chapter deal with our “*walk*” as the children of God. We are told to “*walk in love*,” to “*walk as children of light*,” and to “*walk circumspectly*.” Those who “*walk in the vanity of their minds*” may try to obey these three commands concerning their walk, but they cannot. Paul gives the secret to such a walk in the eighteenth verse; “...*be filled with the Spirit*.” The Christian walk is, of necessity, a walk “*in the Spirit*.” Paul told the Galatians to “...*walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh*.”

The Christian Walk

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

The imagery here is that of a small child, greatly loved by his father, seeking to walk in his father’s footsteps. The word “*followers*” is translated from the Greek word “*mimetes*,” which means “*to imitate*,” and the words “*dear children*” should be understood as “*beloved children*,” which is the meaning of the Greek word “*agapetos*” that the apostle used. When sinful religious people try to “*imitate*” God, the result can only be hypocrisy or self-righteousness, but when a “*beloved child of God*” seeks to imitate the Father, that is certainly the proper order of things because they are of the same nature. The word “*therefore*” makes the connection between **this verse and the last verse of chapter four**. As our heavenly Father has freely pardoned us through “...*His kindness toward us through (in) Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:7), we are to walk “*in His steps*,” in our kindness to others.

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

We have the example of the Father in the previous two verses, and in this verse we have the example of His Son, Jesus Christ, who “*also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us*.” We are to “*walk*” in that same example of love, giving ourselves, laying our lives down that others may know Him. The apostle John establishes the truth of this in I John 3:16; “*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*”

“...and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour...”
“*Sweetsmelling savour*” is in reference to the “*daily sacrifice*” which was offered every day by the Old Testament priests. One lamb was to be offered in the “*morning*” and the other in the “*evening*.” Both were to be prepared in the same manner so that both would offer a “*sweet smelling savour*” unto God. Jesus fulfilled the “*morning sacrifice*” when He offered himself for our redemption and sanctification “*once for all*” (Hebrews 10:10). His sacrifice is a “*sweet smelling savour*” unto God, as well as to all those who believe. Hebrews 10:10 says “...*we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*” Being “*sanctified*” by His offering, we become the “*evening sacrifice*.” Paul confirms this truth in Romans 12:1: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...*” Those who do so are also a “*sweet savour of Christ unto God*” (II Corinthians 2:15).

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

The three things mentioned in this verse bring up a “*stench*” instead of a “*sweet smelling savour*.” Paul said these are not to be “...*named among you, as becometh saints*.” The word “*becometh*” is translated from the Greek word “*prepo*,” which means “*to be suitable or proper*.” Paul’s statement is best understood as “...*let these things not even once be named as being suitable or proper among the saints*.” Nevertheless, such things are often found “*among the saints*,” but never “*in the saints*.” This fact con-

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five

"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

fuses many who defend such behavior in “*believers*” because, as they say, “*they have already believed in Christ.*” A child of God cannot engage in “*fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness*” unless they have been “*moved away from the hope of the gospel* (Colossians 1:23)” to trust in their own abilities to keep commandments or principles. Romans 7:9 says, “*...when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.*” Only those “*believers*” who have “*died to God*” and are “*alive to Sin*” are found in such behavior.

When such “*improper*” things are found among the saints, strong measures are required. Paul had written to the Corinthians concerning these very issues: “*I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a rai-ler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat*These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you...” (Jude 1:12). They are never to be received into the fellowship of the saints, *as* saints. Only such repentance as that which is wrought in “*godly sorrow* (II Corinthians 7:8-11)” can restore such a one to fellowship with either God or the saints. To “*walk in love*” does not require that we accept sinners as if they were saints, but that we love sinners as sinners and saints as saints and never confuse the two.

“...fornication...” The Greek word is “*porneia*,” which, according to Strong’s concordance, means “*harlotry, including adultery and incest.*”

“...all uncleanness...” This term speaks of all “*moral impurities.*”

“...covetousness...” Of the Ten Commandments, the tenth is “*Thou shalt not covet....*” It is the only commandment that reveals the sin that is in the heart of man. The seventh commandment says, “*Thou shalt not commit adultery,*” but the tenth says, “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.*” The eighth commandment says “*Thou shalt not steal,*” while the tenth says, “*Thou shalt not covet... his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.*” The tenth commandment uncovers the root cause and reason that all the other commandments are broken. In the New Testament, the understanding of covetousness is expanded to include “*the love of money,*” which is “*the root of all evil*” (I Timothy 6:10). The same Greek word, “*pleonexia*,” is also translated as “*covetous practices*” (II Peter 2:14) and “*greediness*” (Ephesians 4:19) and carries the connotation of “*fraudulency*” and “*extortion.*” Rather than being the least of these three evils, “*covetousness*” is the greatest because it is the root cause of every evil.

Paul sees these great evils, “*fornication,*” “*uncleanness*” and “*covetousness,*” as being the end result of those who “*walk in the vanity of their mind,*” as he says in Ephesians 4:17-19, “*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*”

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

Not only are we to beware of the “*greater evils*” of “*fornication, all uncleanness, and covetousness,*” but Paul includes the “*lesser evils*” as things that are “*not convenient,*” which means “*not proper.*” In reality, these are not “*lesser evils*” in the eyes of God, even though they indicate speech instead of action. It is amazing to this writer that many in our day take the fact that Paul warned the church against these things in his day as proof that it is normal and acceptable to find them in the “*church*” two thousand years later. There are many things which are common to man that are never found among the right-

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

teous. In Romans 3:13-14, Paul, using words borrowed from Psalms 5:9, describes some of the attributes of the unrighteous: "*Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.*" He goes on to say that this was spoken of those who are "*under the law*" (Romans 3:19). Today, we find these things of which he writes to be rampant in the world around us, especially in those who are "*without law,*" and even among the religious, who are "*under the law,*" but it does not describe even one truly born again child of God.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

"...this ye know..." The "*whoremonger*," the "*unclean person*," and the "*covetous man*" spoken of in this **fifth verse**, are those who are guilty of "*fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness*" in the **third verse**. It was "*common knowledge (...this ye know...)*" among the saints at Ephesus that no one guilty of such things had any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. This is a statement of absolute truth, and it does not stand alone among the scriptures. In I Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul says, "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*" In Galatians 5:19-21, he says, "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that THEY WHICH DO SUCH THINGS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.*" It is heresy to teach that one who is truly "*born of God*" could also be numbered among any of these.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

"...let no man deceive you with vain words..." Vast multitudes in the church today have been deceived by the "*vain words*" of those who walk in the "*vanity of their minds*." In Colossians 2:8, Paul gave warning to that first century church to "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" In the twenty-first century church, those very things which Paul warned against are the order of the day and have very nearly destroyed every semblance of the church that Jesus built. It is because of these things that the wrath of God "*cometh*" on the "*children of disobedience*."

"...for because of these things..." The word "*because*" was translated from the Greek word "*dia*," which means "*through*." It denotes "*the channel of an act*." In this case, fornication, lasciviousness, and covetousness, those things mentioned in **verses three through five**, are the "*channel*" that brings the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

"...cometh the wrath of God..." The word "*cometh*" was translated from the Greek word "*erchomai*" which means "*to come or go*" but is used only in the present tense. It cannot be referring only to the eternal damnation which awaits the "*fearful and unbelieving, etc.*" in Revelation 22:8; instead it speaks of those who are presently living under the "*indignation*" of God.

"...children of disobedience..." The word "*disobedience*" is translated from the Greek word "*apeitheia*," which means "*disbelief; (obstinate and rebellious)*." This is different from the Greek word "*apaistia*," which means "*faithlessness*" and is commonly called "*unbelief*." A "*disbeliever*" is the person Jesus was speaking of in Mark 16:16, when He said, "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*" This person has heard the truth, but has refused to believe it. In Romans 1:18, Paul says,

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
***"The Christian Walk"* Ephesians 5:1-20**

“...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

This short sentence is not given as a “*command*” but as a warning to the children of God. The word “*not*” in this verse was translated from the Greek word “*me*,” which Paul used often in his warnings to believers. The word “*me*” can be translated as a very weak “*not*” in some cases, however when it is used as a conjunction it should be translated as “*lest*.” This **seventh verse** connects with the **first phrase of verse six** and should be understood as follows: **“Let no man deceive you with vain words...lest ye become partakers (co-participants) with them.”** The warning is against the teachings of those who “*walk in the vanity of their minds:*” if you are deceived by them you will become one with them. You will become “*partakers (co-participants or partners)*” with them, both in their sins and in the wrath that is upon them. The same warning is given by the Spirit when calling God’s people out of *Mystery Babylon*; “*Come out of her, my people, that (in order that) ye be not partakers of her sins, and that (in order that) ye receive not of her plagues*” (Revelation 18:4). We will never win those who speak vain words or those who are deceived through vain words by becoming one with them. Instead, the call of the Spirit is always to “*...come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*” (II Corinthians 6:17-18).

8-10 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Verses **eight** and **ten** should be kept together as one complete sentence, which reaches this conclusion, “*...walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*” The **ninth verse**, which is in parenthesis, is added as an explanation of that which is “*acceptable unto the Lord.*”

“...ye were sometimes darkness...” Paul reminds them of their past, before they “*trusted in Christ.*” The first phrase is better understood as “*For ye were, at one time, darkness...*” No one is “*sometimes darkness*” and “*sometimes light.*” He continues, “*...but now are ye light in the Lord,*” better understood as: “*...but now ye are light in the Lord.*”

“...walk as children of light...” God never tells the “*children of darkness*” to walk “*as children of light.*” If a “*child of light*” is moved away from Christ, he will walk in darkness until he returns to the light. It is impossible for a child of darkness to walk in the light. The attempt to do so is the eternal struggle with sin and temptation which many believe to be the normal life of a Christian.

“...proving what is acceptable unto the Lord...” The word “*proving*” is from the Greek word “*dokimazo*,” which means “*to test*” and “*to approve.*” It is used in the same sense as an assayer tests a precious metal, such as gold, to determine its value. The “*proof*” of the “*children of light*” is the “*fruit of the Spirit,*” which is recognized by all who see their walk.

“...(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)...” This **verse**, which is in parenthesis, should have been placed after the **tenth verse**. The experience of the child of God is not a continuous struggle with sin and temptation. Instead, it is the result of all that Jesus did through His death and resurrection to deliver us from sin and the Law of Moses to serve God in “*newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*” (Romans 7:6). The opposite of the “*fruit of the Spirit*” is the “*works of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:19-21), of which Paul concluded, “*...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” The “*fruit of the Spirit*” cannot be produced as the result

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

of struggle; they are, instead, the natural fruit of those who are “*born of the Spirit*” and are the “*proof*” of the children of God.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

There can be no fellowship between the children of light and the children of darkness. Paul expands on this in II Corinthians 6:14; “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*” The key word in this verse seems to be the word “*unfruitful*,” which immediately follows the citing of the “*fruit of the Spirit*”. The contrast Paul gives between light and darkness, good and evil, and righteousness and unrighteousness is never between a “*believer*” on one side and a “*mass murderer*” or a “*rapist*” on the other. Instead, the contrast is always within the visible church between those who “*walk in light*” and those who “*walk in darkness*. ” It is between those who are “*fruitful*” and those who are “*unfruitful*. ” All may profess to believe, but as an old adage goes, “*the proof of the pudding is in the eating.*” It may appear to be delicious, but “*is it?*” An unfruitful work of darkness could well be a “*Christian*” who appears to be a beautiful tree, but is in reality barren of fruit and loaded with thorns.

“...but rather reprove them...” Reproof is certainly a legitimate work of the ministry. Paul instructed Timothy to “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:2). When there is never reproof or rebuke from the ministers of God, sinful people will fill the churches and be led to believe they are acceptable to God. Reproof is only legitimate, however, when it comes through the manifestation of the “*better way*. ” Jesus said, “*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*” (John 15:22-24) It was the working of the Holy Ghost in Jesus that brought reproof of sin through both His words and His deeds.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are *done* of them in secret.

The key to understanding in this verse is found in the words “*...done of them in secret.*” The word “*done*” is translated from the Greek word “*ginomai*, ” which Strong’s Greek Dictionary defines as “*to cause to be* (“*gen*”- erate), i.e. (reflexively) *to become* (come into being). ” Notice the word “*generate*” in the definition, which defines how certain evil things “*come into being*. ” The sin nature generates them in the thoughts and imaginations of man. The heart becomes a storehouse, filled with evil that may never be manifest openly. Certainly Jesus spoke of this when He taught the Jews in Matthew 5:28, “*I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*”

There is an example given in the eighth chapter of Ezekiel of the seventy elders of Israel worshiping the abominations of the heathen. God took Ezekiel in a vision to the “*Temple of God*” in Jerusalem where he saw numerous examples of idolatry in the “*house of God*. ” In the eighth verse, Ezekiel tells of finding a “*secret chamber*” in the wall of the temple. Engraved on the walls of the chamber were “*...creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel.*” Inside the secret chamber he saw the seventy elders of Israel offering incense to the abominations that were on the wall. In the twelfth verse, God said, “*Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?*” According to the Hebrew, it was in the “*chambers of their imaginations*” that these elders were worshiping idols. These were just a few of the shameful things that were “*done of them in secret.*”

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five

"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

It is easy for the church to fall into the same thinking the Jewish Pharisees had in the days of Jesus' ministry. They did not believe they had sin because they had never acted upon their imaginations. Jesus made it clear that "evil imaginations" are sin.

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

In John 3:19-20 we read these words; "...this is the condemnation, that **light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." This is part of the discourse that followed a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, a good man and a master in Israel, who was one of the seventy elders of the Sanhedrin court. It was to Nicodemus that Jesus first said, "Ye must be born again." It is easy for us to sit in the church as "believers" and believe that all "condemnation" is to the "heathen" of the world; to those who absolutely reject all knowledge of God and live their lives in the depths of iniquity. But even though the scripture (John 3:19) states that "*light is come into the world*", it did not immediately shine upon the heathen nations of that day. Instead, John said, "*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not*" (John 1:11). It was not the harlots and publicans who demanded Jesus' death. Neither did the cry for His death come from Rome. It was the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, high priests, and most of the Sanhedrin court of the Jews who demanded his crucifixion. Why did they hate Him? It was because "*their deeds* (their religious works) *were evil* (dead and harmful in effect; John 3:19)." The contrast between their "*dead works*" and the works Jesus did was like the contrast of darkness and light. They were exposed by the "*brightness of His rising*" (Isaiah 60:3). They loved the darkness, because it covered what they were.

The gospel must be preached in both word and deed. Paul said it was "...*by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God* (II Corinthians 4:2)" that he fully preached the gospel. When "*truth*" is manifested in the children of God, they are, as Jesus said they would be, the "*light of the world*."

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

This verse comes as a warning to those who profess Christ, but walk in darkness. They are spiritually asleep and seek their life among the spiritually dead. An example of this is the prophet Jonah, who was a man of God who did not want to do the will of God. God had said, "*Go to Nineveh,*" but Jonah boarded a ship to go to Tarshish. God sent a great tempest against Jonah, and he didn't even know it because he was asleep in the hold of the ship. When it seemed the ship would be broken to pieces, the sailors found Jonah, still asleep, totally unaware of the storm that was raging. It is amazing that God's message to Jonah was brought by the heathen shipmaster who told him, "*What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not*" (Jonah 1:6). The souls of the lost are perishing while Christians sleep, but if the "*Christians*" do not "*awake*" and "*arise*" from among the dead, they will perish also. Jonah spent "*three days and three nights*" in the belly of a whale before he "*awoke*" from his sleep of spiritual death. His experience became the example Jesus used of his own death and resurrection (Matthew 12:40).

In I Thessalonians 5:7 Paul said, "...*they that sleep, sleep in the night* (in darkness)." It is to these God gives the promise, "...*arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*"

How is it possible for those who have been saved, but are now "*asleep*" in that horrible sleep of spiritual death to "*arise from the dead?*" It must be by that "*same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead*" (Romans 8:11). But what is it that will cause those who are spiritually asleep to awake and seek God diligently to be "*filled with the Spirit.*" Jonah did not "*wake up*" when the shipmaster aroused him. He did

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

not wake up when they threw him headlong into the violent sea. Neither did he wake up when the great fish swallowed him. It was not until, as he said in Jonah 2:5, "*The waters compassed me about, even to the soul....*" Those who are asleep can seem to be strong in every evil circumstance. It is only when they fear the loss of their soul that they will "wake up" and surrender to God. They will seek Him with all their heart in that day, and God will "raise them from the dead." Jonah said, "*When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD*" (Jonah 2:9).

Paul says in Romans 8:11, "...*if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" The word "**raised**" in this verse is from the same Greek word that was translated "**awake**" in verse 14 and means "*to rouse.*" The Holy Ghost will "*awake us*" or "*rouse us*" from the death, or sleep, of carnality. The word "**arise,**" in the phrase "*arise from the dead,*" is from the Greek word "*anistemi,*" which means "*stand up.*" It is by the working of the Holy Ghost that we are awakened or aroused from the sleep of carnality, to stand up from among the dead. If we are "*roused*" by the Holy Ghost, we have the promise that Christ will give us light.

15-16 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

"*Seeing then that you have 'awakened from sleep' and have received 'life and light,' see that you walk circumspectly....*" The word "*circumspectly*" is translated from the Greek word "*akribos,*" which means "*exactly.*" According to the "*American Heritage dictionary,*" the word "*circumspect*" means "*heedful of circumstances and potential consequences,*" or "*prudent,*" which also means, "*careful about ones conduct?*" This verse expands on the **eighth verse of this chapter** which says, "...*for ye (who) were sometimes (at one time) darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:* (therefore) **walk as children of light.**" With this verse Paul is setting forth walking in the "*Spirit,*" as opposed to walking in the "*vanity of the mind*" (Ephesians 4:17). Foolish Christians walk in the vanity of their mind, whereas wise Christians walk in an exact manner, in and by the Spirit of God.

In Romans 1:22, Paul speaks of Old Testament Israel saying this, "...*professing themselves to be wise, they became fools....*" The ancient pagan philosophers were very circumspect, but even as they prided themselves in their "*wisdom,*" they were also fools (I Corinthians 1:20). The unbelieving world needs laws, harsh penalties, and great willpower to keep them from unlawful and sinful activities, while the religious world needs many principles, much counseling, and continual uplifting to do the same. On the contrary, a child of God needs only the new nature which is given us in Christ in order to "*walk circumspectly.*" It is to the child of God that Paul says, "...*see then that ye walk circumspectly....*"

"...not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil..." The word "*fools*" in this verse is translated from the Greek word "*asophos,*" which is used only one time in the New Testament and means "*unwise.*" It is speaking of those "*Christians*" who walk "*in the vanity of their minds,*" while those who are wise redeem the time, "*walking in the Spirit of God.*" The phrase "*redeeming the time,*" explains what the admonition to "*walk circumspectly*" actually means. We have a commission to preach the gospel to every person in the world (Mark 16:15). While it is true that not every child of God is called to "*foreign fields*" of ministry, all are equally responsible to see that the commission is fulfilled. Every hour of every day that is spent in selfish pursuits of pleasure, or personal wealth, at the neglect of that which God has called us to, is an hour or day that is lost forever. That day will never return, and we can never relive it. When the apostle says, "*the days are evil,*" he is not speaking of the moral depravity of the time frame in which we live. Instead, the twenty four hour day we all live in has no intrinsic value of its own. It is fragile and within a few hours will be gone forever. The only value this day will have is that which we give to it. If it is to have value we must use it wisely by doing what God has called us to do. While it is also true that not every child of God is an apostle,

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

prophet, or teacher, in the same list of ministries found in I Corinthians 12:28, Paul also named “*helps*,” meaning “*relief*.” The fact that God may not have called you to full time ministry does not free you to idleness. All are called to be “*help*,” or “*relief*” to those who labor for our Lord.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

“...understanding what the will of the Lord is...” This surely takes us back to Ephesians 1:9-10, where Paul says, “...*having made known unto us the mystery of his will...that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ....*” Throughout this book of Ephesians, Paul has revealed what “*God’s will*” for His church would be. It must be the full manifestation of Christ in (and to) this present world; a manifestation which will fulfill the ministry of gathering all into Christ. This will never be accomplished through the “*vanity of the mind*.” And though it is the will of the Lord for every child of God to busy themselves about “*gathering all into Christ*,” it cannot be accomplished through carnal means. Only as the Holy Ghost works in and through us can we ever fulfill the “*great commission*” (Mark 16:15).

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

To walk in the Holy calling which Paul lays out in the book of Ephesians, we cannot be drunk on “*wine*” or anything else of this world. We must be filled with the Spirit of God. I cannot imagine any child of God being literally “*drunk with wine*,” because we know that “*drunkards*” are listed among those in I Corinthians 6:10 who “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God*.” It is amazing that some use this admonition, which is “*against*” wine, to show that Christians may partake of alcoholic wine or beverages. To be “*drunk with wine*” and say “*I am not a drunkard*” is like being caught in the act of adultery and saying, “*I am not an adulterer*.” This is the height of absurdity. The Greek word “*asotia*,” which is translated “*excess*,” actually means “*unsavedness*” and implies “*extravagant waste*.”

The reverse of being “*filled with the Spirit*” is to be “*drunken*” on, or “*addicted*” to, anything of this present world. We all know of those who are addicted to drugs, alcohol, etc. and the extremes they will go to feed and support their “*habit*.” We know that these extremes are very wrong, yet most churches are filled with people who are “*addicted*” to television, video games, sports, hunting, fishing, and every other kind of indoor and outdoor sport, to the point that they cannot serve God. Anyone who claims to be a “*child of God*,” whose pleasure in doing worldly things is greater than their pleasure in worshiping God, has a problem equally as great as the drunkards and drug addicts of the world. In I Corinthians 16:15, Paul commends the household of Stephanas because “...*they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints*.” What a wonderful “*addiction*” to have.

“...but be filled with the Spirit...” Jesus commanded the believers, the same day He ascended into heaven, to “*wait for the promise of the Father*.” The promise of the Father was that they would be baptized (and filled) with the Holy Ghost. That same “*command*” is to every believer for all time, as Peter tells us in Acts 2:39, “...*the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*.” These saints at Ephesus had received the Holy Ghost according to the promise. Paul was not telling them to “*receive*” the Holy Ghost over and over, but to be “*filled*” into the fullness that God has promised.

The Greek word “*pleroo*,” which is translated “*filled*” in this verse is a much stronger word than “*pletho*,” which was translated “*filled*” in Acts 2:4. On the Day of Pentecost, they were all “*filled*” with the Holy Ghost, literally meaning that they were “*supplied*” with the Holy Ghost.” In this verse Paul speaks of a greater “*fullness*” than they had received in the beginning. They were to be “*abundantly supplied*” into all fullness. (See comments on Ephesians 3:19; “...*that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God*.”)

Section 9: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"The Christian Walk" Ephesians 5:1-20

Some ministers erroneously teach that we must “*die daily*,” but Paul taught that we must be “*renewed daily*” (II Corinthians 4:16). Psalms 68:19 speaks of Jesus Christ, who “*daily loadeth us....*” If we are to be “*full of the Spirit*,” we must be loaded daily with “*His fullness:*” we must be “*filled into His fullness*” every day.

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

This is unquestionably the result of a “*Spirit filled life*.” This is not a carnal commandment to carnal people to go about singing hymns and quoting scriptures. This speaks of the “*song in the heart*.” In Job 35:10, the young man Elihu admonishes Job and his three friends in the midst of Jobs troubles, saying, “...none saith, ‘Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night.’” The “*normal*” condition of a “*Spirit filled*” life is to wake up with a song of praise in the heart to the Lord.

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Again, this is not a carnal commandment, but a result of being “*full*” of the Spirit. The “*giving of thanks*” must never be a dry tradition, but the fruit of a thankful heart. God is the supply, as well as the supplier of all things to His children, even those things of this natural life which we have “*worked with our own hands*” to receive (Ephesians 4:28).

Introduction to Section Ten

The message of the next thirteen verses will bring us to the fifth “*pinnacle of glory*” that will show another aspect of the church which Jesus said He would build (Matthew 16:18). Paul begins with a wonderful discourse on the proper “*relationship*” between husbands and wives, only to reveal in the thirty second verse that it is the relationship between “*Christ and His church*” that is seen. He shows the church to be “*holy and without blemish,*” and the image we see is that of a beautiful “*bride,*” whose wedding garments are “*without spot or wrinkle.*” It is indeed a “*glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle...washed in the blood of the Lamb.*”

His Glorious Bride

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

This verse begins an exhortation that will continue through the remainder of the chapter. The word “*submitting*” is translated from the Greek word “*hypotasso,*” which means “*to subordinate.*” It is a “*reflexive word,*” which means that we “*subordinate ourselves.*” We are to choose the part of a servant through our “*love for the brethren*” and “*fear of God.*” The meaning of this verse is the same as found in Galatians 5:13-14: “*...use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” Paul lived his life as an example of this, as is shown in I Corinthians 9:19, “*For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*”

No one is to be forced or coerced into service however. The church of Jesus Christ is not built by human hands or based on human authority. In I Peter 5:2-3, Peter exhorts the elders as “*shepherds (pastors)*” to “*...feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.*” In Mark 10:42-43, Jesus spoke to His disciples at a time when two of them desired an “*exalted position.*” He said to them, “*Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it NOT be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister (your servant).*”

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Out of the exhortation to “*submit yourselves one to another in the fear of the God*” comes this exhortation to wives; “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*” The husband, who is the head of the wife and household, does not have the authority from God to force his wife into subjection. The godly wife will, however, “*subordinate herself.*” She will honor her husband as the head of the house and seek to do those things which please Him. Her love and service to her own husband is “*as unto the Lord.*” The message of this last phrase will continue throughout the remainder of this chapter.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour (savior) of the body.

In this verse Paul draws a parallel between the proper relationship between a husband and his wife and Christ and His church. The husband is the head of the wife in the same manner as Christ is the head of the church. A correct understanding of this verse will work miracles in any and every marriage. I refer to Ephesians 1:22-23, “*And (God) hath put all things under his (Jesus’) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*” We will see the connection between this verse and the husband/wife relationship in the next few verses.

Section 10: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"His Glorious Bride" Ephesians 5:21-33

Tragically, many men do not understand what it means to be "*the head of the wife.*" They believe they have received "*great authority*" over their wives, but they have not. Instead, they have taken on "*great responsibility,*" both to God and to their wife. The marriage union does not place the man as a "*boss*" and the wife as a "*slave.*" Each is to seek diligently to fulfill their responsibility in the marriage, "*as unto the Lord.*"

"...and He is the saviour of the body..." As the "*savior of the body*" Christ is the protector and provider for His church. In this same way, a godly husband is the protector and provider for the wife. Just as the church is to trust in Jesus for all things, so is the wife to trust in her own husband. She is not to look to any other for anything. When God made woman, he made her to be a "*help (aid)*" to man (Genesis 2:18). God has made both man and woman in such a way that neither is "*complete*" without the other. Paul said, "*The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife*" (I Corinthians 7:4). This is true, not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

What a wonderful result we receive when the church is subject to Christ in all things. It is only then that, by the Holy Ghost, the church becomes "*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*" (Ephesians 1:23). In exactly the same way the body of Christ "*completes the head* (which **is** Christ)" when it is "*complete in Christ,*" even so, in a proper marriage union, the godly wife "*completes*" her godly husband when she finds her completion in Him. They are become "*one flesh*" (**verse thirty one**).

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Love, as spoken of in this text, is far beyond the physical "*passion*" that most people today call love. The love a husband has for his wife is to be the same love that Christ had for the church when He "*gave himself for it.*" It is a totally unselfish love. It is never demanding or controlling though at times it may be firm. The example given is, "...*even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.*" Christ's "*sacrifice*" becomes the pattern for a man's love for his wife. As a protector, a godly man would lay down his life for his wife. As a provider, he will be faithful to prepare himself and to work hard to provide food, clothing, and shelter for his wife and children. He will never expect others to provide the necessary things of this life for his immediate family. He will instead "*work with his hands and eat his own bread*" (II Thessalonians 3:12).

26-27 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

There are two reasons given why Jesus "*gave himself for the church.*" The first is that He might "*sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*" It is very important that we understand the phrase "...*the washing of water by the word.*" In I Peter 1:23-25 we read, "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever...and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" Jesus did not give Himself for the church in order that He might "*sanctify and cleanse it*" with the commands of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, or even the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus. It is the "*gospel of Christ*" that is the "*power of God unto salvation.*" It is a "*full salvation*" in which our old man is "*crucified with Christ*" (Romans 6:6), and He has sanctified us "*with His own blood*" (Hebrews 13:12). It is the "*preaching of the gospel,*" not keeping of principles, that Paul calls the "*washing of water by the word.*" It is "*the faith*" which is revealed in the gospel that both "*justifies*" and "*sanctifies*" the believer.

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Section 10: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"His Glorious Bride" Ephesians 5:21-33

The second reason why Jesus "gave himself for the church" is "...that he might present it to Himself a glorious church." A "glorious church" is represented as a beautiful bride, herself "holy and without blemish" and without a single "spot, or wrinkle" in her wedding dress. The "glory" that is seen in her face is directly connected with "who" and "what" the groom is. Christ has not only "loved the church" and "sanctified and cleansed" her, He has also "glorified" her (the church) with the Holy Spirit of His Father. She is married to Christ; she bears His name and becomes one with Him. In Jesus' prayer to the Father, John 17:22, He says, "...the glory which thou gavest me I have given them."

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

In verse twenty-three, Paul tells us "...the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." This is an established fact! In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul shows that Jesus Christ is "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Christ and His church are "one entity," with Jesus as the head and the church as the body. God said from the beginning, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). In the marriage union, God has placed the man as the head and his wife as his body.

"...he that loveth his wife loveth himself..." A very wise, older pastor told me when I married my wife, "If you want to be 'king' in your house, crown your wife to be queen."

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

It is a "very sick man" who abuses his body, cutting, piercing, tattooing, and distorting it into something grotesque. It is an equally "sick" man that abuses his wife. In Ephesians 1:23, the church is called "...his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." In this text, it is Jesus Christ that "filleth all in all." Christ is our abundant supply of every spiritual blessing. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." In Ephesians 4:8, He "gave gifts unto men." In Psalms 68:19 He "daily loadeth us...." In Ephesians 3:19, we are "...filled with (into) all the fullness of God." Just as our Lord nourishes us and cherishes the church, which is His body, the husband is to nourish and cherish his wife. In his wedding vows, he promises "to love, to honor, and to cherish her." In many traditional wedding vows, the man tells his bride, "...with all my worldly goods I thee endow." He is to love her, provide for her, even lay his own life down for her with the love of Christ, who "loved us and gave Himself for us."

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

FIFTH PINNACLE OF GLORY: A wonderful mystery is expressed in this and the following verse. When Adam received his wife from God, he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:23-24). This verse is conveying something much more wonderful and of much greater importance than just the relationship between Adam and his wife, Eve. "We are members of His body...." In I Corinthians 12:12-13, Paul says "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...." We are baptized, by the Holy Ghost, into that one body which is "the fullness of Him..." (Ephesians 1:23). We are "members in particular" of His body (I Corinthians 12:27). Adam said, concerning Eve, that she was "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." Paul does not say, concerning Christ, that we are "bone of His bone;" he literally says that "we are His body, His flesh, and His bones." In the beginning, God created man "in His image, and in His likeness." Man was a "flesh and bone" image of the invisible God, a visible image of the invisible. All that God did in Adam was lost in the transgression, but Jesus Christ died both for the redemption of man and for all that was lost in the fall

Section 10: THE HABITATION Chapter Five
"His Glorious Bride" Ephesians 5:21-33

In the redemption, he redeemed us from sin and reconciled us unto God. In giving us His Spirit (the Holy Ghost), God restored to us that which was lost in the transgression of Adam. When God “*poured out His Spirit* (the Holy Ghost)” upon the hundred and twenty on the Day of Pentecost, they were transformed into the living, breathing, *flesh and bone* body of Christ, full of the Holy Ghost, to do the will of the Father. In Colossians 1:15, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ, “...who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” In Romans 8:29, Jesus is called “...the firstborn among many brethren,” all of whom are “...conformed to the image of the Son of God.” Every Spirit filled child of God is a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. **His church**, “...which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:23), is also “*His Glorious Bride*,” His “body,” His “flesh,” and His “bones.” The “*fifth pinnacle of glory*” is a “*flesh and bone image of our Lord Jesus Christ*.”

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

It would seem that the **thirty first verse** is speaking exclusively about a man and his wife, but Paul said that he was speaking about Christ and the church. Christ found the “cause” of redemption and reconciliation of lost humanity to be so great that he “*forsook all*” to take Himself a bride from among men. Philippians 2:5-8 says, “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him (himself) the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*” If you can see, between the two phrases, “**equal with God...**” and “**...the death of the cross,**” all that Jesus willingly forsook, then you will know a little more about the great cost of our redemption. It was never about “*taking sinners to heaven.*” It is all about His glorious bride, washed, sanctified, and glorified by Him. This is what He will present unto Himself; “*a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle....*”

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

This entire discourse on the husband and wife has been a revelation of the mystery of Christ and His church. Paul begins this closing verse with an admonition beginning with “*nevertheless.*” He is telling us not to disregard what he has written as not being applicable to us. Instead, let the husband be to the wife what Christ is to the church, and let the wife be to the husband what the church is to Christ, and the result will be a marriage that was born in heaven.

Introduction to Section Eleven

In the first nine verses of this chapter Paul exhorts the “*children*” and the “*fathers*,” along with the “*servants*” and the “*masters*,” in their relationships one with another.

Various Admonitions

1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

In the first ten verses of this chapter, Paul exhorts the “*children*,” the “*fathers*,” the “*servants*,” the “*masters*,” and finally, the “*brethren*.” He begins with the children, reminding them of the fifth commandment of God, the first commandment with a promise. Blessings and long life are promised to those who “*Honor their father and mother*.” Notice that Paul says, “*obey your parents in the Lord*.” No child is to follow their parent away from Christ, or into immoral or dishonest conduct.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

“...provoke not your children to wrath...” This phrase is translated from four separate Greek words which give this meaning to the entire verse; “*...and ye fathers, lest you provoke your children to wrath, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*” This verse speaks of much more than just a single incident; it speaks of their entire lifetime from birth until they are responsible young men or women, ready and able to make their way, on their own. That beautiful newborn child, so “*innocent*” and loving, will one day be either a “*child of God* or a “*child of wrath*;” there is no middle ground. For this reason, the fathers must accept their God given responsibility as the head of the house, not only to “*discipline*,” but to expose them to the “*love, presence, and power of God*” all the days of their lives.

The word “*provoke*” is translated from the Greek word “*parorgizo*,” meaning “*anger alongside*.” Do not argue with them! Do not scream at them! When discipline is necessary, it must be done firmly, methodically, and with much love. It is the responsibility of the parents to do so, with the authority God has given them over their own children. When discipline is done correctly, even if it may seem severe to the parent, it will end with tears of love instead of anger.

The godly husband is the final authority God has placed in the home. The relationship between the husband and the wife is one of “*responsibility*” to each other, with the husband as the “*head*” and the wife as the “*body*.” The relationship of both parents to the children is responsibility and authority. The “*responsibility*” includes providing food, clothing, and shelter. Equally important is to provide a warm, loving, and secure home to the child, in which he or she will grow up secure and confident. The responsibility of the parent to the children is to be a “*good role model*,” an example of everything the child should grow up to be. In matters of discipline, the authority and responsibility of the parents come together. The parent is commanded by God to “*discipline*” the child, and he has given them the “*authority*” to do so.

Proverbs 22:6 says, “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*” There is something about this verse that every parent needs to understand. You cannot train “*your child*” to be a “*child of God*,” and it is a grave mistake to try. You can, however, train them to be an honest, moral, honorable and decent man or woman. You can build a “*good conscience*” in them that will prod them when they stray. You can teach them good work ethics and the value of money at the same time. They can learn from you that a man or woman’s word is the most valuable asset they possess, and they will grow up to be people with a “*good word*” and a “*good name*.” These children,

Section 11: THE HABITATION Chapter Six
"Various Admonitions" Ephesians 6:1-9

"trained" from birth in the way they should go, will not end up as drug addicts, alcoholics, pornographers, fornicators, etc. If you are faithful in this "training" they will be "good" because they are "*your child.*" You did not abdicate your responsibility to the government, to the community, public or private schools, or even to "*Sunday School.*" Your children will "*rise up and call you blessed*" (Proverbs 31:28).

Many parents have discovered, too late, that they could not "*train*" their children to be "*Christians.*" They taught them every principle of what a Christian should be. They discipline them "*because they are a Christian,*" often telling little children things like "*Jesus is sad when you are bad.*" The child most often grows up feeling "*deprived*" because, "*we are Christians.*" Christ becomes the symbol of all their struggles, and they cannot possibly know what a child of God really is.

"...but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord..." This writer has raised six children of his own. He often told them, "*You will be good because I am your dad, but you will be a child of God when you are 'born again'.*" When they were very young they were in gospel services almost every night of the week, beginning with every regular church service, then a "*street service*" on Friday nights, plus rescue mission services at least one night a week, and many revivals. We trusted God in our home for all things. When the children were sick, their first thought was "*Dad, pray for me,*" and we saw the Lord heal them throughout their childhood years. They felt the presence of God; they saw the miracles of God and received the healing of God. The fact that they saw the reality of God and His power brought them one by one to know Him as savior and Lord. I could never teach them to "*know God,*" but I could "*expose them to God*" for His "*nurture and admonition.*"

5-8 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Introduction to Section Twelve

In the next eleven verses, Paul gives a final view of the church that is built upon the foundation of Christ-crucified; it is the “*church triumphant*.” It is easy to read these eleven verses and completely miss the message Paul brings. He warns of the “*wiles of the devil*,” he speaks of an “*evil day*,” and he speaks of conflict with “*principalities and powers*.” Many have thought of the “*whole armor of God*” as our “*defense*” against backsliding, or as a hiding place in times of persecution or tribulation. This is the kind of thinking that has kept the church subdued in troublesome times. The proper foundation for understanding the message of the “*whole armor of God*” is a prophecy in Isaiah 59:14-20, which depicts Christ putting His “*armor*” on to bring deliverance and salvation to lost humanity.

“...and judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the **LORD** saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the **LORD** from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the **LORD** shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion...”

This is not a picture of Jesus’ second coming, as some may think; instead, it is what Jesus did when He gave Himself to die on the cross. It was there, through His death, that he “*destroyed the devil*” (Hebrews 2:14), “*spoiled principalities and powers*” (Colossians 2:15), “*led captivity captive*” (Ephesians 4:8), and reconciled us to God, even when we were “*enemies*” (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21-22). After finishing what He came to do, Jesus ascended to the throne and sat down at the Father’s right hand (Hebrews 1:3). Now, it awaits us to put on “*the armor of God*” and go forth as “*more than conquerors*” (Romans 8:37) to “*proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*” (Isaiah 61:1).

The Church Triumphant

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

“...finally, my brethren...” In each chapter of this letter to the Ephesians, Paul has given us a different view of the church. In the next nine verses he will reveal the church which is “*strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might*.” It is “*The Church Triumphant*.” It is the final and perhaps the greatest view of those who “*first trusted in Christ*,” and the secret that made them the ones who “*turned the world upside down*” in their generation.

“...be strong in the Lord...” Paul exhorts the “*brethren*” to “*be strong in the Lord*.” The secret of our strength is “*in the Lord*.” Paul says in Romans 5:6, “*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*.” A child of God is never “*without strength*.” In Ephesians 3:16 Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus “...to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” It is by the continual working of the Holy Ghost in the saints that their “*inner man*” becomes strong in the Lord.

The necessity of being “*strong in the Lord*” is not that we might be able to “*keep ourselves*” from falling. Jude concludes his short letter, saying, “*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Sa-*

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six

"The Church Triumphant" Ephesians 6:10-24

viour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Our Lord and Savior keeps us who abide in Him from falling and presents us faultless unto our Father. The necessity of our being "strong in the Lord" is that we might fulfill the "ministry of reconciliation" that He has given to us. II Corinthians 5:18 says "*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*" Jesus finished the "work of reconciliation" when He took up the "armor of God" and entered "through death" to destroy "he that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). In His great victory, Jesus delivered us from sin, Satan, and the Law of Moses, to reconcile us to God. Having "reconciled us to Himself," God has now "given to us the ministry of reconciliation," which must be fulfilled until He returns. There is no day so evil that the church of Jesus Christ will not "triumph" over the adversary if we are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

"...and in the power of His might..." This phrase is a reference to the Holy Ghost, the "*Holy Spirit of promise*" that is first mentioned in Ephesians 1:14. In Ephesians 1:19, Paul describes the work of the Holy Ghost as "*the working of his mighty power.*" Everything the "*glorious church*" **is**, is a result of Christ-crucified. Everything the "*triumphant church*" **does** is through "*the working of His mighty power*" in each member of the body of Christ. One of the words Jesus used in reference to the Holy Ghost is "*comforter.*" The English word "*comforter*" is derived from two Latin words, the first being "*com,*" which is a prefix meaning "*together,*" and the word "*fortis,*" which means "*strong.*" When a person is filled with the Holy Ghost, they are "*together strong.*" Our English words "*fort*" and "*fortress*" are derived from the Latin word "*fortis.*" A man or woman who is full of the Holy Ghost and is "*led by the Spirit*" dwells in a "*mighty fortress*" wherever they may go.

11 Put on the whole armour (armor) of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Psalms 91:1-2 says, "*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*" This Psalm, which was actually written by Moses, is a prophecy of our "*dwelling place*" which we have "*in Christ.*" We need not fear "*the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday*" (Psalms 91:5-6) because we are in a mighty "*fortress*" which the adversary can never enter. We can "*rest in Christ Jesus*" with no fear of the adversary because "*God is our defense*" as David also said in nine different verses. Our safety, however, is only "*in Christ.*" Those who are "*moved away*" from Christ to trust in anything else will soon be taken in the snare of the adversary and pierced through with his arrows.

"...put on the whole armour of God..." The armor of God is the armor of a mighty conqueror. It is the same "*armor*" that Jesus wore in the days of His earthly ministry. Isaiah wrote, "***For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke***" (Isaiah 59:17). We must put this same armor on if we are to fulfill the "*ministry of reconciliation*" that has been given to us. The church is commissioned to "*preach the gospel* (the word of reconciliation; II Corinthians 5:19)" to a lost world, but we cannot do it as one confined in a "*fortress*." Those who have "*put on the whole armor of God*" have "*put on Christ.*" They remain in the safety of the "*secret place*" even as they invade the "*strongholds*" of the enemy, to pull them down (II Corinthians 10:4).

"...that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil..." It is necessary that we put on the armor of God, if we are to "*stand against the wiles of the devil.*" The word "*wiles*" is translated from the Greek word "*methodia,*" which, according to Strong's Dictionary, means "*traveling over.*" The word "*methodia*" is a combination of two Greek words, the first of which is "*meta,*" which denotes "*accompaniment*" and is most commonly translated as "*with.*" The second word is "*hodeuo,*" which

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six
***"The Church Triumphant"* Ephesians 6:10-24**

means “*to travel.*” The walk of the saints is totally contrary to the direction of Satan and his “*minions.*” These are the “*principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness*” he speaks of in verse twelve, which work in and control multitudes of “*slaves*” and “*prisoners*” who are bound to follow Satan. The children of God are “*ordained*” to “*walk in good works*” (Ephesians 2:10) and to “*walk worthy of our calling*” (Ephesians 4:1). Our walk is “*in love, as Christ has loved us...*” (Ephesians 5:2); it is “*in the light,*” for we are the “*children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8). Finally, we are called to walk “*...circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil*” (Ephesians 5:17). Have you ever tried to walk through a crowd of thousands of people who are all going the opposite direction? If so, you have some comprehension of what it means to “*stand against the wiles (the traveling over) of the devil.*” Without the “*whole armor of God*” you will be swept away with the “*flood,*” but there is the promise in Isaiah 59:19, “*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*” What we may not understand is that the “*church*” is the “*standard*” that God raises up to stand against the “*wiles*” of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Much of the day to day experience of the child of God will be determined by how they understand this verse of scripture. Many are fearful when they consider that our “*warfare*” is with the unseen principalities and powers of Satan. Such “*fear*” will paralyze an individual or a church and keep them within their four walls where they think they are “*safe.*” The truth is, God has not equipped us to wrestle with “*flesh and blood,*” and anytime we enter that arena, we will suffer loss. He has, however, equipped us, not only to “*wrestle*” with principalities and powers, but to “*triumph over them*” in every time and place. Through His death on the cross, Jesus “*spoiled principalities and powers*” and “*made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Colossians 2:15). He “*stripped*” them of their power to hurt or harm the child of God and left them with only a cunning and lying tongue, “*whereby they lie in wait to deceive*” (Ephesians 4:14).

“...for we wrestle not against flesh and blood...”

We should always remember that our warfare is not against flesh and blood. Anytime we designate any person to be our enemy, we have already lost the conflict. The only way a child of God can have a human enemy is if they have chosen someone to be their enemy. The only way for a child of God to “*destroy*” their human enemies is to love them. Jesus said, “*...love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*” (Matthew 5:44). We should remember that the flesh and blood “*enemies of God*” are also “*slaves and prisoners*” of Satan. Jesus died to “*rescue (save)*” them and we are to “*lay our lives down*” to reach them for Christ.

“...but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places...”

According to Ephesians 1:19, God has given “*the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe,*” which is the same as the “*working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named...and hath put all things under His feet....*” This speaks of the Holy Ghost, working in the children of God just as it did in Christ Jesus, to lift us up into those heavenly places in Christ Jesus, which is “*far above all principality and power.*”

The true enemies of a child of God are the “*principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places,*” and our place is “*far above all principality and power....*” Jesus spoke concerning this when He said, “*Behold, I give unto you power (authority) to tread on serpents (principalities) and scorpions (powers), and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you*” (Luke 10:19). The fact that our true enemies are demonic powers is not

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six
***"The Church Triumphant"* Ephesians 6:10-24**

reason for a child of God to fear, but to rejoice, knowing that God has ordained that we “*tread on*” all such powers of darkness.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Paul shows for the second time the necessity of having “*the whole armor of God*,” this time to “*withstand in the evil day*.” The word “*withstand*” is translated from the Greek word “*anthistemi*,” meaning to “*stand against*.” In the eleventh verse, we must “*Put on the whole armor of God*;” otherwise we will be caught up and swept away by wave after wave of the incoming tide of the adversary. With the “*whole armor of God*” we are able to face, stand, and advance against the tide. In this thirteenth verse, the word “*withstand*” means to actively “*oppose*” the adversary in the evil day. This we can successfully do if we have the whole armor of God.

“...that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day...” In this letter to the Ephesians, Paul has never shown the church to be in a defensive mode, and it is certainly not his purpose now. He knew that an “*evil day*” was coming to the churches, but he had spent his entire ministry as an apostle in just such an “*evil day*.” In II Corinthians 11:24-26 Paul lists a few of the things he has suffered during the time he was also winning the Gentile nations to Christ: “*...of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren....*” In the midst of such an “*evil day*,” the apostle Paul never went into a “*defensive mode*. ” Even when he was forewarned by the Holy Ghost of bondage and imprisonment if he went to Jerusalem, he gave this answer in Acts 20:23-24: “*...the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*”

Paul wrote this letter to Ephesus from prison in Rome, yet he wrote it in “*triumph*. ” In his letter to the Philippians, also written from the Roman prison, he continually rejoiced in Jesus and urged the church to rejoice with him. To the Corinthians, he wrote, “*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place*” (II Corinthians 2:14). Even in prison, the apostle “*triumphed*,” winning many souls to Christ, even in the household of Caesar (Philippians 4:22).

In II Thessalonians 2:7, Paul said, “*...the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*” The word “*letteth*” is translated from the Greek “*katecho*,” which means “*to hold down fast*. ” Paul was speaking about himself and the other apostles, who would preach the truth in the face of every adversary for as long as they lived and thus thwart the efforts of Satan to stop the church. If each succeeding generation of the church would “*put on the whole armor of God*” as the first generation had, the church would continue to “*triumph in every place*” and win every conflict, even in the “*evil day*. ”

“...and having done all, to stand...” This phrase should be understood without the comma, as “*...and having done all to stand....*” What you can do to stand is what this entire discourse on the whole armor of God is about. Paul told us what to do; “*Put on the whole armor of God*.” This is not optional if you are to stand. If you have not put on “*the whole armor of God*” you have not “*done all to stand*. ”

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six

"The Church Triumphant" Ephesians 6:10-24

To those who have “*Put on the whole armor of God*” Paul says, “...and having done all to stand, **stand therefore....**” There is no reason to fear or to be afraid of whatever the day may bring if you have put on the whole armor of God. To those he simply says “*stand therefore....*”

“...having your loins girt about with truth...” In John 14:6, Jesus says, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me.*” Again, in John 8:31-32, Jesus said, “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” Every person who comes to God must come through Jesus Christ. Jesus made it very clear; there is no other way to God except through Him. Without this very basic knowledge, no one can be saved. There is more that the “*seeker*” must understand in the knowledge of Christ. First, we must know who Jesus is. Peter received that “*knowledge*” by revelation from God when he told Jesus, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16). Pre-existing as the “*Word*” Christ was “*in the beginning with God...and He was God*” (John 1:1-2). He was “*made flesh, and dwelt among men*” (John 1:14). He was “*conceived of the Holy Ghost*” (Matthew 1:20) and “*born of a virgin*” (Matthew 1:23). He was “*made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death*” (Hebrews 2:9), and He died on the cross to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). All these great “*truths*” are necessary for the salvation of a single soul, yet not a single soul is made free simply by the knowledge of these “*facts*” of history. The “*knowledge of the truth*” that makes the believer “*free*” is best expressed by the apostle Paul in Romans 6:6-7; “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him (Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead (with Christ) is freed from sin.*”

We must “*know the truth*,” that “*Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8) and “*we died with Him*” (Romans 6:6). The “*truth*” continues, “*He that is dead (with Christ) is freed from sin*” (Romans 6:7), fulfilling the words of Jesus, “...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Not only must we “*know the truth*,” but we must also “*love the truth*.” Paul tells of those who perish “...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (II Thessalonians 2:10). These have **heard** the truth and have professed to **believe it**, but do not **love the truth**. As important as it is that you “*know*” the truth, it is just as important that you “*love*” the truth. Those who do not “*love the truth*” will receive “*strong delusions* (II Thessalonians 2:11)” which will damn their souls. When those around you are falling to deceptions and delusions, it is the “*love of the truth*” that will keep you.

In Romans 6:11 Paul instructs us to “...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Reckoning the truth is our protection against the lie of the enemy, and those who “*know*” it are “*free indeed*” from sin, Satan, and the world. Peter says in I Peter 4:1, “*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*”

“...girt about with truth...” The “*knowledge of the truth*” is the defensive armor that will keep the child of God when the adversary is on the prowl “*as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” (I Peter 5:8). It is when God sends the child of God against the devil that even greater offensive armor is necessary. It is “*truth*” we must be “*girt about*” with, which is not “*knowledge*,” but “*a person*.” Not only did Jesus say “*I am ‘the truth’*,” He also tells us the Holy Ghost is the “*Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father*” (John 15:26). An example of this is found in Saul of Tarsus. The Son of God was revealed to Saul on the road to Damascus when he was first saved. Paul tells us of a later time that it “*pleased God...to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the heathen.*” The “*knowledge of the truth*” was enough to keep Saul when Satan would come against him, but before God sent Saul against Satan to pull down his strongholds, He gave him an armor of truth that the adversary could not penetrate. Saul of Tarsus had “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ*,” which no one can do without the Holy Ghost working in them to reveal Christ through them. He became a “*manifestation of the truth* (II Co-

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six

"The Church Triumphant" Ephesians 6:10-24

rinthians 4:2)" by the powerful working of the Holy Ghost in him. Every child of God, "*having their loins gird about with truth,*" becomes the truth they have received.

When Isaiah foresaw Jesus putting on the armor of God, he said, "...*judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter*" (Isaiah 59:14). When Jesus came in His Father's name, "*truth stood up*" and "*justice entered.*" When the child of God is "...*girt about with truth,*" it is the "*lie*" that will fail.

"...and having on the breastplate of righteousness..." Throughout the Old Testament, the words "**righteousness**" and "**justice**" are used interchangeably. In the King James Version of the New Testament the word "**justice**" is never used, even though it is often the correct word that should have been used. The word "**righteousness**" in this text is translated from the Greek word "*dikaiosune*," which means "*equity (of character or act)*." When it speaks of "**character**," the correct translation is "**righteousness**," but when it speaks of an **act**, i.e., action, it should be understood as "**justice**." When a warrior prepares himself to do battle, he must be certain that his cause is "*just*." If it is just, then "*justice*" becomes his breastplate. In Romans 1:17, it is the "*justice of God*" that is revealed in the gospel. In Romans 3:25, it is the cause of God's "*justice*" that put Jesus on the cross as our "*Passover lamb*." In Romans 5:19, it is "*justice*" that determined there must be a "*second man*" to redeem us from the sin of the "*first man*." Isaiah saw Christ "...*put on righteousness (justice) as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head...*" (Isaiah 59:17). He came on a "*rescue mission*" that would take Him to the cross. Concerning the "*death of the cross*," Jesus said in John 12:27, "...*for this cause came I unto this hour.*" His "*cause*" was just, and "*justice*" was His breastplate.

In Ephesians 3:14, Paul said, "*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ....*" His "*cause*" was the salvation of the Gentiles and their reconciliation to God. Justice was his breastplate as he daily met the adversary to deliver lost humanity out of the bondage of sin and Satan.

Many have believed that God's "*justice*" is His judgment and condemnation of sinners to eternal damnation. They are wrong! God's "*justice*" is the salvation of sinners from the bondage of sin. In Romans 3:25, Paul shows that Christ's death on the cross was to "*declare His (God's) righteousness (justice) for the remission of sins....*" The child of God who accepts God's "*justice*" as their breastplate, has accepted the commission our Lord gave us to "*preach the gospel*" to every person in every nation.

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Isaiah prophesied of this in Isaiah 52:7: "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*" Isaiah was speaking of how the people would rejoice to hear the footsteps on the mountain paths of those who brought good news. Paul quoted Isaiah in this way in Romans 10:15, "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*" Certainly he was referring to this prophecy when he spoke of our feet being shod "*with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*"

Paul says, "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Romans 5:1). The gospel of Jesus Christ is the "*gospel of peace with God*" through Jesus Christ. Some preach the gospel with contention. The words they speak may be true, but their footsteps must seem to the condemned soul to be the sound of their executioner rather than the messenger of their pardon.

"...preparation of the gospel..." Paul exhorts us in II Timothy 2:15 to "*Study (make a prompt and earnest effort) to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" Peter also tells us in I Peter 3:15, to "...*be ready always to give an answer*

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six
"The Church Triumphant" Ephesians 6:10-24

to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." This **fifteenth verse** is simply saying "be prepared" with **the gospel of peace**, which is only found in the rightly divided word of truth, by the diligent seeker. We are to be able and ready at all times to testify of and defend the gospel of peace "*with meekness and fear*" and with "*all boldness (nineteenth verse)*."

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

The words "*above all*" are translated from two Greek words "*epi pas*," which mean, "...superimposed over all." Paul does *not* indicate that "*faith*" is the "*most important*" piece of armor. Too many people neglect truth, justice, and preparation, thinking they will be safe "*in the evil day*" because they "*believe God*" when in fact they don't even know what God has said.

The Greek text has the definite article "*the*" before the word "*faith*" in this passage. What Paul said was "...*taking the shield of 'the faith'*...." "*The Faith*" reveals all that Jesus Christ was and is, all that He accomplished and provided in the redemption, and all that He possesses as He sits at the right hand of the father. It is "*the faith of Jesus Christ*" by which Paul said we are "*justified*" (Galatians 2:16). It is "*the victory that overcometh the world*" in I John 5:4. In this verse, it is an all encompassing shield that "*quenches every fiery dart of the enemy*."

The "*shield of 'the faith'*" is "*superimposed*" over the other pieces of armor. If you are not "*girded with truth;*" if you do not have on the "*breastplate of righteousness;*" if you are not "*prepared in the gospel,*" then you have no shield because the "*shield of faith*" does not exist apart from the other elements of armor.

"...wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked..." With "*the faith*" superimposed over "*truth, righteousness (justice), and preparation,*" the child of God has impenetrable armor, which no "*fiery dart of the wicked*" can penetrate.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

"...the helmet of salvation..." The word "*salvation*" in this verse, as in four other places in the New Testament, is translated from the Greek word "*soterion*," which means "**defender**." Perhaps the best way to show the meaning of this term is to refer once more to the prophecy of Christ in Isaiah 59:15-17: "...*he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head....*"

SIXTH PINNACLE OF GLORY: If we can see the image of a great warrior, in full body armor, putting on his helmet and taking up his sword and shield as he leaves the fortress to do battle, we should understand it is the image of Christ who came from the Father to conquer sin and Satan through His death on the cross. It is also a view of the church, full of the Holy Ghost and in full body armor, obeying the commission to "*go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" It is of such a church that Jesus said, "...*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matthew 16:18). It is the sixth "*pinnacle of Glory*" that Paul reveals in his letter to the Ephesians. It is "***The Church Triumphant.***"

The church is called to take up the helmet of salvation as Christ did and carry salvation to the nations. When Isaiah lamented in Isaiah 59:4 that "*none calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth,*" there was no man who could "*put on righteousness as a breastplate*" and "*take the helmet of salvation.*" Christ has died for us. He has triumphed over the enemy, and salvation is ours. Do not be ashamed! Do not follow the crowd! Put on the "*helmet of salvation*" and tell the world that Jesus saves.

"...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..." The writer of Hebrews says, "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of*

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six
"The Church Triumphant" Ephesians 6:10-24

the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). When the word of God is in the "hands" of the Spirit, it is a devastating weapon given to cast down strongholds and destroy the working of Satan.

The "sword of the Spirit" and "the word of God" are synonymous terms which mean the same thing. The fact that the "word of God" is the "sword of the Spirit" lets us know that it does not fit in the hands of a carnal person. The natural man cannot "rightly divide the word of truth." Paul tells us that "...*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (I Corinthians 2:14). Do not forget that Paul is writing this letter to those Ephesians who were both "saved" and "baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Ephesians 1:13). None of this "armor," most especially "the sword of the Spirit," will properly fit the person who is not also "full of the Holy Ghost."

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

"...praying always..." In I Thessalonians 5:17, Paul says, "Pray without ceasing," which carries the same meaning as "praying always" in this verse. The apostle is not telling us to pray continually, twenty four hours a day. Instead, he is saying to make it a regular occasion to pray, and do not cease.

"...with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." There are two ingredients to prayer; they are "worship" and "petition," which is what the phrase "prayer and supplication" means. Both must be "in the Spirit," again, showing the necessity to be "filled with the Spirit." No one can do anything "in the Spirit," who has not first "received the Spirit."

"...watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints..." The Greek word that was translated "watching" means "sleepless." Certainly, we are to be spiritually awake, but the word indicates those who are found, either early or late, persistently "losing sleep," in their supplications for "all saints."

19 And for me, that *utterance* may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth **boldly, to make known the *mystery of the gospel*,**

The apostle Paul, the greatest among apostles (though not in his own eyes), asked for the prayers of the people everywhere that God would give Him "utterance" by the Holy Ghost to make known the "mystery of the gospel" and that he might do it "boldly." These **three things** which I have italicized are most important. **First**, the word "*utterance*" which is translated from the Greek word "logos." Paul is asking for more than just words; his request is that the message he brings will be a "divine expression" from God Himself. **Second**, he speaks of the "*mystery of the gospel*." In Romans 5:8, "*the gospel*" is simply stated as "*Christ died for us*." However, just the fact that Christ died for us does not save us. The "mystery" of the gospel is this; "*our old man (of sin) is crucified with Him* (with Christ; Romans 6:6)." The "fact" that He "*died for us*" must be combined with the "*mystery*" of Romans 6:6, which says, "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him*." Finally, these two must be "*mixed with faith*" in them that hear (Hebrews 4:2). Not only did Paul feel the need for "*utterance* (divine expression)" to reveal the "*mystery of Christ*," but **thirdly**, he also needed the "**boldness**" to do so. The Greek word that was translated "*boldly*" means "*in all outspokenness; frankness, or bluntness*." The "*mystery of the gospel*" is not a philosophy, or a psychology. God does not "*manipulate*" the thinking of man to change his habits. Instead, He slays the old man of sin on the cross and quickens a "*new man*" with Christ in His resurrection. This cannot be spoken in a corner, fearfully, or timidly, or it will never affect anyone.

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Section 12: THE HABITATION Chapter Six
***"The Church Triumphant"* Ephesians 6:10-24**

Notice that it is the “*mystery of the gospel*” for which Paul is in bonds. Paul suffered for Christ more than any of the other apostles. There are places on earth today that simply “*being a Christian*” will endanger your life. There are other places where you can be arrested for speaking publicly or meeting privately in the name of Jesus. Paul was the man the Lord Jesus chose to reveal the “*mystery of Christ*.” His life was in danger everywhere he went because he carried with him the “*power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth* (i.e., the gospel of Christ; Romans 1:16).” Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter to the Ephesians. His requests that the saints pray for him is that he would receive utterance from God that even in prison he would speak the mystery of the gospel with all boldness. We can know those prayers were answered and that Paul did boldly speak the mystery of the gospel while in prison because of the evidence found in the conclusion of his letter to the Philippians, which was also written from prison; “*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household*” (Philippians 4:22). In another letter from prison, II Timothy 2:8-9, Paul told Timothy to “...remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; **but the word of God is not bound.**” Neither will it ever “*return void*” (Isaiah 55:11).

In Conclusion

The words in Ephesians 1:12, “*...that we should be to the praise of his glory...*” tell us in only ten words why God did all He has done through Jesus Christ for the salvation of lost humanity. The last five words of the same verse, “*...who first trusted in Christ...*,” identify those few men and women God anointed so powerfully in the first generation as a pattern of what God will do in every generation of those who “*also trust in Christ.*” We have seen six different views of that church which reveal exactly what Christ made His church to be. These are the “*Pinnacles of Glory,*” and each of them are “*...to the praise of His glory.*” They describe why Christ did what He did “*...that we should be to the praise of His glory.*”

Six Pinnacles of Glory

First Pinnacle of Glory: “*That we should be...His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23).

Second Pinnacle of Glory: “*That we should be...builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Third Pinnacle of Glory: “*That we should be...filled into all the fullness of God*” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

Fourth Pinnacle of Glory: “*That we should be...the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Fifth Pinnacle of Glory: “*That we should be... His glorious church; a flesh and bone image of Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 5:25-30).

Sixth Pinnacle of Glory: “*That we should be...the triumphant church of Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 6:10-18).

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