

MICHIGAN BIBLE SCHOOL

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“THE PRISON EPISTLES”

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This material was prepared by Charles Coats who works with the church of Christ that meets at 340 North Summit Street, Webberville, Michigan. This information is made available in book form to be used in spreading God's word throughout the world.

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GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!**

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Lesson 1
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I. THE PRISON EPISTLES

1. The books of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon comprise what are known as the Prison Epistles.
2. They get their name from the fact that these were written while Paul was under arrest by the Romans (cf. Acts 28:23-31).
3. Each book references Paul’s situation.
 - a. Eph. 3:1 – “prisoner of Jesus Christ”
 - b. Phil. 1:16 – “to my bonds”
 - c. Col. 4:10 – “Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner”
 - d. Phile. 10 – “whom I have begotten in my bonds”
 - e. Phile. 23 – “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner”
4. These books were written around 62 – 64 A.D.

II. THE AUTHOR

1. Of Paul, we know a great deal. He is the most prolific writer of the New Testament, having penned at least 13 books (Romans through Philemon).
2. Note the following on the life of Paul.
 - a. Acts 7:58 – We are first introduced to him when he was Saul of Tarsus. In this passage, he is a witness to the stoning of Stephen, and those stoning Stephen had laid their garments at the feet of Saul.
 - b. Saul had been educated at the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3).
 - c. Acts 8:1 – Saul is a great persecutor of the church.
 - d. Acts 9:1 – With letters in hand from the Council, Saul is headed to Damascus to arrest Christians.
 - e. Acts 9:18 – After his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus and listening to the message given to him by Ananias, he is baptized into Christ (cf. Acts 22:14-16).
 - f. Gal. 1:17 – After his baptism, he went to Arabia.
 - g. Gal. 1:17 – From Arabia, he came back to Damascus.
 - h. Acts 9:25; Gal. 1:18 – After 3 years, he has to escape Damascus to save his life.
 - i. Acts 9:26; Gal. 1:18 – Comes to Jerusalem.
 - j. Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21 – He is sent by the brethren to Tarsus (Tarsus is Saul’s home town in Cilicia – Acts 21:39; 22:3.)
 - k. Acts 11:25,26 – He is brought from Tarsus to Antioch by Barnabas.
 - l. Acts 11:30; 12:25 – He and Barnabas take the relief money from Antioch to Jerusalem.

- m. Acts 13:2 – With Barnabas, he begins the first missionary journey (45-49 A.D.).
- n. Acts 14:26 – They return to Antioch.
- o. Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:1 – Goes to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders.
- p. Acts 15:30 – Returns to Antioch.
- q. Acts 15:36 – Paul and Barnabas separate after a dispute about Mark.
- r. Acts 15:40 – Paul and Silas go on second missionary journey (50-53 A.D.).
- s. Acts 16:12 – They come to Philippi.
- t. Acts 18:22 – Return to Antioch
- u. Acts 18:23 – Paul begins the third missionary journey (54-58 A.D.)
- v. Acts 19:1 – Paul comes to Ephesus (Apollos had already been preaching in Ephesus – Acts 18).
- w. Acts 20:12 – Paul speaks with the elders from Ephesus.
- x. Acts 21:15 – He comes to Jerusalem.
- y. Acts 21:31 – Paul is arrested at Jerusalem.
- z. Acts 22 – Paul addresses the people at Jerusalem.
- aa. Acts 23 – He goes before the Jewish Council.
- bb. Acts 23:27 – Paul comes before Felix, the Roman governor.
- cc. Acts 25 – Paul comes before Festus, the Roman governor.
- dd. Acts 26 – Paul comes before King Agrippa II. (In his defense, he indicates that he had been a member of the Jewish Council – 26:10).
- ee. Acts 27 – He is sent to Rome (60 A.D.).
- ff. Phile. 22 & Phil. 2:24 – Paul expected that he would be released from his imprisonment at Rome.
- gg. 2 Tim. 4:16 – Paul alludes to a previous defense.
- hh. 2 Tim. 4:6 – Paul knows he is about to die. (68 A.D.)

III. MEMORY TOOLS FOR THE PRISON EPISTLES

1. Ephesians – “The letter of the church”
2. Philippians – “The inspired thank you note”
3. Colossians – “The superiority of Christ”
4. Philemon – “In defense of a runaway slave”

IV. SOME BACKGROUND TO THE LOCATIONS

1. Ephesus
 - a. A port city on the Cayster River in western Asia Minor.
 - b. It was a commercial center as three trade routes converged here.
 - A. From the Tigris/Euphrates River area.
 - B. From Galatia.
 - C. From the Meander Valley to the South.

- c. It considered itself to be the first and great metropolis of Asia.
 - A. The Roman governor came to Ephesus to try important cases.
 - B. The Panionian Games (like the Olympics) were held here.
 - C. A free city that was self-governed.
 - d. It was the home of the Temple of Diana, the goddess of fertility. This was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
 - A. 425' long x 220' wide x 60' high.
 - B. The building had 127 pillars.
 - C. People would put their goods in the temple for safe keeping, thus it served as a bank.
 - D. The perimeter of 200 yards around the temple was a safe haven for criminals.
 - E. Heraclitus, a philosopher of Ephesus, said the morals of the temple were worse than the morals of beasts and that the inhabitants of Ephesus were only fit to be drowned.
 - e. Paul taught at Ephesus (Acts 18, 19), and Timothy also worked here (1 Tim. 1:3).
 - f. Paul also sent Tychicus to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12).
2. Philippi
- a. While Amphipolis was the capital of Macedonia, Philippi was called "the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony" (Acts 16:12).
 - b. It was constituted a Roman colony in 31 B.C. As a colony, Rome would house certain people who Rome did not desire to live in Rome.
 - c. Philippi's history goes back at least to Philip II (358 B.C.), father of Alexander the Great.
 - d. Philippi was the first city in Europe to have the message of Christ preached in it.
3. Colossae
- a. Located in Phrygia, between Laodocia and Hierapolis, it held a position on the most important trade route from Ephesus to the Euphrates.
 - b. The city was known for a peculiar wool that was probably purple in color.
 - c. When the road system was changed, Colossae lost its importance to Laodocia.
4. Philemon was written to an individual who lived in Colossae (cf. Col. 4:1 + Phile. 2 – Archippus; Col. 4:9 + Phile. 10 – Onesimus.)

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V. PAUL’S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. The first two verses of Ephesians 1 contain Paul’s introduction to his letter, including his usual address that grace and peace may abound for them (verse 2).
2. Verse 1 gives us some insight to Paul and the church at Ephesus.
 - a. Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ. In Acts 9:15, Paul is told that he is a chosen vessel to take the message to the Gentiles. Paul tells us that he was given the task of taking the gospel to the Gentiles, as Peter was given the task of taking the gospel to the Jews (Gal. 2:7,8).
 - b. The church is described by two statements.
 - A. “The saints which are at Ephesus”. Saints are those who are set aside. 1 Cor. 6:11 teaches us that the church is sanctified – set aside for a special purpose. It should be noted that all Christians are saints, and not just those to whom some religion has decided to give that title.
 - B. “The faithful in Christ Jesus”. The church is faithful to God and in Christ Jesus. Therefore, those who are not in Christ are not the church.

VI. THE CHURCH IS THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF GOD

1. The church has been blessed with spiritual blessings. These blessings are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). It would therefore be the case that we should be in Christ. Otherwise, we will not have these spiritual blessings. How does one get in Christ? Gal. 3:27 says that we are baptized into Christ. Baptism is a result of our obedience to the message of God (1 Pet. 3:21).
2. The church is the chosen people of God (Eph. 1:4). They were chosen before the foundation of the world.
3. At this point, it will be good to examine a common misconception taught from these verses that deal with predestination.
 - a. Many teach today that everything we do is predestined or predetermined. They say that God has already chosen the path of life for us and that we are going to walk that path regardless. It is also taught that we will be either lost or saved based on the course that has already been determined for us. The most common expression of this concept today is the statement, “It was meant to be”.
 - b. Eph. 1:4,5,11, all use the concept of what appears to show that God has pre-chosen those who will be saved. However, a

complete study of God's word and this context will show that such is not the case. If it is not the case, then what has God predestinated?

- c. Notice the following statements made in these verses beginning at Eph. 1:4.
 - A. "he hath chosen us **in him** before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).
 - B. "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children **by Jesus Christ**" (Eph. 1:5).
 - C. "being predestinated according to the purpose of him **who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**" (Eph. 1:11).
 - D. In these statements, we find that what has been predestined is that we are saved **in him, by Jesus Christ, and according to his will**. This is no different from what is taught throughout the New Testament concerning our salvation – we are saved by God (2 Tim. 1:9) through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12) in obedience to his will (1 Pet. 1:23; Rom. 6:17).
 - E. How were we chosen before the foundation of the world as Eph. 1:4 teaches? In this same book, two chapters later, God gives us this information. The church was known before the world began (Eph. 3:10,11). Jesus is the Savior of the church (Eph. 5:23). Therefore, our salvation is in the church, which we become a part of through our obedience to his word (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47).
 - F. What is predestined is not those who will be saved but the means of our salvation! The word "predestined" used in this passage means "to limit in advance". Therefore, God limited in advance the way that we would be saved. It is man who has tried to offer many ways of salvation, not God. God limited the means of salvation before the world began.
4. What does God say about his chosen people?
 - a. They must be holy and without blame before him (Eph. 1:4).
 - b. They are redeemed by the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7). This blood we have because we walk in the light (1 Jn. 1:7).
 - c. They have been forgiven of their sins (Eph. 1:7).
 - d. They have been given the knowledge of God (Eph. 1:9; cf. 1 Cor. 4:1).
 - e. They are to be one in Christ (Eph. 1:10; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; Jn. 17:20,21).
 - f. They are the heirs of God (Eph., 1:11; Gal. 3:29; Rom. 8:17).
 - g. They trusted in God which was shown by their obedience to the gospel of their salvation (Eph. 1:12,13; cf Rom. 1:16).

- h. They have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). {Sealed – “to stamp”. This was a mark that showed possession.}
- i. They have the Spirit as the earnest of their inheritance (Eph. 1:14). {Earnest – “a pledge”. This word is used to describe that money that is placed down as a security that the balance will be paid. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is God’s pledge that we will have salvation if we fulfill his will – “until the redemption of the purchased possession”.}

VII. PAUL’S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS

- 1. He prayed for them consistently (Eph. 1:16).
- 2. He prayed that they might have wisdom and knowledge (Eph. 1:17).
- 3. He prayed that they might know what awaits them in their inheritance (Eph. 1:18).
- 4. He prayed that they might understand the greatness of God’s power shown by his raising Jesus from the dead and setting him at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:19,20). This is the assurance that we have that God can do all that he has said.

VIII. THE MAJESTY OF JESUS

- 1. He is the preeminent one of the resurrection (Eph. 1:20). Others had been raised from the dead (Lazarus – Jn. 11; Jairus’ daughter – Matt. 9), but none had been raised to sit on the right hand of God.
- 2. Jesus is far above all principality, power, might, dominion, and name, both on Earth and in the world to come (Eph. 1:21).
- 3. All things have been placed in subjection to Christ (Eph. 1:22; Matt. 28:18).
- 4. He is the head of the church (Eph. 1:23).
- 5. The church is the work that he came to complete. It is his ultimate work on Earth (Eph. 1:23) – “the fullness (“completion”) of him that filleth (“to make complete”) all in all”.

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- IX. THE PREVIOUS WALK OF THE EPHESIANS**
1. Ephesians 2 gives us a look at what the Ephesian brethren had once been and how they became what they are at the time of Paul’s writing.
 2. The first three verses give the following concerning what the Ephesian brethren had been before they became Christians.
 - a. They walked according to the course of this world (Eph. 2:2).
 - b. They walked according to the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
 - c. They were the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2).
 - d. They walked in the lusts of the flesh (Eph. 2:3).
 - e. They fulfilled the desires of the flesh and the mind (Eph. 2:3).
 - f. They were the children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).
- X. THEY WERE SAVED BY GRACE**
1. Even when we were dead in sins, he made us alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5).
 2. He has raised us up together and made us sit in spiritual realms (Eph. 2:6).
 3. We have been saved by grace (Eph. 2:5,8).
 4. Our salvation is not of ourselves, but is from God (Eph. 2:8,9; cf. Rom. 6:23).
 5. Saved by grace alone? Verse 8 shows that we are saved by grace THROUGH faith. That is, grace saves because of our faith.
 6. We must maintain good works (Eph. 2:10).
 7. Grace + faith +works = salvation.
- XI. WHAT THEY WERE WITHOUT CHRIST**
1. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:12).
 2. Strangers from the covenant of promise (Eph. 2:12).
 3. Having no hope (Eph. 2:12).
 4. Without God in this world (Eph. 2:12).
- XII. NOW, IN CHRIST JESUS**
1. Made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13).
 2. Made one in Christ (Eph. 2:14).
 3. Made one new man (Eph. 2:15).
 4. Reconciled to God in one body by the cross (Eph. 2:16).
 5. The importance of the church is seen in this section. Our being in a right condition with God is based on our being in Christ, which is the same as in his body, the church.
 6. Have access to the Father through the Spirit (Eph. 2:18).

XIII. THEY WERE NO MORE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS

1. Fellow citizens with the household of God (Eph. 2:19).
2. Of the household of God (Eph. 2:19).
3. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20; cf. Acts 2:42).
4. Jesus is the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).
5. Together the church grows unto a holy temple of God (Eph. 2:21).
6. The church is a habitation of God (Eph. 2:22).

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XIV. THE INSPIRATION OF GOD’S WORD

1. Paul, as he starts his discussion in Eph. 3, talks about the inspiration of the word of God.
 - a. “heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward” (Eph. 3:2)
 - b. “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery” (Eph. 3:3)
 - c. “as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:5).
2. This helps them to understand that these are not merely the words of some man, but in truth, God’s message to them (Eph. 3:4).
3. Other scriptures related to the inspiration of the Bible: 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Sam. 23:2; 2 Pet. 1:20,21; Acts 1:16; Heb. 1:1,2.

XV. SALVATION IS FOR THE GENTILES ALSO

1. A difficult concept for the early church to comprehend was that the gospel was for all mankind, not just those of Jewish background (consider Acts 10).
2. Even though the commission of Jesus was to go into all the world (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15), until Peter’s work with Cornelius, little was done to evangelize the Gentiles.
3. Paul sets the record straight on the Gentiles.
 - a. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, of the same body, and partakers of his promise (Eph. 3:6)
 - b. Paul was sent to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:7,8; cf. Gal. 2:8)
 - c. Paul was to help make all men know the fellowship of the mystery (Eph. 3:9).

XVI. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

1. To make known the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10; cf. 1 Cor. 1:17; 1 Thess. 2:4; 2 Cor. 4:5-7).
2. This was eternally purposed by God in Christ. That is, this was always the plan of God, and not an afterthought or “stop gap” measure (Eph. 3:11).
3. We are to have boldness and not to faint because of the tribulations that we face (Eph. 3:12,13; cf. Heb. 10:23; Acts 4:29).

XVII. SO WE WILL UNDERSTAND THE LOVE OF GOD

1. Paul prays that the Ephesians --
 - a. might have inner strength by the Spirit (Eph. 3:16)
 - b. might have Christ dwell in their hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17).
 - c. might be rooted and grounded in love (Eph. 3:17).
 - d. may be able to comprehend the scope of the love of God (Eph. 3:18,19; For a good understanding of love, study 1 Jn. 4:7ff).

XVIII. TO GOD BE THE GLORY

1. God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask (Eph. 3:20; cf. Phil. 4:19).
2. In the church must be the glory of God by Christ throughout the ages (Eph. 3:21; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 4:7).

XIX. WE ARE TO WALK WORTHILY

1. Eph. 4:1-3 teach us to walk worthy of our vocation.. The word “vocation” has nothing to do with our jobs, but means our “calling” and is a reference to our Christian lives (cf. 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:10; Eph. 4:4 – all use the same word for calling which is translated vocation in Eph. 4:1). What Paul is exhorting them to do is keep their lives faithful to God.
2. We are to walk with lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance (Eph. 4:2; cf. Col. 3).
3. We are to endeavor (“to make speed, earnest; make effort, prompt”) to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3; cf. Jn. 17; 1 Cor. 12:12ff).
4. As Christians, we are to work together for unity which is in Christ Jesus.

XX. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

1. Sometimes, this section (Eph. 4:4-6) is referred to as the seven ones of unity.
2. The seven ones
 - a. One body (Eph. 4:4).
 - b. One spirit (Eph. 4:4).
 - c. One hope of your calling (Eph. 4:4).
 - d. One Lord (Eph. 4:5).
 - e. One faith (Eph. 4:5).
 - f. One baptism (Eph. 4:5).
 - g. One God and Father of all (Eph. 4:6).
3. Of these seven, there are only two that are in question – one body and one baptism.
 - a. While the Bible teaches one body (church), the world teaches there are many bodies. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Jesus established one body (Matt. 16:18).
 - B. Jesus purchased one body (Acts 20:28).
 - C. The saved are added to one body (Acts 2:47).
 - D. Jesus is the head of one body (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18).
 - E. We are baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

- F. The one body will be delivered to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24).
- b. The world teaches there are many baptisms, but consider what the Bible teaches.
 - A. There are 5 baptisms mentioned in the New Testament.
 - 1. Baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11). Matt. 3:12 teaches us that this deals with the punishment of the wicked. This is yet to come, and will not effect our salvation.
 - 2. Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5). This baptism came about only two times – on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and at the teaching of Cornelius (Acts 10:44; 11:15,16). This baptism enabled them to speak in tongues. When the completed word of God came, the ability to perform miracles stopped (1 Cor. 13:8-10). This baptism was temporary and is no more. There is not one example of or implication of this baptism saving anyone.
 - 3. Baptism of suffering (Matt. 20:22,23; Mk. 10:38,39). Contextually, this dealt with the suffering that Jesus and the apostles would undergo. This baptism does not apply to others.
 - 4. Baptism of John (Lk. 7:29; Acts 1:5). This baptism was valid for its time, but after the church was established, it was done away (cf. Acts 19:1-5). This is not the baptism by which we are saved.
 - 5. Baptism in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:41; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:38). This is the baptism that is valid today. It is the only one that is. By it, we –
 - a. Are added to the church (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
 - b. Have remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 - c. Have our sins washed away (Acts 22:16).
 - d. Call upon the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).
 - e. Are saved (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - f. Are brought into Christ (Gal. 3:27).
 - g. Participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3,4).

XXI. THE GIFTS FROM THE FATHER

- 1. God gave various gifts to individuals (Eph. 4:7-10).
- 2. He gave some to be
 - a. Apostles.
 - b. Prophets.
 - c. Evangelists
 - d. Pastors
 - e. Teachers

3. The purpose of these gifts (Eph. 4:12).
 - a. For the perfecting (“complete furnishing”) of the saints (cf. 2 Tim. 3:17)
 - b. For the work (“toil, labor”) of the ministry (cf. 2 Tim. 4:5)
 - c. For the edifying (“building up”) of the body of Christ (cf. Rom. 14:19)

XXII. THE LIVES WE ARE TO LIVE

1. Eph. 4:15-32 shows us some of the things we are to put on and some we are to put off.
2. We are to –
 - a. Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15,16).
 - b. Put off the lives we once lived (Eph. 4:20-22).
 - c. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph. 4:23).
 - d. Put on the new man (Eph. 4:24).
 - e. Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, and forgiving (Eph. 4:32).
3. We are not to –
 - a. Walk as the other Gentiles walked, in the vanity of their mind (Eph. 4:17-19).
 - b. Lie (Eph. 4:25).
 - c. Let the sun go down on our anger (Eph. 4:26).
 - d. Give place (“a spot”) to the Devil (Eph. 4:27).
 - e. Steal (Eph. 4:28).
 - f. Use speech that does not edify those around us (Eph. 4:29; 5:3,4; Col. 4:6).
 - g. Grieve (“distress, cause grief”) the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30).
 - h. Have bitterness (“acridity – caustic in language or tone”), wrath (“passion, fierceness”), anger (“violent passion, ire”), clamour (“outcry, tumult”), evil speaking (“vilification – to defame; blasphemy”), or malice (“badness, depravity”) (Eph. 4:31).

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XXIII. BE YE THEREFORE FOLLOWERS OF GOD

1. As Eph. 5 opens, Paul exhorts the Christians at Ephesus to be followers of God, just like dear children follow their parents (Eph. 5:1).
2. Using Christ as our guide, we are to walk in love (Eph. 5:2).
3. As followers of God, there are things that will not be named among us (Eph. 5:3-5).
 - a. Fornication – “harlotry, illicit sexual activity”
 - b. Uncleaness – “impurity”
 - c. Covetousness – “avarice, by implication fraudulency, extortion”
 - d. Filthiness – “shamefulness, obscenity”
 - e. Foolish talking – “silly talk, buffoonery – making coarse jokes”
 - f. Jestng – “witticism, ribaldry – relating to or indulging in coarse, licentious humor” {Licentious – morally undisciplined or sexually unrestrained}
 - g. Whoremonger – “prostitute”
 - h. Unclean person – “impure, lewd – indecent, obscene”
 - i. Covetous man – “eager for gain” {The text says this person is an idolater.}
 - j. Corresponding passages: 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:9,10; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Heb. 12:16; 13:4; Rev. 21:8,15
4. Of these things, God tells us
 - a. That as saints, these things are not to be named among us (Eph. 5:2).
 - b. They are not convenient (“be proper”) (Eph. 5:4).
 - c. The wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience (Eph. 5:6).

XXIV. BE NOT PARTAKERS WITH THEM

1. Of those who do these evil things, God teaches us to not be partakers (“co-participant”) with them (Eph. 5:7).
2. When we were in darkness, this is how we walked, but now we are children of light (Eph. 5:8).
3. The Christian walks after the fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 5:9).
 - a. Goodness – “virtue, beneficence”
 - b. Righteousness – “equity, justification”
 - c. Truth – “to be true”
4. The Christian does those things which are in full agreement (“acceptable”) to the Lord (Eph. 5:10).

5. The Christian has no fellowship (“to share in company with”) the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). The word “unfruitful” means “to be barren”, thus showing that the things of the world are emptiness.
6. The things of the world are so shameful that a Christian does not speak of them (Eph. 5:12).

XXV. WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY

1. No evil thing will be hidden, but God and his word will bring them to light (Eph. 5:13, 14). Therefore, Christians should wake up to the reality of the situation and understand that our true blessing is in serving Christ.
2. We are to not be as the fools but as the wise. We must walk circumspectly (“exactly”) (Eph. 5:14-16).
 - a. We are to redeem (“to buy up, ransom”) the time, because the days are evil.
 - b. As Christians, we must consider that our days are short and our work is never ending. Our opponent, the Devil, does not rest. We must live our lives as vigilant servants of the Master.

XXVI. BE YE NOT UNWISE

1. As Christians, we must understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17).
2. We are not to be involved with alcohol, but be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). A Christian is motivated by the things of God, and not by the things of the world.
3. Our worship must be directed to God (Eph. 5:19,20).
 - a. In song, we worship God with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (religious songs, not carnal in nature). This worship is done without the aid of mechanical instruments of music, that is, vocal only (“speaking”; “making melody in your heart”). Our singing is reciprocal in action (“to yourselves”). We must sing so as to be heard by others.
 - b. We are to pray to God through Jesus Christ. We must always be thankful for all things.
4. We are to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21). Christians are here to serve (Jn. 13:1-17; Lk. 17:7-10). The word “submit” means “to subordinate, to obey, be under in obedience”.

XXVII. CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

1. In discussing the church, God uses the marriage relationship to help us understand our relationship to Christ as members of his church.
2. Concerning marriage, Paul writes the following.
 - a. Wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands. How submissive? As unto the Lord (Eph. 5:22).
 - b. The husband is the head of the wife. How much of a head? As Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23).

- c. Wives are to be subject to their own husbands in every thing. How subject? As the church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:25).
 - d. Husbands are to love their wives. How deeply? As Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:26).
 - e. Men must love their wives as they love themselves (Eph. 5:28).
 - f. Men must nourish (“to rear up”) and cherish (“to brood”) their wives. The idea expressed is they help them grow to spiritual maturity and protect and care for them (Eph. 5:29).
 - g. A husband and a wife must leave their parents and cleave to one another. They become one (Eph. 5:31).
 - h. The husband is to love his wife and the wife is to reverence (“in awe of”) her husband (Eph. 5:33). Properly speaking, the two hold each other in the highest of respect and greatest of love for one another (cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-7).
3. Concerning the church, Paul writes.
- a. Christ is its head (Eph. 5:23).
 - b. Christ is the savior of the church (Eph. 5:23).
 - c. The church is in submission to Christ (Eph. 5:24).
 - d. Christ loved the church and gave his life for it (Eph. 5:25).
 - e. Christ died that he might sanctify (“make holy”) and cleanse (“purify”) the church (Eph. 5:26).
 - f. The church is to be –
 - A. A glorious church (Eph. 5:27).
 - B. Without spot (“stain, blemish”) (Eph. 5:27).
 - C. Without wrinkle (“fold”) (Eph. 5:27).
 - D. Without any imperfections (“any such thing”) (Eph. 5:27).
 - E. Holy (“sacred”) (Eph. 5:27).
 - F. Without blemish (“without blame”) (Eph. 5:27).
 - g. Christ nourishes and cherishes the church (Eph. 5:28).
 - h. We, in the church, are members (“a limb”) of his body, flesh, and bones (Eph. 5:30). He is the vine and we are the branches (Jn. 15:5).

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XXVIII. DIRECTION TO CHILDREN

1. Eph. 6:1-3
2. Children are commanded to do the following.
 - a. Obey (“to hear under – as a subordinate; to listen attentively”) their parents (1). This obedience is as they direct them in God’s will (“in the Lord”). Consider Prov. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1,2.
 - b. Honor (“to prize, fix a valuation upon”) their parents (2,3). This is the first commandment with promise (Ex. 20:12).
 - A. That it may be well with them.
 - B. That their days may be long on the Earth.

XXIX. DIRECTION TO FATHERS

1. Provoke not your children to wrath (Eph. 6:4). The word “provoke” and the word “wrath” are the same word in the Greek. It means “to anger alongside, enrage”. In contrast to this, fathers are told to bring up (“cherish, rear up, train”) their children. One can enrage where learning never happens or one can guide a child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6).
2. Bring them up in what?
 - a. Nurture – “tutorage, education or training”. This word is used in 2 Tim. 3:16 and is translated “instruction”. Fathers are to instruct their children in the way of God.
 - b. Admonition – “calling attention to, a mild rebuke or warning”. Guidance not only shows where to walk (Psa. 119:105), but also warns against the dangers of walking a different path (Matt. 7:13,14; 2 Tim. 4:2).

XXX. DIRECTION TO SERVANTS

1. The word servant used in Eph. 6:5 is a word that means “slave”. It is later used in verse 8 and is translated “bond” and is contrasted with “free”, a word that indicates one is not a slave.
2. What were servants told to do?
 - a. Be obedient to their masters (Eph. 6:5). The word “obedient” is the same word used in Eph. 6:1 where children are told to obey their parents.
 - b. To work with fear and trembling (Eph. 6:5). While they must respect and understand what their masters can do to them if they do not obey, they must also understand that if they fail to be good servants, they will have to answer to Jesus Christ.

- c. To work with singleness (“sincerity”) of heart. They must remember they are not working for the master on Earth; they are working for the Master in Heaven (Eph. 6:5).
- d. Their work is not just to be a show or that which outwardly pleases men, but must be from the heart. Why? Because this is the will of God (Eph. 6:6). They are the servants of Christ.
- e. They do their work with good will. They serve their masters like they would serve God (Eph. 6:7).
- f. Servants are to remember that they will reap of the Lord what they sow in their work for their masters (Eph. 6:8).

XXXI. DIRECTION TO MASTERS

- 1. The way the servants were to treat their masters, the masters are to treat their servants (Eph. 6:9).
- 2. Masters must not threaten their servants any more (Eph. 6:9).
- 3. As God does not show respect of persons, neither should the master (Eph. 6:9).
- 4. The master must remember that he has a Master in Heaven (Eph. 6:9).

XXXII. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

- 1. Eph. 6:10-17 gives us the information God wants us to have about outfitting ourselves for battle against the Devil.
- 2. Christians must –
 - a. Be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10).
 - b. Put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11).
 - c. Stand against the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:11).
- 3. The Christian’s war is not against foes of this world, but against the rulers, authorities, and the forces of evil in this world. In short, we battle the Devil (Eph. 6:12; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 2:11; Jn. 8:44).
- 4. The whole armor of God will make it where we can withstand the evil when it comes and stand fast for Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:13; 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13).
- 5. The armor!
 - a. Loins girt about with truth (Eph. 6:14; cf. Jn. 17:17).
 - b. Breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14; cf. Psa. 119:160,172).
 - c. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15; cf. Acts 10:36).
 - d. Shield of faith (Eph. 6:16; cf. Jude 3). This will help us withstand the “darts” the devil throws our way.
 - e. Helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17; cf. Rom. 1:16).
 - f. Sword of the spirit (Eph. 6:17), which is the word of God.
 - g. What is the armor of God? It is his word, with which we can defeat the Devil (cf. Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

XXXIII. DIRECTION TO PRAY

1. Pray always (Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-3)
2. 1 Tim. 2:1-3 uses four expressions that help us to understand what prayer is.
 - a. Supplications (“petition, request”) – We ask for that which we need.
 - b. Prayers (“oratory”). This is the general term for prayer. In it, we learn that we must ask if we are to receive.
 - c. Intercessions (“supplication, to confer with”). We seek the guidance of God.
 - d. Giving of thanks (“gratitude”). Never forget to be thankful to God.
3. In Eph. 6:19,20, Paul asks them to pray for him that he may speak boldly in proclaiming God’s word.

XXXIV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Tychicus will come to you and bring you news of me, Paul tells them (Eph. 6:21).
2. Tychicus’ coming will help to comfort them (Eph. 6:22).
3. Peace and grace to them is Paul’s common greeting or salutation to his brethren (Eph. 6:23,24).

XXXV. THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS

1. It is the body of Christ; Christ is its head (Chapter 1).
2. It is where we find peace (Chapter 2).
3. It is to make known the manifold wisdom of God (Chapter 3).
4. It is the only organization Christ built (Chapter 4).
5. It is the unique and pure body of Christ (Chapter 5).
6. It is at war with the Devil (Chapter 6).

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XXXVI. THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

1. As was noted in lesson 1, Philippi was the first city in which the gospel was preached on the European continent. The city itself was a chief city of Macedonia, the northern portion of Greece.
2. To this congregation, Paul pens what has been called “An Inspired Thank You Note”. The care this congregation had for Paul is expressed in their prayers (Phil. 1:19) and in financial help (Phil. 4:15).
3. Paul encourages the brethren to greater faithfulness and gives them the confidence to continue to follow God.
4. As Paul is under Roman guard at the writing of this book it is not surprising to find mention of the palace, where Paul had an influence in teaching the gospel (Phil. 1:13; 4:22).

XXXVII. PAUL’S THANKFULNESS FOR THE BRETHREN

1. In his introductory remarks, Paul specifically mentions the elders and deacons at Philippi (Phil. 1:1). This is the only verse in the New Testament in which both are mentioned together. From 1 Tim. 3, we find that God’s desire was for there to be elders and deacons in every congregation (cf. Acts 14:23). Philippi is an example of a congregation that had fulfilled this desire.
2. Paul made constant mention of them in his prayers (Phil. 1:3,4).
3. He was thankful for their fellowship in helping to spread the gospel (Phil. 1:5).
4. He is confident of their perseverance until Christ come (Phil. 1:6).
5. He is thankful that they helped him even when he was in bonds (Phil. 1:7).

XXXVIII. PAULS’ DESIRE FOR THE BRETHREN

1. He wanted their love to abound more and more in knowledge (“recognition, discernment”) and judgment (“perception”) (Phil. 1:9). Love was to be their guide in dealing with one another and in their decision making.
2. He prayed that they may approve those things which are superior (“excellent”), and they would be sincere (“genuine”) and without offense (“not led to sin”) (Phil. 1:10).
3. They were to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11), those things which by Jesus are for the glory of God.

XXXIX. PAUL'S CONTENTMENT

1. Paul viewed all that had happened to him had benefited the spread of the gospel (Phil. 1:12). To some degree, we can understand this. Because of Paul's arrest, he had been able to preach to –
 - A. A chief captain in the Roman Army (Acts 21:31ff).
 - B. The Jewish people in Jerusalem (Acts 22).
 - C. The Jewish Council (Acts 23).
 - D. To the Roman governor, Felix (Acts 24).
 - E. To the Roman governor, Festus (Acts 25).
 - F. To the Roman king, Agrippa (Acts 26).
 - G. Those among Caesar's household (Acts 25:11; Phil. 4:22).
 - H. To those in the Palace (Phil. 1:13).
2. His endurance of his afflictions had encouraged the brethren to more boldness (Phil. 1:14).
3. Paul is glad that the gospel is preached even when the motivation behind it is not always correct (Phil. 1:15-18).
 - A. Some preach out of envy ("ill will, jealousy").
 - B. Some preach out of strife ("wrangling").
 - C. Some preach out of good will.
 - D. Some preach out of contention ("faction") and not sincerely ("purely"). These hope to make Paul's suffering more severe.
 - E. Some preach out of love.
4. Regardless of their motivation, Paul knew that all of this would work out well for his salvation, with the help of the brethren and the Spirit (Phil. 1:15).
5. Whatever came Paul's way, he was going to preach the word (Phil. 1:20).

XL. PAUL'S DILEMMA

1. Paul was faced with a very difficult decision. As a Roman prisoner, he could be killed at any time. This would be better for Paul personally as he would gain Heaven (Phil. 1:21,23; cf. 2 Tim. 4:6-8).
2. On the other hand, there was still much work to be done. Paul's staying with them would be beneficial to the brethren (Phil. 1:24).
3. Paul's desire is to stay with the brethren and continue to teach them the word and encourage them to faithfulness (Phil. 1:25).
4. He also knew that his coming to them again would bring joy to them (Phil. 1:26).

XLI. WHAT PAUL WANTS FROM THE BRETHREN

1. That they be faithful to Christ ("as it becometh the gospel of Christ") (Phil. 1:27).
2. They were to stand fast (Phil. 1:27).
3. They were to be like-minded (Phil. 1:27).
4. They were not to be afraid of their adversaries (Phil. 1:28).
5. They must believe in Christ (Phil. 1:29).

6. They must suffer for Christ (Phil. 1:29; cf. 1 Pet. 4:16; 2 Tim. 3:12).
7. They were to endure as Paul endures (Phil. 1:30).

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XLII. THE EXHORTATION TO UNITY

1. Phil. 2:1-4
2. Paul exhorts the Philippian brethren to be likeminded. To accomplish this, he tells them the following:
 - a. If there is any consolation (“solace”) in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship (“partnership”) of the Spirit, if any bowels (“pity”) and mercy – Paul is urging them to examine their love for Christ, for him, and for the church. If Christ means anything to them, they need to fulfill his joy (1,2).
 - b. Their oneness would be exemplified in (2) --
 - A. Being likeminded
 - B. Having the same love
 - C. Being of one accord
 - D. Being of one mind
 - c. They would do nothing through strife (“intrigue, faction”) or vainglory (“empty glorying, self conceit”) (3).
 - d. In humility, they would esteem others better than themselves (3).
 - e. They were not to look upon their own things, but look towards helping others (4; cf. Gal. 6:2, 10).

XLIII. THEY WERE TO HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST

1. The mind that was to be in them was to be like the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).
2. What is the mind of Christ? (Phil. 2:6-8)
 - a. He had the form (“nature”) of God. (6).
 - b. He did not consider being equal with God the thing to be grasped or seized (6).
 - c. He made himself of no reputation (“emptied himself”) and took on the nature of a servant (“slave”). He took on the likeness of man (7).
 - d. As a man, he humbled himself and learned obedience. He died upon the cross (8).

XLIV. THE EXALTED CHRIST

1. God exalted him (Phil. 2:9).
2. God gave him a name above every name (Phil. 2:9).
3. Every one should worship Christ (Phil. 2:10).
4. Every tongue should confess (“profess, agree fully”) that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:11).

5. All that is done is to the glory of God (Phil. 2:11).

XLV. WHAT THE PHILIPPIANS WERE TO DO

1. Be obedient even if Paul is not there to see it (Phil. 2:12).
2. Work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. The terms fear and trembling involve terror and incredible fright. All people should work to be saved and remember what will happen to them if they do not (Phil. 2:12).
3. It is God who should be directing them (Phil. 2:13). Therefore, they should do everything without murmurings (“grumbling”) and disputings (“debate”) (Phil. 2:14).
4. They should do this so they will be blameless (“irreproachable”), harmless (“innocent”), and without rebuke (“unblameable”) (Phil. 2:15; cf. 1 Pet. 2:11,12).
5. They must live this way even though the world is crooked and perverse (Phil. 2:15; Tit. 2:12).
 - a. To live above the world, we must look for the heavenly home (Tit. 2:12).
 - b. To live above the world, we must turn and serve God and patiently endure until the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 1:9,10).
6. They must hold forth the word of life (Phil. 2:16). This would also bring great joy to Paul, and assure him that he had not labored in vain among them. Paul’s concern for the Galatian brethren was that they had become so wicked that all of his labor among them had been in vain (Gal. 4:11).

XLVI. PAUL’S DESIRE FOR THE PHILIPPIANS

1. He was unconcerned about his situation knowing that it would bring joy to him and to them if he was sacrificed because of their faith (Phil. 2:17,18; 1:23).
2. He hoped to send Timothy to them so he could know how things were going with them (Phil. 2:19).
 - a. Who was Timothy?
 - A. Timothy becomes a companion of Paul and Silas. He was from the area of Derbe and Lystra, and his mother was Jewish and his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1).
 - B. He was a young man who was left at Ephesus to teach with all authority (1 Tim. 4:12; 1:3; 4:11). He was to teach the church how to behave themselves as Christians (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - C. He is described as a man of God (1 Tim. 6:11).
 - D. In Paul’s last letter, he asks Timothy to come to him shortly (2 Tim. 4:9).
 - b. Of Timothy, Paul said he had no man likeminded and that Timothy was not like the others who only cared for self and not for Christ (Phil. 2:20,21).

- c. Like a son to his father, Timothy had served Paul in the gospel (Phil. 2:22).

XLVII. EPAPHRODITUS IS SENT TO PHILIPPI

1. Paul would send Timothy to them as soon as he knew what was to happen to him, and he hoped that he could come to them shortly himself (Phil. 2:23,24).
2. He sends Epaphroditus to them as he longed to come to them (Phil. 2:25,26).
 - a. Epaphroditus was Paul's brother, companion in labor, and fellow soldier (Phil. 2:25).
 - b. He was their messenger (Phil. 2:25).
 - c. He had provided for Paul's needs (Phil. 2:25).
 - d. The Philippians were concerned for Epaphroditus because he had been gravely ill (Phil. 2:26,27). {It should be noted here that Paul had the ability to heal the sick (cf. Acts 19:11,12) yet he did not heal Epaphroditus. This helps us to understand that miracles were not used on every one, but were only used in instances where the word of God would be confirmed (cf. Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3,4; Jn. 3:1,2)}.
 - e. Epaphroditus would come to them so they could be glad when they see him and they were to receive him with gladness and know him to be of great value ("hold such in reputation") (Phil. 2:28,29).
 - f. Epaphroditus worked hard for Christ even to the point where he was nigh unto death. He did not concern himself with his own life, but worked to supply those things the Philippians were not able to supply for Paul (Phil. 2:30).

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XLVIII. WE ARE THEY WHICH WORSHIP GOD IN THE SPIRIT

1. Paul begins this portion of his letter by contrasting the church and the world. He cautions the Philippians concerning those of which they should be aware. (Phil. 3:1-3).
2. Those of whom they must be aware (Phil. 3:2).
 - a. Dogs – The Jews used this term of the Gentiles, whom they considered ceremonially impure. It is used here of those who are not worthy of entering into Heaven (cf. Rev. 22:15).
 - b. Evil workers – Those who do that which is not in keeping with God’s will. Those whose influence is towards evil and not good. We are not to follow that which is evil (3 Jn. 11).
 - c. Concision – This term means “to mutilate” and is used here in contrast to those of the circumcision of the spirit. This term refers to the Jews who circumcise the flesh. Rom. 2:28,29 teach us that the true circumcision is that of the heart and not of the flesh. The Jews took pride in their “law keeping”, but had not come to understand that the Old Law was done away (Eph. 2:14).
3. The church rejoices in Christ Jesus and has not confidence (“reliance”) in the flesh. The church knows that the things of the flesh will be destroyed in the end and that only those who do the will of God will abide forever (1 Jn. 2:17).

XLIX. PAUL’S STANDING AS A JEW

1. In Phil. 3:4-6, Paul reminds them that he could have gloried in the flesh, after all he had everything going for him there. But, he willingly gave it all up for Christ.
2. How does Paul describe himself?
 - a. Circumcised the eighth day – This is to the letter of the Law and was in keeping with that which God had given to Abraham as a sign between God and Abraham’s descendants (Gen. 17:10-14).
 - b. Of the stock of Israel – His national pride as God’s chosen people.
 - c. Of the tribe of Benjamin – With Judah, the only other tribe that remained faithful to God when the nation split during the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 12:21).
 - d. An Hebrew of Hebrews – A top notch Jew. He was one who had letters from the council to persecute the church (Acts 9:1,2). In many ways, he was their champion.

- e. A Pharisee – Of the strictest branch of the Jewish nation. The Sadducees had denied the resurrection, angels and the spirit of man (Acts 23:8). The Pharisees had not.
- f. A zealous persecutor of the church – The journey from Jerusalem to Damascus was not an easy journey in the 1st Century, yet Paul was willing to make that journey to arrest Christians (Acts 9). After the stoning of Stephen, it was Paul whose persecution of the church caused the Christians to scatter abroad (Acts 8:3,4).
- g. Blameless in the law – He was a law keeper, who was irreproachable and faultless in observance of the law. He believed in and kept the Law of Moses. He was not just a good Jew; he was one of the best.

L. PAUL'S WILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP HIS EARTHLY STANDING

1. How did he view these things when it came down to choosing between these and Jesus? (Phil. 3:7)
 - a. These things were gain to him in the flesh. If we could ever say any one had it made in this world, it was Paul.
 - b. Yet, for Christ, they were that which he was willing to give up. The word "loss" used here means "a detriment". Paul realized that the things the flesh had to offer were that which would hinder him from going to Heaven. They had to go, so he could be what Christ wanted him to be.
2. He counted the things he had as nothing but waste – worthless. These things were only good for being cast out. This was necessary if he were to win Christ. (Phil. 3:8)
3. He did not seek his righteousness in the law that was not in effect, but the righteousness that is of God by faith (Phil. 3:9).
4. Paul conformed his life to the death of Christ (Phil. 3:10).
5. All this he did so he could be happy in the resurrection (Phil. 3:11).

LI. PAUL'S GOAL

1. Paul had not yet attained his goal. He was not yet complete. He worked to apprehend ("to take eagerly, to seize, to possess") those things offered by Christ (Phil. 3:12). He himself had been apprehended or possessed by Christ. As he said in Gal. 2:20, he no longer lived but Christ lived in him.
2. Paul had put his past life behind him. He looked only towards the goal set before him. That he had great standing as a Jew meant nothing to him. There was no allure of the things of the past. The idea of "reaching forth" here is to stretch out for. It gives us the impression of a runner coming to the finish line and stretching out to win the race and claim the prize. (Phil. 3:13).
3. Therefore, Paul pressed ("pursued") the only goal that mattered – the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

LII. HIS PLEA FOR UNITY

1. In Phil. 3:15, as in verse 12, Paul talks about reaching perfection or completeness. It is used in both verses of those who have reached the level that will cause them to be saved. We are to think like those who are spiritual (“be thus minded”).
2. Christians are to do only those things revealed by God (Phil. 3:15). If anything is different than what they had already been taught, they were only to follow it if it were from God. Like the Galatians, they are being warned to not follow false doctrine (cf. Gal. 1:6-9).
3. They were to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing (Phil. 3:16; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10).

LIII. WHERE OUR LIVES REALLY ARE

1. We are to mark those who are godly (Phil. 3:17). Paul lived in such a way that his life could be imitated and those who followed his example would go to Heaven (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Tim. 4:12).
2. There are many who walk ungodly (Phil. 3:18,19).
 - a. They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.
 - b. Their end is destruction (cf. Prov. 14:12; 16:25).
 - c. Their God is their belly. They serve only their needs (cf. Rom. 16:17,18).
 - d. Their glory is their shame. They do not realize they should be ashamed of what they are doing.
 - A. Eph. 5:12 – It is a shame to speak of those things which they do in secret.
 - B. 2 Pet. 2:13 – Sporting themselves with their own deceivings
 - C. Jude 12 – Feeding themselves without fear
 - e. They mind earthly things. They are not concerned with souls.
3. In contrast to the ungodly, Paul reminds us that our lives are in Heaven (Phil. 3:20). It is to Heaven that we look for the coming of Jesus (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; Tit. 1:13; Rev. 22:20).
4. When Christ comes, two things will happen according to Phil. 3:21.
 - a. We will be changed. Our physical bodies will be changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:52-54).
 - b. Christ will subdue all things (cf. 1 Cor. 15:25-28,54-57)

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LIV. PAUL’S CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Phil. 4
2. In this chapter, Paul draws to a conclusion all he has taught in the previous portions of the book. Note verses 1 and 8.
3. At the end of this chapter, he offers the encouraging words that God will take care of us and we can do all things through Christ.
4. This remarkable thank you letter gives us insight into a congregation ready to help the spread of the gospel in every way they can. When they could not, it was because they lacked opportunity (10). Opportunity has best been described as NEED + ABILITY. If the need is there, but we do not have the ability to fulfill that need, we lack opportunity. {We must be careful to not confuse selfishness with the true lack of ability to help.}

LV. A PLEA TO STEADFASTNESS AND UNITY

1. He beseeches them to stand fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1).
2. He calls for Euodias and Syntyche to be of the same mind (Phil. 4:2).
3. He pleads with the brethren to help these two women (Phil. 4:3).
4. He calls upon them because their names are written in the book of life (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19).

LVI. THE WAY THEY ARE TO THINK

1. They are to rejoice always (Phil. 4:4).
2. Because the time is close at hand, they must let their moderation be known to all men (Phil. 4:5). The word moderation means “appropriate, mild”. They were to do those things which were appropriate before all men.
3. They were not to worry (“be careful for nothing”) (Phil. 4:6).
 - a. By prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, they were to let their requests known to God.
 - b. They were not to worry about even one thing (“nothing”), but all (“in every thing”) was to be taken to God for his help. (cf. 1 Pet. 4:19).
 - c. The prayers of the saints are ever before the throne of God (Rev. 5:8; 8:3; 1 Pet. 3:12).
4. The result of casting our cares upon God is a peace that excels beyond all understanding (Phil. 4:7). This shall keep (“guard”) our hearts and minds through Christ. See Eph. 3:18-21.
5. Guidelines for our thinking. (Phil. 4:8). Think on those things which are --
 - a. True – “truth”
 - b. Honest – “venerable, honorable”
 - c. Just – “equitable”

- d. Pure – “clean”
 - e. Lovely – “friendly towards, acceptable”
 - f. Good report – “well spoken of, reputable”
 - g. If there be any virtue (“manliness {valor}, excellence”)
 - h. If there be any praise (“laudation, a commendable thing”)
 - i. Think (“to take an inventory”) on these things
6. These things they were to practice continuously (Phil. 4:9). The word “do” that is used in this verse means to “perform repeatedly or habitually”.

LVII. PAUL’S CONTENTMENT

1. The Philippians had cared for Paul as they had opportunity (Phil. 4:10).
2. Paul was not asking for anything. He had learned to be content (“self complacent”) wherever he was (Phil. 4:11).
 - a. The godly will be content (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Heb. 13:5).
 - b. The ungodly will not be content (Prov. 6:34,35; 3 Jn. 10).
3. He knew how to be abased and how to abound (Phil. 4:12). He had been in many situations in life and had to deal with various challenges (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-33).
4. How did Paul handle the challenges that came his way? He knew that he could do all things through Christ (Phil. 4:13). There was nothing anyone could do to him that would persuade him to not follow Christ. With Christ on his side, he was victorious.

LVIII. THE AID OF THE PHILIPPIAN BRETHREN

1. Even though Paul was in need of nothing, he was thankful to the brethren for their help (Phil. 4:14).
2. When he left Macedonia, none helped him initially except the Philippians (Phil. 4:15,16).
3. Paul was not looking for a gift for himself, but he was thankful for their care because it laid up gifts for them in the right place (Phil. 4:17; Matt. 6:19-21).
4. Epaphroditus had brought the aid from the Philippians (Phil. 4:18). Paul said this was a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God (cf. Rom. 12:1,2).

LIX. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Because of their care for him and their love for the truth, God would take care of them (Phil. 4:19).
2. Paul sends his greetings to them, and also greetings from those in Caesar’s household (Phil. 4:20-23).

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LX. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE COLOSSIAN LETTER

1. Written by Paul to the saints at Colossae, the letter teaches us of the superiority of Christ (which is the memory tool for this book) (Col. 1:1,2)
2. Colossae at one time was an important city in the province of Asia, but lost its prominence to the city of Laodecia, which was located close by. Laodecia is one of the seven churches addressed in the book of Revelation (Rev. 3:14).
3. The congregations at Colossae and Laodecia apparently enjoyed a close relationship, and this letter was to be shared with them (Col. 2:1; 4:15,16).
4. In this book, Paul will remind the brethren what Christ had done for them, a lesson so many of us tend to forget.

LXI. PAUL’S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. The book was from Paul who had Timothy with him at the writing (Col. 1:1).
2. It is addressed to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ (Col. 1:2).
3. Paul was thankful for this congregation (Col. 1:3) for the following reasons:
 - a. Their faith in Christ (Col. 1:4)
 - b. The love for the brethren (Col. 1:4)
 - c. For the hope they have in Heaven (Col. 1:5)
4. They were obedient to the message delivered to them (Col. 1:5-7). They based their hope on the evidence set before them and heeded the teachings given to them. They realized that the word of God was truth (Jn. 17:17) and that the truth would set them free (Jn. 8:32).
5. Their love in the Spirit had been declared unto Paul (Col. 1:8).

LXII. THAT THEY MAY WALK WORTHY

1. Paul continued to pray for them and hoped they would be filled with the knowledge of Christ (Col. 1:9).
 - a. He wanted them to walk worthy (“appropriately”), that is, in compliance with God’s will (Col. 1:10). The word “pleasing” that is used here is a word that means “complaisance”. Complaisance means “inclination to comply willingly with the wishes of others”. Therefore, Paul’s desire for them was they obey God willingly.
 - b. They were encouraged to be fruitful in good work and to grow in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). As will be noted throughout this book, God’s people are not to involve themselves in that which is evil.

- c. They were to be strong in the Lord, patiently enduring with joy (Col. 1:11). This is similar to what James taught in Jas. 1:3,4 and what Peter taught in 1 Pet. 4:12-14.
 - d. They were to give thanks to God because they now had an inheritance with him (Col. 1:12).
2. Col. 1:13 shows us what we now have because we are Christians.
- a. We have been delivered from the power of darkness. We are now free from sin (Rom. 6:18). The term “delivered” means “to rescue”. We were dying in sin and Christ came to our rescue (cf. Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:7,8).
 - b. We have been translated (“transferred”) into the kingdom of Christ. NOTE: It must be noted here that if the Colossians had been placed in the kingdom of Christ, then the kingdom existed at that time. It should also be understood that if the kingdom was in existence at the time, then Christ is not going to come back to establish his kingdom!!!
 - c. What a great blessing we have –LOST, BUT NOW SAVED!

LXIII. WHO IS THIS JESUS?

1. For centuries, man has struggled with this question. They have debated it from every angle that comes to the minds of men, and have never settled on an answer with which they are satisfied. This is to be expected, since they are not bothering to reason from what God has taught us.
2. Who is this Jesus?
 - a. He is our redeemer who bought us with his blood (Col. 1:14; cf. Acts 20:28; Heb. 10:10).
 - b. He is the image of God (Col. 1:15; cf. Jn. 14:9).
 - c. He is the firstborn of every creature (Col. 1:15). The idea of the firstborn has to do with his preeminence and not the order of Creation. How do we know this? Note the verses that follow verse 15.
 - A. By him were all things created (Col. 1:16). What things?
 - a. Things in heaven and in earth
 - b. Things visible and invisible
 - c. All governments and positions of authority
 - d. These were created by him and for him.
 - B. He is before all things (Col. 1:17). Again, a reference to his superiority.
 - C. By him all things consist (“to set together”) (Col. 1:17). The reason we have everything is because of Christ. The reason everything is sustained is because of Christ.
 - D. He is the head of the body, which is the church (Col. 1:18,24).
 - E. He is the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18).
 - F. He has the preeminence in all things (Col. 1:18).

- G. He is the one who reconciled us having made peace through the blood of his cross (Col. 1:19-22).
- H. He died that we might be holy, unblameable (“unblemished”), and unproveable (“unaccused”) in his sight (Col. 1:22; cf. Eph. 5:26,27). No other person and certainly no animal ever did this for us. In fact, it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away our sins (Heb. 10:4). He was our pure sacrifice (Heb. 4:14,15).
- I. Much has been said over the years about Christ being the firstborn of creation and the firstborn from the dead. Some have taken this to mean that Christ was a created being. There are several things wrong with this.
 - a. If all things were created by him (Col. 1:17), then he could not be created. Why? He would have to be one of the all things created! And, to do this, he would have to exist before he existed. Every finite creature has a beginning that came from one who existed before him. Some might argue that God created Jesus and then he created everything else, but this is not what this passage teaches. This passage says all things were created by him and is consistent with what John taught in John 1:3.
 - b. The phrase “firstborn from the dead” helps us to understand how this term is being used. While Christ certainly was the preeminent one raised from the dead, he was not the FIRST one raised from the dead.
 1. Elisha raised a child from the dead (2 Kgs. 4:34).
 2. A dead man came back to life when he touched Elisha’s bones (2 Kgs. 13:21).
 3. Jesus brought Jairus’ daughter back to life (Matt. 9:23).
 4. Jesus raised a widow’s son (Lk. 7:11).
 5. Lazarus was brought forth from the grave after having been dead for four days (Jn. 11:38).
 - c. If Christ were not the first created and the first brought forth from the dead, then he can only be the superior one to all. This is consistent with what is taught in this context.

LXIV. WHAT THE COLOSSIANS MUST DO.

1. They must continue (“remain”) in the faith (Col. 1:23).
2. They must be grounded (“lay a basis”, the idea of a foundation) in the faith (Col. 1:23).
3. They must be settled (“immoveable”) in the faith (Col. 1:23).
4. They must not be moved away (“to place elsewhere”) from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:23).

5. This message is the universal message heard by all (Col. 1:23).

LXV. WHO PAUL IS AND WHAT HE HAD DONE FOR THEM

1. He is a minister of the gospel (Col. 1:23).
2. He rejoiced in his sufferings for them (Col. 1:24).
3. He is the minister of the gospel that brought the message to them and to fulfill the word of God (Col. 1:25).
4. He was the minister of the gospel who made the gospel manifest to them (Col. 1:26,27).
5. He warned them and taught them (Col. 1:28).
6. He gave them what they needed to be presented perfect (“complete”) in Christ (Col. 1:28,29). Paul gave the whole gospel to those whom he taught keeping nothing from them (cf. Acts 20:20,27).

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LXVI. PAUL’S DESIRE FOR THE COLOSSIANS AND THE LAODICEANS

1. Although they had not seen Paul in the flesh, he had a great care (“conflict”) for them (Col. 2:1).
2. His desire was –
 - a. That their hearts be comforted (Col. 2:2).
 - b. That they be knit together in love (Col. 2:2).
 - c. That their hearts would come to the full riches of the assurance that comes from their knowledge (Col. 2:2).
 - d. That they would recognize that the true treasures of wisdom and knowledge were in God and Christ (Col. 2:2,3).

LXVII. PAUL’S WARNING TO THE COLOSSIAN BRETHREN

1. Do not let anyone beguile you with enticing words (Col. 2:4). The false teacher has always had a smooth way of talking while stealing the souls of mankind (Isa. 30:10; 2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 16; Rom. 16:18).
2. They are encouraged to continue to walk in Christ in the way they had received the message (Col. 2:5,6). How so?
 - a. Rooted and built up in him (Col. 2:7).
 - b. Established in the faith (Col. 2:7).
 - c. Abounding in the faith with thanksgiving (Col. 2:7).
3. They were not to listen to men who did not teach the will of God, but rather, taught their own traditions (Col. 2:8).
4. They must listen to Christ for in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9; cf. Jn. 14:9).

LXVIII. WHAT THE COLOSSIANS NOW HAD

1. They were complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). Their head is the head of all powers.
2. They were the chosen of God, circumcised with the true circumcision (Col. 2:11). Rom. 2:28,29 teach us that the true circumcision is not that of the flesh but that of the heart.
3. They were buried with Christ in baptism (Col. 2:12), which finds its force because God raised Christ from the dead. In baptism, one dies to sin, is buried, and rises to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3,4).
4. They have been made alive in Christ and had the forgiveness of their sins (Col. 2:13).

LXIX. WHAT THE CROSS MEANT TO THEM

1. They would not be under the Old Law (Col. 2:14).
 - a. Jesus blotted (“smeared”) it out.
 - b. Jesus took it out of the way.
 - c. Jesus nailed it to the cross.
2. Jesus triumphed over his enemies (Col. 2:15). As the disciples said on the Day of Pentecost, his grave is empty (Acts 2:29-32).
3. Because Christ had set them free from the Old Law, they should not let anyone hold them to the observances under the Old Law (meat, drink, holyday, new moon, Sabbaths) (Col. 2:16). These things were only there as shadows (the reflection from the substance) of the things to come (Col. 2:17).

LXX. WHAT THE COLOSSIANS WERE TO AVOID

1. At Colossae, there were problems with Judaizing teachers, those who tried to make the brethren hold to at least some of the Old Law. They also had a problem with Gnostics.
 - a. A belief that they had a special knowledge making them superior to others.
 - b. They believed that matter was the source of all evil. They did not believe that the spirit of man was evil. (They taught asceticism, yet also encouraged licentiousness.)
 - c. They believed that the Creator of the universe was a being distinct from and inferior to the Supreme Deity.
 - d. They denied the humanity of Christ (note 1 Jn. 2:22; 4:3). Interestingly, they believed Jesus and Christ were two separate beings. Jesus was human; Christ was deity. 1 Jn. 2:23 shows that those who hold this view do not have God, and 1 Jn. 4:3 teaches us that they have the spirit of antichrist.
 - e. They denied the free will of man.
 - f. 1 Tim. 6:20,21 calls this a “*a science (“gnosis”) falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith.*”
2. They were not to let anyone take away their reward of Heaven by causing them to practice false religion (Col. 2:18-23).
 - a. The phrase “beguile you of your reward” is from one Greek word that means “defraud of reward”, that is to take away your reward. The great caution to the Colossians was to not do that which would be of extreme foolishness – allow someone to cause them to be lost!
 - b. Two practices that were from men are mentioned in Col. 2:18.
 - A. Voluntary humility – This would be the practice of showing yourself to be humble religiously. Throughout history, people have made a great show of how humble they are religiously! This humility is false and is designed only to draw attention to the person and not to Christ.

- B. Worshipping of angels – This is a practice that many still practice today. Because people view the angelic host of God to be higher than us and therefore more holy, they see no problem in worshipping the angels. However, John learned from an angel to not worship angels (Rev. 19:10; 22:8,9). Only deity is to be worshipped (Matt. 4:10).
- c. Those that would beguile them do not revere Jesus Christ (Col. 2:19).
- d. Since they were dead to the world through Christ, why would they be entangled again in these things (Col. 2:20)?
 - A. What things? Such things as those that forbid certain things (Col. 2:21). In the history of mankind since the establishment of the church, there have been those who made their religion more of a ritualistic, sometimes self-denying, practice (see 1 Tim. 4:1-3; perhaps something like Lent?). Because these things were from men and not from God, then those who practice such things will perish (Col. 2:22). People can honor God with their lips, but their hearts can still be far from him (Matt. 15:8,9).
 - B. While these things make for great show and work on the emotions of men, they have no value to satisfying the things of the flesh (Col. 2:23). They cause no real happiness, nor do they satisfy the needs of man in glorifying God. They certainly do not give us what we need to go to Heaven!

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LXXI. IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST

1. Paul begins his discussion by placing a supposition before the Colossian brethren – “If ye then be risen with Christ” (Col. 3:1).
2. Based on this statement, Paul shows that they will do the following.
 - a. Seek those things which are above (Col. 3:1).
 - b. Set their affections on things above (Col. 3:2).
 - c. Remember that they have died and their lives are now hid in Christ (Col. 3:3).
 - d. Live in such a way that when Christ comes they will be above to receive the reward in glory (Col. 3:4).

LXXII. THEY ARE TO PUT AWAY THESE THINGS

1. They are to mortify these (Col. 3:5).
 - a. Fornication – “illicit sexual activity”
 - b. Uncleaness – “impurity”
 - c. Inordinate affection – “improper affection, lust”
 - d. Evil concupiscence – “evil desire, esp. sexual”
 - e. Covetousness – “avarice, excessive desire for wealth”
2. They are to put off these (Col. 3:8,9).
 - a. Anger – “indignation”
 - b. Wrath – “fierceness”
 - c. Malice – “badness, depravity”
 - d. Blasphemy – “to defame, esp. God”
 - e. Filthy communication out of your mouth – “vile conversation”
 - f. Lying
3. Why were they to put off these things?
 - a. Because the wrath of God comes upon those who do such things (Col. 3:6).
 - b. Because this is what they used to do when they were in the world (Col. 3:7).
 - c. Because they have put off the old man of sin (Col. 3:9).
 - d. Because they have put on the new man (Col. 3:10).
 - e. Because Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

LXXIII. THEY ARE TO PUT ON THESE THINGS

1. They are to put on these (Col. 3:12,13).
 - a. Bowels of mercies
 - b. Kindness
 - c. Humbleness of mind
 - d. Meekness

- e. Longsuffering
 - f. Forbearance
 - g. Forgiveness
2. Above all, they are to put on love (Col. 3:14).
 3. They have been called in one body, therefore be thankful (Col. 3:15).

LXXIV. WHAT WERE THEY TO DO?

1. Let the word of Christ dwell in them richly (Col. 3:16).
2. Teach and admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16).
3. Sing with grace in their hearts to God (Col. 3:16).
4. Do everything by the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17).
5. Families must live in keeping with God's will.
 - a. Wives are to submit to their husbands (Col. 3:18).
 - b. Husbands are to love their wives (Col. 3:19).
 - c. Children are to obey their parents (Col. 3:20).
 - d. Fathers are not to provoke their children to anger (Col. 3:21).
6. Servants were to obey their masters (Col. 3:22).
 - a. Not with eye service.
 - b. Not as men pleasers.
 - c. They were to have one heart (singleness – “not self-seeking”) – to fear God.
7. They were to do everything they did heartily to the Lord (Col. 3:23). The word “heartily” comes from two words that mean “out of breath”. This gives us the idea that our service to God must be such that we give everything we have, as the person strives to accomplish a task until they run out of breath and cannot go any farther.

LXXV. WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR CHOICES?

1. If they serve Christ, they will receive the reward of their inheritance (Col. 3:24).
2. If they do wrong, they will be punished by God. They will reap what they have sown (Col. 3:25).
3. They must always remember that with God there is no respect of persons (Col. 3:25). That is, no one will get away with anything and God will not show any favoritism.

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LXXVI. PAUL’S CLOSING REMARKS IN COLOSSIANS

1. Col. 4 continues the instructions to the various groups of people at Colossae.
2. In chapter 3, he spoke to wives, husbands, children, fathers, and servants. In this chapter, he deals with the other side of the master/servant relationship and then gives some general instructions for all.
3. He concludes this letter with words of exhortation for all.

LXXVII. TO THE MASTERS

1. They were to give their servants that which was just and equal (Col. 4:1).
2. Just – Equitable
3. Equal – equity, likeness
4. The answer to slavery has always been found in the Bible. While not condemned, slavery was always regulated. Masters in the 1st Century could do anything they wanted to their slaves. Christian masters and Christian slaves treated one another fairly and equally. Thus, although master and slave, their real relationship was that of brethren in Christ. No longer one’s property, but one’s brother.
5. To help them understand why they must treat their servants so, masters are reminded that they have a Master in Heaven (Col. 4:1).

LXXVIII. CONTINUE IN PRAYER

1. Twice in Col. 4, prayer is addressed.
2. They were to continue in prayer (“be earnest towards, to persevere, be constantly diligent”) (vs. 2; 1 Thess. 5:17).
3. They were to be watchful in prayer with thanksgiving (vs. 2). {Watch – “be vigilant”}. They were to be fervent and alert ever thankful to God for this great blessing to address him.
4. They were to pray that a door would be opened so Paul and the others could continue to preach the word (vs. 3).
5. They were to pray that Paul would be able to make the word clear before all men (vs. 4).
6. They were to pray that they may be able to stand perfect before God (vs. 12).
7. Paul helps them to understand the importance and power of prayer.

LXXIX. WALK IN WISDOM

1. The Colossians were exhorted to walk in wisdom (“understanding what is true, right, or lasting; good judgment; common sense”) (Col. 4:5).

2. They were to walk in wisdom toward them that are without. Those outside the church must see Christ living in them. Their ability to win souls would be dependent upon how they dealt with those who were not Christians (cf. Acts 2:47; 1 Tim. 3:7).
3. They were to redeem (“to buy up, ransom”) the time. This was also what Paul told the Ephesians (Eph. 5:15,16).
4. We must use our time wisely as precious souls are before us always. The world is working hard to pull people away from Christ and time is running out for many. Therefore, walk in wisdom.

LXXX. OUR SPEECH

1. It is to ALWAYS be with grace (“graciousness, acceptable, benefit”). (Col. 4:6).
2. It is to be seasoned with salt (“prepared”). The concept is as salt helps food taste good, our speech must always be good and “taste right” to others.
3. Why must we have this attitude in speech? So we can know how we ought to answer one another. Knowledge is important and must be taught to others, but others will not listen if we do not speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).
4. We must be willing to give an answer to every man that asks a reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). If we want people to listen to us, we must have speech that is different from the world and that helps to encourage all around us.

LXXXI. VARIOUS GREETINGS

1. Tychicus will tell them about Paul and get information on them for Paul (Col. 4:7,8).
2. Onesimus would come with Tychicus (Col. 4:9).
3. Aristarchus is a prisoner with Paul (Col. 4:10).
4. Mark, Barnabus’ nephew, is around and they are to help him if he comes to them (Col. 4:10).
5. Justus, like the others, was a fellow worker in the kingdom of God (Col. 4:11).
6. Epaphras prayed for them always (Col. 4:12,13).
7. Luke and Demas send greetings (Col. 4:14). {Demas is a sad case. At this time, he was a fellow worker with Paul – Phile. 24 also. But, by the time Paul’s last letter is written, Demas had gone back to the world – 2 Tim. 4:10}.
8. Paul sends greetings to the brethren at Laodecia (Col. 4:15).
9. He sends greetings to Nymphas and the church that meets in his house (Col. 4:15). Congregations met in many homes, including the home of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Cor. 16:19) and the home of Philemon (Phile. 2).

LXXXII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. This letter was to be read to the church at Laodecia and their letter was to be read at Colossae (Col. 4:16).
2. Archippus was to take heed to the work God had given him and fulfill his work (Col. 4:17).
3. Paul salutes the brethren and asks them to remember his bonds (Col. 4:18; cf. 2 Tim. 4:5).

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May 3, 2007

LXXXIII. IN DEFENCE OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

1. The book of Philemon was written by Paul, described aged and a prisoner of Jesus Christ (vs. 9), to Philemon to plead the cause of a slave by the name of Onesimus.
2. We are first introduced to this man in Col. 4:9 where he is described as “*a faithful and beloved brother*”.
3. This book helps us to examine a very difficult subject – the issue of slavery.
4. Obviously, slavery is of prime importance to some, and is a volatile issue for many.
5. However, in discussing any subject, we must see what the Bible says on the subject and accept that. Also, we must remember that the abuse of something is wrong, but that does not make that something wrong.

LXXXIV. SLAVERY IN THE TIMES OF THE ROMANS

1. To get an idea of slavery during the times of Paul, we turn to outside sources. Two books that help with this study are *The Story of Civilization III – Caesar and Christ*, by Will Durant and *As the Romans Did – A Sourcebook in Roman Social History* by Jo-Ann Shelton.
2. At one point, it was believed that Julius Caesar had created 1,000,000 slaves by the conquests he made. Slave populations in cities like Rome and Corinth numbered in the thousands.
3. Slaves in Rome came from various sources.
 - a. Those captured in war
 - b. Rebellious provincials
 - c. People captured by pirates or kidnappers
 - d. People enslaved by debt
 - e. People convicted of capital crimes
 - f. Children (especially babies) abandoned by their families
 - g. Children sold by their families (usually children the parents could not take care of)
 - h. The offspring of slaves
 - i. One could also choose to be a slave.
4. Slaves were property in the Roman Empire and had no rights.
5. Slaves could be bought or rented. Slaves which had been bought generally had a better time than rented slaves, because the slave owner felt some obligation to protect his investment.
6. Slaves served in the fields, in households, in industry, in the mines, as gladiators, and as prostitutes.

7. While there were some good slave owners, flogging, branding, mutilation, and sexual assault were used to keep slaves in line and to punish them.
8. Slaves sometimes suffered because their owners were cruel.
9. Slaves were the property of the owner and any children born to the slave also became the property of the owner. Sometimes families were separated as the owner sold children and spouses to other owners.
10. Slaves who ran away and were caught could be crucified, burned alive, or sold to a person who arranged gladiator shows (These slaves were usually the victims of the shows.).
11. Slaves were branded or wore identification tags so they could be easily spotted if they ran away.
12. A slave who ran away was considered a criminal because he had stolen his master's property – himself.

LXXXV. SLAVERY IN THE BIBLE

1. Slavery in the Bible is never condemned, but is regulated. In the Old Testament, different guidelines were put in place to cover Hebrews owning slaves who were Hebrew, and Hebrews owning slaves who were not Hebrews.
2. While slavery is not condemned, the abuses of slavery are. Loving your neighbor as yourself and being kind and compassionate apply to all areas of life, including slavery.
3. Please note the following passages on slavery.
 - a. Jews could be sold into slavery for a period of six years (Ex. 21:2ff; Deut. 15:12ff).
 - b. A Hebrew could choose to stay in slavery (Ex. 21:5ff; Deut. 15:16ff).
 - c. Hebrew slaves were to be treated as hired servants (Lev. 25:39,40).
 - d. Hebrew servants were to be freed in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:40).
 - e. Slaves could be taken from the heathens (Lev. 25:44ff).
 - f. Slaves were to serve their masters as though they were serving Christ (Eph. 6:5-8).
 - g. Masters were to treat their slaves with kindness, remembering they also have a master in Heaven (Eph. 6:9).
 - h. Slaves were to obey their masters in all things (Col. 3:22-25).
 - i. Masters were to give their servants just and equal treatment (Col. 4:1).
 - j. Slaves were to be obedient to their masters and please their masters (Tit. 2:9).
 - k. Slaves were not to talk back to their masters nor were they to speak evil of their masters (Tit. 2:9).
 - l. Slaves were not to steal (Tit. 2:10).
 - m. Slaves who became Christians were still slaves (Philemon and Onesimus).

LXXXVI. ONESIMUS, THE RUNAWAY SLAVE

1. As noted previously, a runaway slave could be in serious trouble in the 1st Century. He could be killed by his master and no one would say anything.
2. Onesimus had made his way from Colossae in Asia Minor to Rome in Italy, a distance of over 900 miles if you went in a straight line from one to another.
3. While at Rome, Onesimus came in contact with Paul and became a Christian (Philemon 10).
4. Now, although a Christian, by Roman law, he must be returned to his master, who had the right to do anything to the runaway slave that he so desired.
5. Thus, the return of Onesimus could be a disaster for him, but he has Paul pleading his case. Note Paul's argumentation:
 - a. Philemon is "*our dearly beloved and fellow labourer*" (Philemon 1).
 - b. He speaks of the great love that Philemon has for the church and those who do the work of God (Philemon 3-7).
 - c. He does not command Philemon to do this, but pleads with him (Philemon 8,9).
 - d. He tells Philemon that Onesimus is now a Christian (Philemon 10).
 - e. He lets Philemon know that Onesimus is now profitable to him (Philemon 11).
 - f. He asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would Paul (Philemon 12).
 - g. Paul says he could have kept Onesimus with him to help him, but he would do nothing without Philemon's consent (Philemon 13,14).
 - h. Paul wanted the decision to be made willingly (14).
 - i. He tells Philemon that the departure of Onesimus for this short time would work to Onesimus being with him forever (Philemon 15).
 - j. Now Onesimus is not just a servant, but he is a brother (Philemon 16).
 - k. Paul asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would Paul, if he counted Paul as a partner (Philemon 17).
 - l. Paul tells Philemon that if there is anything which Onesimus owes him, put that on Paul's account, and then reminds Philemon that he owes himself to Paul (Philemon 18,19).
 - m. Paul encourages Philemon to receive Onesimus so Paul can have joy (Philemon 20).
 - n. Paul tells Philemon that I know you will do what I ask, and even more than Paul asked (Philemon 21).

- o. And, then, Paul asks that lodgings be prepared for him for he hoped to be freed from jail and come to visit Philemon (Philemon 22).

LXXXVII. TERMS APPLIED TO CHRISTIANS IN THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

1. Brother (1,7,20) – The family of God
2. Dearly beloved/loved (1,2) – Loved greatly
3. Fellow laborer (2,24) – Working together for the cause of Christ
4. Fellow soldier (2) – Fighting the fight together
5. My son (10) – His child in the faith
6. Brother beloved (16) – A family member loved greatly
7. Fellow prisoner (23) – Faithful to Christ and willing to suffer for the cause of Christ

LXXXVIII. WHO WAS PHILEMON?

1. He was a fellow laborer in the church (Philemon 1).
2. He opened his home for the church to assemble in (Philemon 2).
3. His love and faith toward Christ and the church was well-known (Philemon 4).
4. The saints were refreshed by him (Philemon 6).