

Epistles II

International Alpha Bible Course
by Ralph Vincent Reynolds

EPISTLES

Part II

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INTERNATIONAL ALPHA BIBLE COURSE

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Sponsor's Page:

Church of Pentecost

Jacksonville, Florida • Rick Olson, Pastor



In honor of

Pastor and Mrs. Rick Olson



Rev. Rick and Mrs. Alexa Olson

Pastors Rick and Alexa Olson came to Jacksonville, Florida, in March 1984 with a vision and a calling to start an Apostolic church. In two weeks time they had found a building to rent on Beach Blvd. and proceeded to clean and fix it up to have services. The first Sunday ten were in attendance. Five years later Church of Pentecost moved to their

new building at 8709 Hogan Road after a long building process. Then in 2007 they broke ground and began building a "Family Life Center." In March 2010 they celebrated their twenty-sixth pastoral and church anniversary, and had their first service in the Family Life Center on Easter Sunday with 368 in attendance!

To God be the glory!

Epistles II

Lesson One

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

PART I

A. THE GALATIANS

The Epistle to the Galatians was Paul's only letter written to a group of churches. These churches were located in the cities of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Antioch and had been established during Paul's first missionary journey.

The Galatians were originally from north of the Black Sea and divided from the main westward migration of Gauls. They settled in Asia Minor during the third century BC.

Paul's ministry in Galatia had been very fruitful. Here the Gentiles had responded to the preaching of the gospel; many had been converted. Paul had visited these churches during his second journey accompanied by Silas. Again, as he began his third journey (Acts 18:23), he ministered in these churches, teaching and establishing the Christians in the faith.

Later, some Jewish teachers came teaching that circumcision was essential to salvation. These Judaizers had to undermine the confidence of the Galatians in the apostle Paul before they could destroy their faith in the gospel of salvation without works. Apparently they had some success for many Gentile Christians were circumcised.

When Paul heard this, he was greatly disturbed and wrote this epistle, declaring that circumcision had no part in salvation.

It is quite probable that the epistle was written in AD 57 from Ephesus or Macedonia.

A simple outline of the epistle may be given as follows:

1. Introduction—Galatians 1:1-9
2. Paul's Apostleship Defended—Galatians 1:10-2:21
3. Paul's Gospel Explained—Galatians 3 and 4
4. Paul's Gospel Lived—Galatians 5:1-6:15
5. Conclusion—Galatians 6:16-18

B. PAUL'S AUTHORITY

Scripture Reference:

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)” (Galatians 1:1).

Thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament begin with the same word, *Paul*. In this epistle, Paul begins the letter with a strong emphasis upon his apostleship. Why was this necessary?

It was necessary because the Judaizers had to attack Paul’s authority before they could attack Paul’s gospel. These false teachers claimed that Paul was not one of the Twelve, apparently proclaiming that he had been taught by untrustworthy teachers and had altered the gospel message.

Before Paul could defend the true gospel message, he had to defend his own apostolic authority, which he did in the first two chapters of his letter. In Galatians 2:1-14, he defended his authority based on:

1. He had a miraculous conversion.
2. He had not consulted with flesh or blood.
3. He had been taught by Christ Himself through divine revelation.
4. He had participated in the church council at Jerusalem.
5. He had received the right hand of fellowship from James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be the pillars of the church.
6. He confronted Peter face to face in Antioch.

Paul emphasized the fact that he had not been ordained by man, but his apostleship was ordained by Jesus Christ Himself. He received the gospel directly from God, and there was no other gospel.

C. THE CERTIFIED GOSPEL

Scripture Reference:

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man” (Galatians 1:11).

The word *certified* carries great weight. A certified check is accepted with full confidence, because the bank has guaranteed its value. A certified product is bought without hesitation, for the manufacturer has guaranteed that the product is genuine. The apostle Paul certified the gospel he preached.

The message of salvation without works was genuine. It was God’s truth, given to Paul by revelation.

Paul declared that the legalistic teachers had perverted the gospel. The word *pervert* means to “twist or distort.” He stated that it sounded like another gospel, but

it was not another gospel for there was none other. Paul used very strong language and pronounced a curse upon anyone who would dare to preach a perverted gospel. Paul was so certain of his certified gospel that he could pronounce a curse upon anyone, even though it be an angel, who would pervert it (Galatians 1:8).

D. LEGALISM VERSUS GRACE

Legalism is the teaching that we are saved by works and the keeping of the Law. Legalism brings the individual under bondage and fear. It takes his eyes off Jesus and fixes them upon himself. If any man could save himself through his own good works, then Calvary was a great blunder. However, Calvary had to be, for no man could save himself. Salvation had to be the gift of God and given to fallen man by grace.

Whether or not a man had to be circumcised to be saved was only one part of the greater issue: Law versus grace. The Epistle to the Galatians was written by Paul to declare emphatically that salvation was by grace alone. If circumcision was needed, then salvation would be by works.

The student of God's Word must keep balanced in his views. The Bible clearly teaches that there is nothing man can do to add to the finished work of Calvary. Also, man can do nothing to merit or earn eternal life. There are definite conditions, however, attached to the qualifications of receiving salvation. Man has to take definite steps in order to receive salvation, which is still the gift of God and given to man by grace.

E. PETER'S DISSIMULATION

In the second chapter, Paul referred to Peter's dissimulation (Galatians 2:1-13). He did not do this to criticize Peter, but because it was necessary in the defense of the true gospel. Peter's inconsistent example was seen by all. Paul, therefore, took his stand against Peter for everyone to witness.

This was the third time that Paul had met Peter. The first time was at Jerusalem where he visited Peter for fifteen days. The second time was fourteen years later when Paul attended the Jerusalem conference. It should be noted that Paul took with him Titus, a young Greek, who was a test case as far as circumcision was concerned. This conference ended in a spirit of unity and opened the way for free social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles in the church.

When Peter came to Antioch, he ate with the Gentiles until some Jews came from Jerusalem. Apparently Peter was afraid of them and separated himself from the Gentile brethren. Peter's hypocrisy could have had far-reaching results. Since it could have divided the church, Paul had no choice. Paul withstood Peter publicly for all to see.

There was a sad note here when Paul mentioned Barnabas. It would seem that Paul expected more of Barnabas than the other Jewish believers and expressed his regrets concerning this great man.

F. THE GREAT EXCHANGE

Scripture Reference:

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4).

Paul was able to certify the gospel because the price was paid. The gospel was built upon the truth stated in verse 4. The statement here is tremendous!

This verse does not say, “He gave Himself for sinners,” but rather it says, “He gave Himself for our sins.” The depth of meaning cannot be expressed in mere words. This is the greatest exchange—Jesus Christ for our Sins!

Let us quote three Scriptures:

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (I Peter 2:24).

“And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

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

It is because of this great truth that salvation is by grace—a free gift offered to all men.

G. DEAD TO THE LAW

The last five verses of the second chapter should be studied carefully. Here is stated the foundation truth settling the entire issue.

The Law is not dead. It is very much alive, cursing, and condemning the sinner and ministering death. It is not the Law that is dead, but the child of God. Through repentance, he has died. By being baptized into Christ, he has already been crucified. The Law has no power over a dead man!

H. MAKING ONESELF A TRANSGRESSOR

The student should take careful note of Paul’s statement in Galatians 2:18.

Lesson One

Men who would build what they have previously destroyed become transgressors. In preaching God's Word, one cannot take a backward step without condemnation. This applies not only in preaching the truth, but in living a holy life.

Preachers who let down the standards of holiness make themselves transgressors.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Galatians, Part I

Fill in the blanks.

1. The Epistle to the Galatians was Paul's only letter to be written to a _____ of churches.
2. Paul wrote to the Galatians primarily to correct the false teaching of the _____.
3. Paul preached a _____ gospel.
4. _____ teaches that one is saved by works and the keeping of the Law and brings the individual under bondage.
5. "Who gave himself for our _____, that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Galatians 1:4).

Short Answers

6. Why did Paul feel it necessary to defend his apostleship?
7. What was Peter's dissimulation?
8. What is the role of law and grace in one's salvation?

Epistles II

Lesson Two

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

PART II

Text: Galatians 3-6

A. PAUL'S GOSPEL EXPLAINED

1. Justification by Faith

Scripture Reference:

"The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11).

Here is the Scripture that God made real to Martin Luther. It is the revelation of "justification by faith" that inspired Luther to take his courageous stand which resulted in the Reformation. Luther heard these words spoken while he was ascending Pilate's staircase on his hands and knees. He ran from the scene and began to preach a salvation based solely upon faith in Jesus.

It is quite evident that no man can ever be justified by the Law. No man has ever been able to keep the Law in every point. If any man could save himself by his own good works, then Calvary was the greatest blunder of all times.

2. Our Schoolmaster

Scripture Reference:

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24-25).

Jesus did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. The Law did not fail, but man failed under the Law. The Law is still as just as ever condemning the sinner.

It is important to understand why the Law was given in the first place. Since the fall of Adam, man has been a sinner. The Law did not change this, but it did permit man to know that he was a sinner. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).

Before man could be saved, he first had to be condemned and realize his need of salvation. Jesus did not come to condemn, for the Law had already done that. (See John 3:17.)

After giving to Moses the moral law, God added the ceremonial law, which consisted of types all pointing to Christ. The Law, our schoolmaster, could not save, but it did reveal the need of salvation and pointed forward to the One who could save.

3. Abba, Father

Scripture Reference:

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

Under the Law a person could only be a slave, but under grace he may become a son of God.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father.” However, they did not do this until after the Day of Pentecost. The word *Abba* is the Aramaic word for “father.” It was used three times in Scripture. Jesus used this term in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36), and Paul used it twice (Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6).

Abba expressed the first time an infant calls his father by name (*Papa* or *Daddy* might be suitable equivalents), speaks of a loving, tender trust, and brings great joy to the heart of the father. *Father*, the Greek equivalent, means “maturity.”

Undoubtedly the newborn babe in Christ cries this when he speaks in tongues as he is baptized with the Holy Ghost.

4. Travailing Again

Scripture Reference:

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

This statement of the apostle Paul proves that a backslider is a lost soul. The church must travail for every soul born into the body of Christ. If the backslider is not lost, there would be no need to travail.

Every experienced gospel minister knows that frequently it takes more travail for a backslider to be delivered than for a new convert.

5. The Allegory

Scripture Reference: Galatians 4:22-31

In the latter part of the fourth chapter, the apostle Paul gave an allegory. The story of Hagar and Sarah with their two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, has a spiritual application. This allegory should be carefully studied by the Bible student. In the allegory, there are two women, two sons, two covenants, two mountains, and two cities. Paul uses this entire story to illustrate the difference between Law and grace. Hagar was a slave just as the Law enslaves.

B. PAUL'S GOSPEL LIVED

1. A Little Leaven

Scripture Reference:

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9).

Leaven is yeast used in baking. Apparently in Bible times, it was kept as a lump of dough between bakings.

Jesus warned His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:6). This was explained to mean the doctrine or teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The apostle Paul stated that a little wrong doctrine will contaminate the whole body of believers. The student should consider the seriousness of wrong teaching. False doctrine will lead to apostasy, which is far more serious than backsliding by falling into an act of sin. It is very difficult to reclaim an apostate.

Also it should be noted that false cults believe a measure of truth; however, it is the false doctrine interwoven through the truth which destroys. It only takes a little false doctrine to contaminate and destroy the whole body.

2. Grace Is Not a License

Scripture Reference:

"Ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

We are saved by grace and are kept by the grace of God. However, it is possible to fall from grace. Grace is not a license for sin but rather the power of God to live above sin.

There are those who teach that because of the grace of God a person may live in sin and still be saved. Here in this verse the apostle Paul stated that it is possible to fall from grace.

In Jude, verse 4, we read of men who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. The grace of God, however, permits one to live above sin, not under the guilt of sin.

3. Works of the Flesh

Scripture Reference:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness . . . that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

In the fifth chapter, the apostle Paul contrasted the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. There is a constant warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. The only way to victory is to crucify the flesh (verse 24). It should be noted that the “works of the flesh” is in the plural and denotes self-effort. The fruit of the Spirit is in the singular and expresses that which is born by the Holy Spirit.

There are seventeen works of the flesh named, but Paul added “and such like.” This means that all sins similar to these are included in the works of the flesh.

These may be divided into four groups: impurity, idolatry, hostility, and revelry. We shall attempt to define four of them. The meaning of the others is well understood.

- a. Lasciviousness—lustful desires
- b. Emulations—rivalry
- c. Sedition—rebellion and divisions
- d. Heresies—wrong teachings destructive to true faith.

Paul sums it up with the warning that those who are guilty of these shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

4. Fruit of the Spirit

These are nine in number, but there is only one fruit, signifying that they are born by one common root or plant.

This is not the fruit of the child of God, but rather the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Christian does not bear this fruit, but rather the Spirit bears the fruit in the life of the Christian.

The Holy Spirit bears this fruit as the need arises. For example, during the seasons of distress and sorrow, the Holy Spirit will bear the fruit of joy.

Paul clearly teaches that the secret of victory is living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit.

5. Law of the Harvest

Scripture Reference:

“For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

Here is expressed the law of the harvest. A person will reap whatsoever he sows. There is no way to change this law. It will hold true throughout a man’s life, whether he is sowing to the flesh or whether he is sowing to the Spirit.

6. Marks of the Lord Jesus

Paul’s enemies claimed that Paul was not a genuine apostle, but his battered, bruised, and scarred body proved that he was.



Epistles II

Lesson Three

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS PART I

Text: Ephesians 1

A. EPHESUS

Ephesus was a prosperous city located in western Asia Minor in the province of Lydia and was the capital of Proconsular Asia. Situated near the mouth of the Cayster River on the main trade route between Rome and the East, it was one of the greatest trading centers in the eastern Mediterranean and was a “free city” with its own Senate and Assembly.

One of the “Seven Wonders of the World” was found at Ephesus. This was the Temple of Diana, the center of all heathen worship in that area. Inside the temple was a statue of the goddess, which the Ephesians claimed had fallen down from Heaven.

The Ephesians practiced a great deal of magic. Ephesus was the city of astrology, sorcery, exorcism, and every form of magic.

B. THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Scripture Reference:

“But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things” (Ephesians 6:21).

This epistle was written by the apostle Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome, probably during the summer of AD 62. The epistle was written not just to the church at Ephesus, but to the churches of that area and apparently he meant it to be read in all. The epistle, along with the Epistle to the Colossians, was carried to Ephesus by Tychicus.

In this epistle, the apostle Paul emphasized the holiness of the Christian's calling in contrast to his former sinful condition. Also he taught the unity of the Jew and Gentile. There was only one church. He presented Jesus Christ as making peace between the Jew and Gentile by the blood of His cross.

This was one of the greatest of the Pauline Epistles. We may understand the importance of it when we consider the place that the Ephesian church had at that time.

One whole chapter in Acts is devoted to the founding of this church. Paul spent more time ministering here than any other place. There is also a record given of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. In Revelation 2, we find the first of the letters written to the churches of Asia addressed to this church.

C. IN CHRIST JESUS

In chapter 1, the apostle Paul repeated twelve times one of his favorite phrases, "in Christ Jesus." Sometimes he worded it simply "in Christ," "in Him," or "in whom," but this phrase is found throughout this chapter. This is one of Paul's favorite expressions.

Definitely salvation depends upon a person being "in Christ."

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22).

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13).

Paul wrote to those who are "in Christ." Salvation is only to be found "in Christ."

D. CHOSEN IN HIM

Chapter 1 is a very important chapter. The Bible student should read and study this very carefully. If he can understand what the Lord offers him, he will never be tempted to trade it for what the world has to offer.

In verse 3, Paul expressed this by saying, ". . . who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." This is a great contrast to the low position that we had while living in sin. Then Paul went on to mention some of these spiritual blessings that have been given to the child of God. He is chosen "in Christ," predestinated, and adopted to be a child of God. Here Paul was speaking of the church. The church has been predestined and chosen before its own choice by free will. Each Christian must chose to accept Jesus Christ. However, in His foreknowledge knowing that choice, God chose him from the very beginning.

We are chosen "in Christ" to be:

1. In Him
2. Holy
3. Without blame
4. Before Him in love
5. To be the praise of the glory of His grace
6. To be accepted in the Beloved

E. BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

In this chapter, Paul takes us from the eternity of the past, verse 4, to the eternity of the future, verse 10. The phrase “foundation of the world” refers to the beginning of time and God’s dealing with mankind in redemption. In verse 10, the word *dispensation* means “stewardship,” and the phrase “fulness of times” means that God will do this exactly on time as He has it planned. At that time, He shall gather together all those in Christ who have already died together with those who are still upon the earth.

God’s will was determined in the eternity of the past. Everything has happened according to the good pleasure of His will (verse 5). In verse 11, we read that He works all things after the counsel of His own will. In all of this, the emphasis is placed on God’s will. If this has been so important in the eternity of the past and will be in the eternity of the future, how important it should be for the child of God to know His will, to surrender to it, and to obey it.

F. PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

Much emphasis is placed on the purpose of the church. God has had a special place for His church from the very beginning. The Incarnation was for the purpose of the atonement, and the atonement was for the purpose of redeeming His church out of a sinful world. Several times we read concerning “the praise of His glory.” (See Ephesians 1:6; 1:12; 1:14.) Definitely, the main purpose of the church is to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ who loved the church and gave Himself for her.

Here it should be remembered that the church can only bring praise of His glory when the individual members of the church have chosen Him of their own free will. It is their choice that brings glory to the Lord Jesus Christ in that day when we shall be caught up to be together with Him.

G. THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

Scripture Reference:

“Which is the earnest of our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:14).

This is speaking of the Holy Spirit that we receive when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost. “The earnest” is the down payment that concludes a transaction. When one is baptized with the Holy Ghost, he receives the down payment that finalizes the transaction of His redemption. We are sealed with His Holy Spirit, which signifies we belong to Him. Not only is it a symbol of ownership, but also it gives security. This seal, however, may be broken if one deliberately turns back to live in sin.

H. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS

In the epistle, Paul gave two prayers for the Ephesian church. The first one is found in chapter 1, verses 17 and 18. This is a prayer that their understanding might be enlightened not only to know what they have been provided “in Christ,” but also to know that they in turn, constitute Christ’s inheritance; for the church is His inheritance. In order that they might understand this profound truth, Paul prayed that they might receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

I. THE BODY OF CHRIST

The last two verses of chapter 1 state clearly that the church is Christ’s body upon the earth. There is only one body, and in order to be saved, one must be a member of that body.

Here in verse 9, the mystery of His will is revealed—the fact that both Jew and Gentile are one in the church. Jesus Christ has broken down the wall of division and by His Spirit baptized both Jew and Gentile into His body.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Part I

True or False

- _____ 1. Ephesus was a prosperous city in western Asia Minor and was listed as one of the "Seven Wonders of the World."

- _____ 2. Ephesus was noted for the worship of Athena, the goddess of wisdom.

- _____ 3. The Epistle to the Ephesians was written during Paul's fourth imprisonment.

- _____ 4. In this epistle Paul emphasized the holiness of the Christian's calling in contrast to this former sinful condition.

- _____ 5. We are chosen in Christ to be the praise of the glory of His grace.

- _____ 6. The "earnest" is the down payment that concludes a transaction.

- _____ 7. Christ's body on earth is the church.

- _____ 8. The mystery of His will is that Jews can be saved.

- _____ 9. In chapter 1, Paul repeats the phrase "in Christ Jesus" fourteen times.

- _____ 10. The phrase, "foundation of the world," refers to creation.

Epistles II

Lesson Four

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS PART II

Text: Ephesians 2-4:16

A. EPHESIANS 2

1. The Great Contrast

In chapter 2, we are given the contrast between the condition of the sinner before he is saved and the saint of God after he has been redeemed. Before his salvation, the sinner is:

- a. Dead in trespasses and sins. This simply means that he has no spiritual or eternal life. Being dead, he is ignorant of all of God's blessings and cannot possibly live pleasing to the Lord.
- b. He walks according to the course of this world.
- c. He is a child of disobedience. This refers to the fact that his father, Satan, is the disobedient one, and he can be no better than his father.
- d. His life is according to the lust of the flesh. This does not only refer to sexual abuse, but also to all human desire that is contrary to God.
- e. He is a child of wrath. This means that he is one who deserves God's wrath. God hates all sin; consequently, the sinner must face the wrath of God.

What a contrast it is to find the description of the saint of God:

- a. He has been "quickened" or has received eternal life.
- b. He has been raised up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
- c. He has become Christ's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

2. Saved by Grace

Scripture Reference:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Salvation is wholly by the grace of God. Man cannot merit salvation or earn it in any way. It is not what he does, but it is what Jesus Christ did for him on Calvary's cross. Faith is the hand by which he reaches up to receive God's grace into his life.

Certainly there is nothing to be added to the finished work of Calvary and the grace of God that saves a lost sinner. We must always keep in mind, however, that there are certain conditions of the gospel to be met in order to become recipients of the grace of God.

3. His Workmanship

Scripture Reference:

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

The word *workmanship* is translated from the Greek *poieme*, which means "poem." It brings out the thought of a masterpiece of harmony and beauty. How we should praise Him for this truth that a child of God is the Lord's poem.

4. Our Peace

In the Temple there was a wall built to separate the Gentiles from the Jews. The Gentiles could not enter into the sanctuary. On the outside, they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant, having no hope and without God in this world, verse 12.

Through the cross, Jesus broke this wall down and became our peace, reconciling both Gentile and Jew unto God, into one body.

Three times in chapter 2, we have the word *together* (verses 5, 6, and 22). This expresses the fact that in Jesus Christ there are no divisions, but we are all one in Him.

5. The Chief Cornerstone

Scripture Reference:

"And are 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" (Ephesians 2:20-22).

Paul stated that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Actually Jesus Christ is the foundation, but Paul's reference here is to the founding of the church on the Day of Pentecost and evangelizing the world, which

had to be done through the apostles and prophets. But even as the apostles and prophets laid the foundation for the church, Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone.

The chief cornerstone is the most prominent stone on one of the corners of the foundation. From this stone, all the measurements are taken. Every part of the building is plumbed and measured from this cornerstone.

B. EPHESIANS 3

1. The Prisoner of Christ

In the first verse of both chapter 3 and 4, the apostle Paul declared that he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ. He also stated the reason was that he preached that the Gentiles could be saved.

Paul had been given a stewardship of the grace of God towards the Gentiles. This had been a mystery hidden in ages past, but now had been given to him by revelation. This revelation was the truth that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and partakers of Christ's promises. It was because of this truth that Paul was now a prisoner at Rome.

2. Less Than the Least

There were times that Paul defended his apostleship, but this was only at moments that he needed to state his authority in preaching the gospel. At all other times, he revealed a true spirit of meekness and humility.

In Ephesians 3:8, he stated that he was less than the least of all saints. He looked upon himself as being the least important of any one of the children of God. He also stated elsewhere in his writing that he was the least of the apostles and before his conversion, the chiefest of sinners (I Corinthians 15:9; I Timothy 1:15).

3. Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians

In chapter 3, verses 13-21, we have the second prayer for the Ephesians expressed in this epistle. Paul desired that they be strong in the Spirit that they might not faint in tribulation. He prayed that they be established in Christ and know the fullness of the boundless love of Jesus Christ. He expressed this with the dimensions of breadth, length, depth, and height. This may be interpreted as:

- a. Breadth—The Jews and Gentiles all brought into the one body. The gospel embraces everyone.
- b. Length—The dispensation of the fullness of time.
- c. Depth—The place from which we were taken.

- d. Height—The position that the church is to occupy in heavenly places.

4. The Family Name

Scripture Reference:

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:14, 15).

When we are baptized in the name of Jesus, we take on the family name of Jesus. Being born into His family, we should consider it a privilege to bear His name.

C. EPHESIANS 4:1-16

1. The Church’s Vocation

In the first verse of chapter 4, Paul used the word *beseech*, which means “entreat” or “implore.” He used this word to show how important it is for the child of God to walk in a way that is worthy of his calling.

The church’s vocation is to show forth the praise of the glory of His grace both in this world and throughout eternity. Here we have been raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace might be revealed. In order to walk worthy of this calling, it is necessary to walk in humility, in meekness, and in love.

2. Unity of the Spirit

Scripture Reference:

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

Paul exhorted the Ephesians to endeavor to keep the unity of Spirit and the bond of peace. This implies that there must be effort put forth. One need not be surprised at this when he realizes that men and women of all walks of life and all races are baptized by one Spirit into one body. Therefore it is necessary to put forth the effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Emphasis should be placed upon the fact that we all should come to the unity of Spirit not to the unity of some man, but allow the Holy Spirit to direct and lead. The believers should work at this until they reach a time that they have come to the unity of the faith, verse 13.

3. Captivity Led Captive

Scripture Reference:

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he lead captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8).

It is thought here that Paul is referring to the time that Jesus arose from Hades. Between His death and resurrection, He visited Paradise and Hades. However, now Paradise is in the third Heaven (II Corinthians 12). The time of change could only have taken place at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4. Fivefold Ministry

These ministries are not necessarily listed in order of importance but rather in order in which their work comes. The work of the pastor and teacher follows the work of the evangelist.

It should be noted that their ministry is primarily within the church. They are there to protect the saints and edify the body of Christ.

5. Increase of the Body

If the work of the ministry within the body of Christ is successful, the saints will become strong, mature and develop in the likeness of Christ. As the individual members become strong spiritually, so will the body. If the body is strong and healthy, then it will automatically grow and increase and new members will be added to the body.

Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Part II

1. Contrast the condition of the sinner before he is saved and his life as a saint of God after salvation.
2. Explain the role of God's grace in salvation.
3. How is Jesus Christ the Chief Cornerstone?
4. What was Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in chapter 3?
5. What is the importance of the unity of the Spirit?

Epistles II

Lesson Five

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

PART III

Text: Ephesians 4:16-6:24

A. EPHESIANS 4:17-32

1. Comparison of the Sinner with the Saint of God

Again the apostle Paul brings out a distinct contrast between the unregenerate man and the born-again child of God.

The unsaved man lives only to satisfy his own carnal desires; his understanding is darkened. He is separated from the life of God through ignorance and gives himself wholly to satisfy unbridled lust.

The child of God is a new man created in righteousness and holiness.

2. Speaking the Truth

Scripture Reference:

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Ephesians 4:25).

The Ephesians are exhorted to put away lying and always to speak the truth. The Bible places great emphasis upon the seriousness of the sin of lying. In Revelation 21:8, it is stated that all liars shall have part in the lake of fire. We may understand how serious it is to lie when we realize that a man must face and confess the truth before he can be granted repentance. Lying may be forgiven, but forgiveness cannot come as long as a man lies.

3. Righteous Anger

Scripture Reference:

“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26, 27).

There is such a thing as “righteous indignation.” The righteous man will react with indignation against evil and wickedness. Paul did not condemn this righteous anger, but he did instruct the Ephesians not to sin during this time of indignation. It is

possible when angry to give the devil an opportunity or a foothold in one's life. In other words, the angry man may say or do things that are wrong and that will call for repentance. Paul stated that this should not be. Before the day is finished, the matter should be completely dealt with and settled.

4. Grieving the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reference:

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

This is one of the sins against the Holy Spirit which, if continued, will cause the Holy Spirit to withdraw from a person's life. It is the sin of conforming to the world and being inconsistent in his daily walk. Verse 31 states that the Holy Spirit may be grieved if bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking are not put away. The Holy Spirit will cause each child of God to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

B. EPHESIANS 5

1. Children of Light

The word *therefore* shows that Paul is building what he had to say upon the exhortation that he had just written. Because we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit, we should be followers of God and walk in love.

Then Paul gave us the contrast again between the unregenerate and the born-again child of God. He listed several things which, clearly stated, will shut anyone out of the kingdom of God. Those who do those things are called the children of disobedience upon whom cometh the wrath of God. It should be noted that among the list is filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting. The Christian will not repeat smutty jokes; nor will he even laugh at them if he hears them.

The children of light will bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is listed here as goodness, righteousness, and truth. They will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

2. Redeeming the Time

Scripture Reference:

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

Because the days are evil, it is necessary for every Christian to buy up every opportunity to redeem the time. In order to do this, he must walk carefully and

purposefully before the Lord. There will be no place for careless living. In redeeming the time, there will be no place for drunkenness. The child of God will be filled with the Spirit, speaking and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

3. Exhortation to Husbands and Wives

Scripture Reference:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Ephesians 5:22-23).

This is a wonderful passage of Scripture which gives us some very important instructions for husbands and wives. Husbands are the heads of the homes and, as such, the wives are to submit to them (verse 22).

The wives are to be subject to their husbands (verse 24), and they are to reverence their husbands (verse 33). On the other hand, the husbands are to love their wives as they would love themselves. Husbands and wives are one flesh, and the husband is to love his wife even as his own body. Paul stated that he that loves his wife loves himself (verse 28).

Wives will be happy to submit and obey their husbands if their husbands really love them. In these few words of instructions, Paul has given us the key to happy marriages. If husbands and wives lived according to these instructions, there would be very few broken marriages.

4. Christ and His Church

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 5:22-33

In this passage of Scripture, Paul, by using the instruction given to husbands and wives, brought out the relationship between Christ and the church. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her. One day, He shall present her to Himself, a beautiful, glorious bride.

The student should note carefully verse 26. The statement here has been greatly misunderstood by many. The writer of these notes likes the way this verse is written in the Living New Testament: “To make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God’s word.” It is recognized that God’s Word alone is able to cleanse and have a sanctifying influence in the lives of the hearers (John 15:3; John 17:17). In this statement, however, the apostle Paul undoubtedly is referring both to water baptism and the power of obedience to the Word of God.

C. EPHESIANS 6

1. Instructions for the Home and Family

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 6:1-9

The relationship existing between parents and children is very important. Children are to obey their parents; on the other hand, parents must not provoke their children. Much can be written here concerning this admonition. Parents must not be angry with their children, scolding and nagging until the children are resentful. Rather, they must bring them up with loving discipline.

Instructions are given to servants to obey their masters and to do their very best as unto the Lord. Masters must not threaten their servants but be considerate of them. It is recognized that these instructions are given to the relationship existing between masters and their slaves, but the same principles will apply today between employers and employees. The Christian employer will be considerate of those that work for him; the Christian employee will do his best to please the employer.

2. The Whole Armor of God

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 6:10-20

The apostle Paul concluded the Epistle to the Ephesians with an exhortation to be equipped for battle. He stressed the fact that we are in a battle with spiritual wickedness in high places, or, as in modern terms, against the forces of wickedness in the supernatural sphere. In this world, we are surrounded by evil, and it is very important that we be properly equipped to fight against the subtlety of the devil.

Undoubtedly when Paul wrote these words, he was looking at the Roman soldier that was guarding him. Naming the various pieces of armor, he applied it to the spiritual sense.

The list is as follows:

1. Belt of truth
2. Breastplate of righteousness
3. Shoes of the gospel of peace
4. Shield of faith
5. Helmet of salvation
6. Sword of the Spirit
7. Prayer

The New English Bible, which we shall quote here, has this worded very clearly:

Therefore, take up God's armour; then you will be able to stand your ground when things are at their worse, to complete every task and still to stand. Stand firm, I say. Fasten on the belt of truth; for coat of mail, put on integrity; let the shoes on your feet be the gospel of peace, to give you firm footing; and, with all these, take up the great shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take salvation for helmet; for sword, take that which the Spirit gives you—the words come from God. Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty; pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit.

The student's attention is drawn to the breastplate of righteousness, which is called the "coat of mail—integrity." Truth and integrity has a very important part in this armor of the Christian. Many times in naming this whole armor of God, we conclude with the sword of the Spirit. But the proper conclusion is with prayer. Without prayer and supplication in the Spirit, the other pieces in the armor would be ineffective.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Part III

1. What is the role of "righteous indignation" in the life of a Christian?
2. How does one grieve the Holy Spirit?
3. What instructions does Paul give to husbands and to the wives?
4. What is the relationship between Christ and the church?
5. Describe the Christian's armor.

Epistles II

Lesson Six

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS PART I

Text: Philippians 1 and 2

A. PHILIPPI

Philippi was a city of Macedonia founded by Augustus. It was situated upon a very fertile plain about nine miles from the sea. At the time of Paul, Philippi was a Roman military center. It was a Gentile city with very few Jews in its population.

B. THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

The church at Philippi was founded by Paul after he received his Macedonian call at Troas. This was his first church in Europe. Two prominent people among the early converts were Lydia and the jailer.

Luke had joined Paul's party at Troas, and some scholars seem to think that Philippi was Luke's home. He had a part in the development of the Philippian church, one of the most commendable of the churches that Paul founded.

This epistle was written about AD 64 during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. Epaphroditus had come from Philippi with a gift for the apostle Paul and fell sick upon his arrival at Rome. After his recovery, he returned to Philippi, and Paul wrote this letter of thanks and exhortation.

C. THE "JOY" EPISTLE

The word *rejoice* and its synonyms are repeated sixteen times in this epistle. In order to understand the word *rejoice*, let us consider the word *revive*. A person cannot be revived unless he has already had life. Likewise, a person cannot rejoice unless he has already known the joy of the Lord. The word *rejoice* simply means to allow the joy of the Lord to spring up in one's soul again and again.

This rejoicing is not dependent upon outer circumstances as we can see here in the experience of the apostle Paul. It is a deep emotion, springing up from within, that comes with the presence of the Lord.

Once as a young convert, the writer was greatly impressed as he watched Mother Ira, a veteran missionary who had spent her life in China. She was sitting on the platform of the church, lost in the Spirit, with her face aglow, saying over and over

again, “Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy.” This is an example of what the apostle Paul wrote about here in this Epistle to the Philippians.

There was one man at Philippi who would understand this epistle well, for he had personally witnessed Paul’s joy. After Paul had been beaten and chained in the dungeon, Paul still sang the songs of Zion and rejoiced in the Lord. This rejoicing under great adversity and persecution had brought a miracle and the conversion of the jailer.

D. PAUL’S THANKSGIVING

In the beginning of this letter, Paul expressed his thanksgiving for:

1. The Philippians

Apparently the Philippian church was a church that brought great joy to the apostle Paul. The church ministered to him with financial gifts. They expressed their love for him. Apparently there was very little in the Philippian church that caused Paul any concern.

2. Confidence in Christ

Philippians 1:6 states, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

This Scripture expresses Paul’s confidence in the fact that Jesus can finish that which He begins in our lives. As we study this verse, we all should be thankful that we too can have confidence that God can complete that which He has begun in our individual lives. This is not an unconditional eternal security, but it is a security that may cause all of us to have great confidence in Christ! Certainly, He is our Keeper!

3. The Preaching of the Gospel

Paul was thankful that his persecution at Rome had been the means for the furtherance of the gospel. Being chained to a Roman guard could not hinder him from proclaiming the gospel until it was known throughout the palace.

He also was thankful that others were preaching the gospel. He did admit that some of them were preaching the gospel with wrong motives, possibly to try to create some jealousy on Paul’s part. Regardless of whether or not their motives were right, Paul was thankful that Christ was preached.

E. PAUL'S DESIRE TO BE WITH CHRIST

Scripture Reference:

“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

The apostle Paul gave the great motto of his life here. He desired to exalt Jesus Christ whether it was in this life or by death.

He expressed his desire to leave this world to live with Christ. But above this, he wanted to do the will of God and whatever would give the greatest glory to the Lord. He realized that he could minister as long as he stayed in this life and was willing to remain in the flesh that he might be a blessing to those to whom he ministered.

F. EXHORTATION TO HUMILITY

In chapter 2 of Philippians, the apostle Paul exhorted the church to humility and then gave them the example of Jesus Christ.

The student should give consideration to the meaning of the phrase “if any bowels and mercies” (verse 1). In New Testament times, it was considered that all the emotions had their origin within the body, and this was an expression that “from the organs of the body came the emotions.” We would use the heart instead of bowels. We might repeat this phrase by wording it thus: “if any tender mercies.” The Philippians were exhorted to have the mind of Christ, who was the greatest example to all men of humility. I shall quote these verses from the Living New Testament:

Who, though He was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God, but laid aside his mighty power and glory, taking the disguise of a slave and becoming like men. And he humbled himself even further, going so far as actually to die a criminal's death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8, LNT).

Every student should memorize verses 9, 10, and 11, for here the power of Jesus' name is expressed. The name of Jesus is above every name! His name is higher than the name of the greatest earthly king or the most famous conqueror in this world. At that name, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

This is a very positive statement showing the deity of Jesus. There is only one Lord. If Jesus Christ is that Lord, bringing glory to God through the Father, then Jesus must be one with God the Father.

G. WORKING OUT OUR SALVATION

Scripture Reference:

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

It is God who gives the Christian both the desire and ability to do God’s will. However, the Christian must continually exercise himself, to keep in prayer and worship where he can become a strong, victorious Christian. Salvation is not by works, but definitely the Christian must put forth the effort to receive all that Christ can do for him.

The example that we would use here is for a cold man to come to the fire and be warmed. It is the fire that warms him. A man who is chilled with the cold must come to the fire before the fire can do its work. Also, the man must remain near the fire if he is to remain warm. Likewise, we are exhorted to work at our salvation. This is a salvation in the present tense, being constantly worked out in our lives daily.

H. PAUL’S COWORKERS

In the latter part of chapter 2, Paul wrote commending two of his coworkers. He said that Timothy was a son of his in the gospel. He was a minister who would not seek his own interest but would have their welfare at heart. In the salutation of this epistle, Paul united his name with Timothy’s. Undoubtedly, it was Timothy who wrote the epistle while Paul dictated it to him.

The other coworker was Epaphroditus. Paul spoke of him as being his companion in labor and fellow soldier. Epaphroditus was the messenger for the Philippian church who brought their offering to Paul. After arriving at Rome, Epaphroditus was very sick. Paul thanked God for His mercy in healing this Christian worker and expressed how sorrowful he would have been had he lost him. It was Epaphroditus that carried this epistle back to Philippi.

Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Philippians, Part I

Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ a Roman _____ center, was a city of Macedonia founded by Augustus.
2. The church in Philippi was founded by _____ after he received his Macedonian call at _____.
3. Paul's life shows that rejoicing is not dependent on _____ circumstances.
4. "Being _____ of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will _____ it until the day of _____" (Philippians 1:6).
5. In chapter 2, Paul exhorted the Philippians to _____.
6. _____ was Paul's son in the gospel.
7. The messenger for the Philippian church was _____.
8. "Let this mind be in _____ which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of _____, thought it not robbery to be _____ with _____: But made _____ of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a _____ and was made in the likeness of _____: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

Epistles II

Lesson Seven

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS PART II

Text: Philippians 3 and 4

A. PHILIPPIANS 3

1. Warning Against Legalism

Scripture Reference:

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” (Philippians 3:1, 2).

Apparently, some legalists had come to Philippi and were teaching them that they should obey the Judaistic traditions. In this Scripture, Paul warned the Philippians not against three types of people, but against one kind with three characteristics: dogs, evil workers, concision.

In Paul's day, dogs were rarely individually owned. They roamed in packs as unclean scavengers. Prior to this, the Gentiles had been called dogs, but here the apostle Paul reversed it and named the Jews, who would take the Christians back into the bondage of the Jewish traditions, as being dogs. It was simply a term of contempt.

Instead of using the word *circumcision*, Paul used the word *concision*, which means “those who mutilate the flesh.” By using this word, Paul revealed some sarcasm concerning the ordinances of circumcision.

2. Paul's Background of Righteousness

Scripture Reference: Philippians 3:3-9

Here, Paul described fully his background of righteousness in which, if he desired, he could really boast.

When the nation of Israel was split into two parts, the northern part was made up of ten tribes. The southern part constituted the two tribes that were orthodox and had the Temple. These were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. When Paul said that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, he was stating that he was a man with an orthodox

heritage. A “Hebrew of the Hebrews” showed that he shared in the covenant of Abraham, and, as a Pharisee, he kept the Law in every detail.

Certainly in the natural, Paul had much of which he could boast, but he counted all of this but refuse (dung) that he might win Christ and have the righteousness that is of God by faith.

In verse 3, he wrote that those who worshiped God in the Spirit and rejoiced in Christ Jesus were of the circumcision, not those who mutilated the flesh, but those who had the righteousness of Christ through faith.

3. Paul’s Heavenly Goal

Scripture Reference: Philippians 3:10-16

Paul pictured himself as in a race, exerting every ounce of strength that he might reach the goal set before him, which was that he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Paul had had a glimpse of the glory of Heaven (II Corinthians 12:4), and he was determined to reach Heaven regardless of the cost. The past was to be put behind him, and his eyes would be fixed upon the future as he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

4. Heavenly Citizenship

Scripture Reference: Philippians 3:17-21

The word *conversation* in verse 20 means “citizenship.” When Paul wrote that he had his conversation in Heaven, he meant that he had his citizenship in Heaven.

Paul warned the Philippians against those who were gluttons and lived only for sensual indulgences. In the last verse, Paul again expressed his hope of the resurrection. The phrase “vile body” means “the body of our humiliation.” It is a frail house that returns to dust. Nevertheless, being the temple of the Holy Ghost during life, the body is reserved for a higher destiny than remaining dust. When Jesus returns, this frail house will be changed like unto His own glorious body.

B. PHILIPPIANS 4

1. Exhortation to Two Women

Euodia and Syntyche were two prominent women in the Philippian church who had personal differences and were bringing some annoyance to the entire church. Paul beseeched them to be in harmony and to settle their differences.

He exhorted one of the brethren there, whom he called a “true yoke fellow,” to help the women at Philippi who labored with Paul in the gospel.

2. Do Not Worry or Be Anxious

Scripture Reference:

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:5-7).

Because of the near coming of the Lord, Paul admonished the church to be reasonable in all things and have the ability to be considerate and not be extreme.

He exhorted them to fully trust the Lord. This would mean that there would be no place for worry, anxiety, or fretting. Instead, they would pray much, and their prayer would be made with thanksgiving. If they would pray with thanksgiving, then the peace of God, which is more wonderful than the human mind can understand, would keep their thoughts, and their hearts would be at quiet rest, trusting Jesus Christ.

3. Mental Health

Scripture Reference:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:8, 9).

Here is a paragraph concerning positive thinking. Physically, a man is what he eats; spiritually, a man is what he thinks. His thoughts will control and motivate his actions. How important it is to be thinking noble and pure thoughts.

Paul enumerated the things that a Christian should fix his thoughts upon: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue, and praise. If we are to fix our thoughts on such things, it is evident that the apostle Paul believed that a man could control his thinking.

4. Paul’s Sufficiency

Scripture Reference:

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

Paul expressed his total sufficiency to be in Christ. “All things” referred to everything that was in the will of God for him. He could be content under all circumstances of life. In both lack and abundance, the apostle Paul would still be victorious through Christ. He did not place his confidence in his own strength but in the strength of Christ’s presence within his life.

5. The Promise of Ample Supply

Scripture Reference:

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

God does not promise to supply our wants, but rather He will supply all of our needs. The key to this promise is the phrase “according to his riches in glory.” God owns the universe, and it does not impoverish Him in the least to supply the needs of His children. He will supply to the fullest every need, both temporal and eternal, that the child of God has.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Philippians, Part II

Fill in the blanks.

anxiety	citizenship	dog
eats	every	fretting
gluttony	Judaistic	legalism
moderation	needs	orthodox
riches	thinks	worry

1. Paul warned the Philippians against _____.
2. The legalists taught that the Christians should obey the _____ traditions.
3. The term _____ was one of contempt.
4. Paul had an _____ heritage and endeavored to keep the Law in _____ detail.
5. The word *conversation* means _____.
6. Paul warned against _____ living only for sensual pleasures.
7. Paul exhorted the Philippians to _____.
8. When we trust the Lord, there is no room for _____, _____, _____, or _____.
9. Physically, a man is what he _____ spiritually, man is what he _____.
10. God has promised to supply our _____ based on His abundant _____ in glory.

Epistles II

Lesson Eight

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

PART I

Text: Colossians 1

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Colosse

Colosse was situated about 100 miles east of Ephesus on a caravan route to the East, near the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis. Undoubtedly the apostle Paul had traveled through Colosse, but it seems that he was not acquainted with the Christians there (Colossians 2:1). It is quite possible that the church was established as an outreach of Paul's Ephesian ministry.

2. The Epistle to the Colossians

This letter was written by Paul in AD 61-63 while he was in prison at Rome. Epaphras, a Colossian and minister of the church there, had come to Rome, informing Paul of a heresy that was growing. Paul sent the letter by Tychicus and Onesimus who also carried the letter to the Ephesians and the one to Philemon.

3. The Gnostic Heresy

At Colosse, false teachers were teaching false doctrine, which later was known as Gnosticism. They changed the gospel into a mere philosophy. They placed the emphasis on "knowledge" rather than on "faith." They taught that all matter was evil and that God alone was holy. God could not span the gulf between Himself and man, so mediatory angels were used. They interpreted Christ according to their pagan philosophy and classified Jesus with these mediatory angels. This heathen philosophy was mixed with the legalism of Judaism.

In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he gave the remedy for this false teaching. This remedy may be stated under two headings:

- a. The Lordship of Jesus Christ
- b. Christian Liberty

4. The Godhead of Jesus Christ

The key verse in this letter to the Colossians is the last clause of verse 18 in chapter 1, "That in all things he may have preeminence." In this passage of Scripture,

Paul stated that Jesus had the preeminence in creation (verse 16), in the resurrection (verse 18), and in redemption (verse 20). Here, He is stated to be the Originator of all the wonders of creation and their Sustainer. He also is the One that overcame death and brought peace to the redeemed. All the power, wisdom, and glory of God are resident in Him and in Him all the fullness dwells bodily.

Let us list some of the prominent phrases found in Colossians that establish His preeminence:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| a. | Colossians 1:15 | “Image of the invisible God . . . firstborn of every creature.” |
| b. | Colossians 1:16 | “All things were created by him.” |
| c. | Colossians 1:17 | “He is before all things . . . by him all things consist.” |
| d. | Colossians 1:18 | “Head of the church . . . the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” |
| e. | Colossians 1:19 | “In him . . . all fulness dwells.” |
| f. | Colossians 1:20 | “To reconcile all things unto himself” |
| g. | Colossians 1:27 | “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” |
| h. | Colossians 2:3 | “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” |
| i. | Colossians 2:9 | “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the God head bodily.” |
| j. | Colossians 2:10 | “Head of all principality and power.” |

B. COLOSSIANS 1

1. Paul’s Prayer

Scripture Reference: Colossians 1:9-13

Two of Paul’s prayers are recorded in his Epistle to the Ephesians, one in his letter to the Philippians, and his fourth is here.

In contrast to the intellectualism of the Gnostics, Paul prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will. As they are fruitful in every good work, their knowledge of God will grow. This power will be God’s power in their lives to produce patience, longsuffering, and joyfulness.

2. Translated from Darkness

Scripture Reference:

“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” (Colossians 1:13-14).

In describing the power of God in action, Paul used the two verbs *delivered* and *translated*. The child of God has been rescued from the darkness of Satan’s kingdom and translated into the light of Christ’s kingdom. This is experienced when a person is born again according to the obedience of the gospel as preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost.

In redemption, we experience forgiveness of sins. In translating the word *forgiveness* into the Eskimo language, translators used a twenty-four letter word meaning “not being able to think about it any more.” This only partially expresses what divine forgiveness means.

3. Image of the Invisible God

Scripture Reference:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15).

God is a Spirit and as such is invisible. Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. The only God that man will ever see is Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the glory of God may be seen in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6). Philip asked Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father.” The reply of our Lord was, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:8, 9).

The phrase “firstborn of every creature” has given some students difficulty. If we read this Scripture in The Amplified New Testament, the meaning here is very clear:

And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). He also is the Head of [His] body, the church; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place [stand first and be preeminent]. For it has pleased [the Father] that all the divine fullness (the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes) should dwell in Him permanently (Colossians 1:17-19, AMP).

4. All Things Reconciled

Scripture Reference:

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say” (Colossians 1:20).

It was through the atonement provided on the cross of Calvary that reconciliation was accomplished for all men. No matter how alienated man may be from God, they may be fully reconciled if they will accept the salvation provided for them. There is no other reconciliation possible but that provided by the death of Christ.

5. If Ye Continue

Scripture Reference:

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Colossians 1:23).

Paul certainly made it clear that our position in Christ depends upon “our continuing in the faith.” There is no room for unconditional eternal security here.

6. Mystery Now Made Manifest

Scripture Reference:

“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26, 27).

When a believer is baptized with the Holy Ghost, he is in Christ (I Corinthians 12:13) and Christ is in him. The church is Christ’s body, and Jesus takes up residence in the heart of His saints.

This is a tremendous truth that answers many questions that cannot otherwise be explained.

Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Colossians, Part I

True or False.

- _____ 1. Colosse was situated about 200 miles west of Ephesus.
- _____ 2. The Epistle to the Colossians was written by Peter.
- _____ 3. The epistle was written to correct the errors of Gnosticism.
- _____ 4. The epistle stresses the preeminence of Jesus Christ in all things.
- _____ 5. The child of God has been translated (delivered) from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son.
- _____ 6. Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.
- _____ 7. It was through the atonement on the cross of Calvary that reconciliation was accomplished for all men.
- _____ 8. Our position in Christ has nothing to do with "our continuing in the faith."
- _____ 9. When a believer is baptized with the Holy Ghost, he is in Christ and Christ is in him.
- _____ 10. The church is the body of Christ.

Epistles II

Lesson Nine

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS PART II

Text: Colossians 2-4

A. COLOSSIANS 2

1. Laodicea

Scripture Reference:

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh” (Colossians 2:1).

Paul desired that the Colossians and Laodiceans would understand the battle that he had fought for them.

Laodicea was ten miles away, and this letter to the Colossians was to be read there. At approximately the same time, Paul also wrote a letter to the Laodicean church which he desired to be read in the church at Colosse. Apparently at both places, there were those who had never seen Paul. It was for these that Paul was especially concerned that they would understand Paul's conflict for the preaching of the gospel.

2. Mystery of God

Scripture Reference:

“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:2, 3).

Paul's concern for these churches was that they might be united in love, that they might have a clear understanding of the deity of Jesus. Let us quote a portion in The Amplified New Testament, beginning with the last clause of verse 2: “May know more definitely and accurately and thoroughly that mystic secret of God which is Christ, the Anointed One. In Him, all the treasure of wisdom, and knowledge and enlightenment are stored up and lie hidden.”

If it was essential for the Colossians to receive the revelation that Jesus is very God, it is still essential that every Christian receive this revelation today!

3. Warning Against Gnosticism

Scripture Reference:

“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” (Colossians 2:8).

In warning the Colossians against Gnosticism, Paul wrote to them to beware lest they be deceived by philosophy, man’s tradition, vain deceit, and elementary notions of the world. These expressions describe the error of Gnosticism and were to be avoided.

4. Warning Against Legalism

Scripture Reference: Colossians 2:11-17

False doctrine is generally mixed with that which has the appearance of truth. Such was the case with the error at Colosse. Judaistic teachings were mixed with Gnosticism.

At Calvary, Jesus triumphed over these, which were shadows pointing forward to Christ. Now that He had come and fulfilled these types, they were no longer necessary. This is certainly true of both the rite of circumcision and the Sabbath. Paul stated that now water baptism has taken the place of circumcision.

5. Warning Against Mysticism

Scripture Reference:

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Colossians 2:18, 19).

Here the worship of angels is condemned. As members of His body, we do not need the mediatorial ministry of angels; this includes the worship of the virgin Mary. Each member of the body receives strength directly from the Head, Jesus Christ.

6. Warning Against Asceticism

Scripture Reference: Colossians 2:20-23

The final warning in this chapter is against Asceticism. If we are dead to the teaching of the world, then there is no merit in self-affliction.

B. COLOSSIANS 3

1. With Christ in God

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:14

The apostle Paul exhorted the Colossian saints to set their love on things above. This reveals the ability that one has to control his love as seen in Psalm 91:14, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him."

As it does elsewhere, the phrase "right hand of God" means the place of power and authority. The old life is dead, but the new life is hid with Christ in God. This place of salvation and blessing only can be if the old life is dead. What a wonderful comfort it is to know that one's life is hid with Christ in God.

2. Exhortation to Holiness

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:5-14

In Paul's exhortation to holiness, his emphasis is upon what the Christian has to do. First, he has to kill the desires of the flesh. Second, he has to rid himself of certain things. Third, after he has died to the flesh and laid aside the works of the flesh, he has to clothe himself with the beautiful attributes of holiness. It is important to see the Christian's own responsibility in this.

We shall list the things that must be killed as given in *The Amplified New Testament*: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness for that is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Paul stated that it was because of these things that God's anger would come upon the disobedient.

Let us again turn to *The Amplified New Testament* to list the things that the Christian must rid himself of: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses, slander, foulmouthed abuse, and shameful utterances from your lips (Colossians 3:8). It should be noted that lying is another work of the flesh that must be laid to one side.

Colossians 3:12 lists attributes of holiness with which the Christian must clothe himself. Tenderheartedness, forgiveness, and love are outstanding among these.

3. Exhortation to Worship

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:15-17

The child of God should sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with grace in his heart. Worship has a very important place in the life of every true Christian. Worship should take place with great thanksgiving in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Admonition to the Family

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:18-4:1

Your home has a very important part to play in Christian living. The admonition to wives, children, and servants is for submission and obedience. The admonition to husbands and masters is for love, patience, understanding, and justice.

In most cases, the wives and children will be happy to submit and obey if husbands and fathers will love and show proper understanding. In verse 19, the expression “be not bitter against them” means that husbands must not be harsh with their wives.

C. COLOSSIANS 4

1. Paul’s Request for Prayer

Scripture Reference:

“Don’t be weary in prayer; keep at it; watch for God’s answers and remember to be thankful when they come. Don’t forget to pray for us too, that God will give us many chances to preach the Good News of Christ for which I am here in jail. Pray that I will be bold enough to tell it freely and fully, and make it plain, as, of course, I should” (Colossians 4:2-4, The Living Bible)

Paul always laid great emphasis upon prayer. He was concerned that the Colossians would not forget him, that he might have many opportunities to preach the gospel.

2. Paul’s Friends and Coworkers

Paul closed this epistle with reference to ten friends and coworkers. They are listed here:

- a. Tychicus, one of Paul’s companions and the bearer of this letter.
- b. Onesimus, a runaway slave from Colosse who was converted under Paul’s ministry at Rome and returned to his master, Philemon.
- c. Aristarchus, a Thessalonian who accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey and was later Paul’s fellow prisoner at Rome.

Lesson Nine

- d. Marcus, the Roman form of “Mark,” was the writer of the gospel that bears his name. His mother was Mary, a sister of Barnabas. John Mark accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey but turned back at Perga.
- e. Epaphras, a teacher in the Colossian church and a faithful minister of Christ.
- f. Justus, one of Paul’s friends.
- g. Luke, a converted Gentile who was born at Antioch and who studied medicine. He joined Paul at Troas. He wrote two books of the New Testament.
- h. Demas, a companion of Paul’s during his imprisonment, but whose love for the world caused him to forsake Paul.
- i. Nymphas, a wealthy Christian in Laodicea. The church worshiped at his house.
- j. Archippus, a Christian teacher in Colosse.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Letter to the Colossians, Part II

1. In Colossians 2:1, what was Paul's desire for the Colossians and Laodiceans?
2. What was the mystery of God?
3. In Colossians 2:8, what did Paul warn the Colossian saints against?
4. What is legalism?
5. What is mysticism?
6. What is ascetism?
7. What does the Christian have to do to live a life of holiness?
8. Explain the need for submission with the Christian family.

Epistles II

Lesson Ten

PAUL'S FIRST LETTERS TO THE THESSALONIANS

PART I

Text: I Thessalonians 1, 2 and 3

A. THESSALONICA

Thessalonica was a strategic commercial city in Macedonia. It was located on a harbor surrounded by rich plains. It was in sight of Mount Olympus and was a leading city of that time. Many Jews, Greeks, and Romans lived there. The modern name for this city is Salonika.

B. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

This was the first epistle Paul wrote. It was written from Corinth around AD 50 or 51. The second letter to the Thessalonians was written a few months later, also from Corinth.

Paul preached three Sabbath days in Thessalonica and was accused of turning the world upside down. A riot resulted, and Paul went to Berea. When Paul left Berea for Athens, Timothy and Silas remained behind. From Athens, Paul sent for them, and when they arrived, he sent Timothy back to see how the church in Thessalonica was. Timothy brought back a good report, but he also brought questions concerning the Lord's coming. There are five chapters in this epistle. Each one ends with a message concerning the Lord's return.

C. SALUTATION

In the salutation, Paul included the names of Silvanus and Timotheus. These were Roman forms of the names Silas and Timothy.

Silas was a Jew and a leader in the Jerusalem church. He was one of the messengers chosen by the Jerusalem church to carry the decision of the first church council to the Gentiles (Acts 17:32). He accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey.

D. WITH GREAT CONVICTION

Scripture Reference:

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of man we were among you for your sake" (I Thessalonians 1:5).

Paul called the message he preached “our gospel.” It revealed his personal commitment to the gospel and that it was part of him. This was emphasized in his reference to his personal life that he lived before them. The result was a message of power and great faith. Under the ministry of Paul, the gospel brought great conviction. Let us quote from Richard Francis Weymouth’s translation [The New Testament in Modern Speech]: “Our gospel did not come to you in words only, but also with power and with the Holy Spirit and with great conviction.”

E. WHO WERE SAVED AT THESSALONICA

In the account of the revival of Thessalonica given in the seventeenth chapter of Acts, there were Jews and devout Greek and Gentile proselytes among the first converts. In I Thessalonians 1:9, we also read where there were Gentiles saved from idolatry. In these Scriptures, it is stated that there were three groups of people among the converts:

1. Jews
2. Gentile proselytes
3. Gentiles saved from idolatry

F. PAUL’S PURE MOTIVES

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 2:1-8

As it frequently happens, the enemies of the gospel attacked it by attacking God’s messenger. They accused him of several wrongs and tried to assassinate his character. They accused him of moral impurity, deception, of being a man pleaser and a religious racketeer.

In order to protect the gospel, it was necessary for Paul to defend and vindicate himself. He reminded the Thessalonians of his ministry among them. His motives for preaching the gospel were pure. He had been sincere, truthful, and unselfish. He denied the accusation of deceit and uncleanness. He never preached with flattering words to please men. In fact, he was willing to give them not only the gospel, but his own soul.

G. PAUL’S EXAMPLE

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 2:9-12

Paul reminded the Thessalonians of his example. He labored night and day that he might not be chargeable to anyone. Three words were used to describe his life: holy, just, and unblameable. These words referred to religious purity and moral integrity. He likened himself to a father and summarized his ministry by the use of these three verbs: *exhorted*, *comforted*, and *charged*.

H. PAUL'S REASON FOR REJOICING

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 2:13-20

Paul rejoiced that the Thessalonians received the gospel as being God's message not as the word of men. As a result, they suffered persecution as did the churches in Judea. The phrase "to fill up their sins always" refers to the Jews adding sin to sin, making up their full measure of guilt.

Paul expressed his desire to visit Thessalonica, but Satan hindered him. We do not know how he had been hindered. It may have been by ill health or by the persecution at Athens and Corinth.

I. PAUL'S CONCERN

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 3:1-11

Paul's concern for the church at Thessalonica was revealed by his statement, "when we could no longer forbear" (I Thessalonians 3:1). He repeated this in verse 5. His concern was so great that he sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage them, reminding them that he had told them that they would suffer tribulation. Paul was concerned lest their faith would weaken and they would yield to temptation.

Paul rejoiced when Timothy returned with a good report of their steadfastness and devotion. This comforted Paul in his affliction and distress.

J. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIANS

Scripture Reference:

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thessalonians 3:12, 13).

Paul prayed day and night for the Thessalonians. There were three main petitions made for them:

1. That God would enable Paul to visit them to perfect their faith
2. That they might abound in love
3. That the Lord might establish their hearts in holiness

The final petition is linked with the hope of the Lord's return.

Epistles II

Lesson Eleven

PAUL'S FIRST LETTERS TO THE THESSALONIANS PART II

Text: I Thessalonians 4 and 5

A. PAUL'S EXHORTATION

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 4:1-12

The first part of chapter 4 is an exhortation to holiness. Paul exhorted them to:

1. Abstain from fornication
2. Defraud no brother
3. Mind their own affairs
4. Work with their own hands
5. Be honest with all men

There may be a problem in understanding verse 4. The word *vesse/* undoubtedly refers to one's body. In this case, it means that a person is to control his body in purity. Some students believe it refers to a man's wife. To throw some light on this Scripture, let us quote from The Living Bible: "God wants you to be holy and pure, and to keep clear of all sexual sins so that each of you will marry in holiness and honour" (I Thessalonians 4:4).

B. HOPE WITHOUT SORROW

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Thessalonian church was troubled about the Christians who had died. In this epistle, Paul gave a very explicit explanation about the coming of the Lord which is the hope of the church. Each chapter closes with a statement about the Lord's return and its meaning to the child of God. These statements link the return of Jesus to:

1. Salvation
2. Service
3. Sanctification
4. Comfort
5. Separation

In this well-known portion of Scripture, Paul stated facts about the Lord's return for His church:

1. It is a comforting hope for the bereaved. They will be reunited with their loved ones.
2. Those who have died in the Lord will be caught up first. Then the living saints will be raptured with them to meet the Lord in the air.
3. Accompanying the return of the Lord for His church, there will be a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God.

The student should understand the following:

1. The word *prevent*, verse 15, should read *precede*.
2. The expression “sleep in Jesus” refers to a conscious rest in the Lord. It is the body that is sleeping. The spirit and soul of man are with the Lord. (See II Corinthians 5:6-8.)
3. The verb *to meet*, as used in verse 17, is the same as the verb *to meet* used in Acts 28:15. Brethren came from Rome to meet Paul at the Appii Forum to return or to accompany them back to Rome. This is the meaning here: “The Lord will come to meet the church in the air to accompany the church back to Heaven.”

C. NOT APPOINTED TO WRATH

Scripture Reference:

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 5:9).

After the rapture of the church, the Day of the Lord will take place, which will include the Great Tribulation and Armageddon. This is a time of judgment for the unbelievers. However, this time of God’s wrath is not for the church. Therefore, the church is exhorted to be sober, put on the breastplate of love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. In other words, the church does not look for the Day of the Lord, a time of God’s wrath, but rather for the Rapture when Jesus will catch the church home to Himself.

D. MINISTRY TO BE ESTEEMED

Scripture Reference:

“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (I Thessalonians 5:12, 13).

It is essential that God’s people esteem and love the ministry which admonishes them and through teaching helps them to be ready for the Lord’s return.

E. PAUL'S FINAL EXHORTATION

Scripture Reference: I Thessalonians 5:14-22

In Paul's final exhortation, several things are mentioned. The student should list them and study each individually. The "feeble minded," verse 14, are the faint hearted. Special note should be taken to the sins against the Holy Spirit—namely quenching and despising. They were exhorted to discern between the true and the false and to avoid even the appearance of wrongdoing.

F. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

Scripture Reference:

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

Salvation is for the whole man. It is impossible to be sanctified in the body, soul, and spirit and not to be found blameless when Jesus returns.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's First Letters to the Thessalonians, Part II

Fill in the blanks.

- 1 . Paul exhorted the Thessalonian saints to:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

2. The word *prevent* in verse 4:15 means _____

3. The expression "sleep in Jesus" refers to _____

4. The church is not appointed to _____

5. Paul taught that the ministry should be _____

6. The Holy Spirit should not be _____ nor

7. I Thessalonians links the return of Christ to:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

Epistles II

Lesson Twelve

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Text: II Thessalonians

A. PAUL'S SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul had written regarding the coming of the Lord for His church. The Thessalonians apparently received the wrong interpretation from this letter. Some believed that they were already in the Great Tribulation. Others thought that the coming of the Lord was so near that they need not work. Paul wrote this letter to correct these erroneous views. It was written from Corinth shortly after his first epistle.

In this epistle, Paul expressed his thanksgiving for their steadfastness, love, patience, and faith during tribulation. He comforted them in their suffering and taught them more about the return of Christ.

B. THE DAY OF THE LORD

Paul dealt with the return of Jesus in judgment. He instructed them to relax, which is the meaning of the verb *rest* as used in verse 7. He emphasized the fact that the Day of the Lord could not come until there was a great apostasy and the man of sin was revealed.

The judgment scene described here is mentioned by the Lord in Matthew 25. It should be noted that the angels take an important place in this scene of judgment and that judgment will come on those who do not know God and have not obeyed the gospel. "Everlasting destruction" is eternal perdition, not annihilation as some people suppose.

The beginning of chapter 2 breaks the continuity of thought; however, the apostle Paul was still writing about the return of our Lord in judgment. "The Day of the Lord" is the theme here, not the "coming of the Lord for His church."

C. THE MAN OF SIN

Scripture Reference:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (II Thessalonians 2:3).

The “man of sin,” that wicked one, the lawless one is described as being the “son of perdition.” He is the Antichrist who will rise up in the end time and will claim that he is God.

The “man of sin” has not yet been revealed. Undoubtedly somewhere in the world, he is living as these notes are being written. He must come and be revealed before the Great Tribulation takes place and the judgment of God is poured out in the last days. We must always remember, however, that this is referring to the Lord’s return in judgment and not to the Lord returning for the church.

D. THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

Scripture Reference:

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” (II Thessalonians 2:7).

The “mystery of iniquity” is the spirit of lawlessness. This first clause might read thus: “Lawlessness is already at work in secret.” Let us quote this verse from The Living Bible: “As for the work this man of rebellion and he will do when he comes, it is already going on, but he himself will not come until the one who is holding him back steps out of the way.”

Just as Jesus is the mystery of godliness (I Timothy 3:16), so the Antichrist is the mystery of iniquity. It is important to know that the world has to choose between the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity. Those that reject the mystery of godliness (Jesus Christ) will at the close of this church age accept the mystery of iniquity (Antichrist).

E. THE RESTRAINER

Scripture Reference:

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” (II Thessalonians 2:7).

Who is the “he” mentioned in this verse? This does not refer to the church who is feminine in gender. It is definitely the One who resides in the church—Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).

This truth emphasizes the role the church is having in this troubled world today. The church is literally the “salt of the earth,” the great stabilizing force that is holding back the powers of darkness and the coming of the Antichrist. Jesus Christ, residing in the church, is the Great Restraint mentioned in this verse.

F. PRESENT DAY JUDGMENT

Scripture Reference:

“And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thessalonians 2:11, 12).

There is a judgment that takes place at the present time. This judgment is the strong delusion that men will believe a lie.

It is essential not only to receive the truth, but also the love of the truth. Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans of those who changed the truth of God into a lie. (See Romans 1:25.) Those who love a lie will be punished by being sent a strong delusion; their souls will be damned because they loved not the truth and have pleasure in unrighteousness.

G. PAUL’S PRAYER REQUEST

Scripture Reference:

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” (II Thessalonians 3:1, 2).

Paul requested the church at Thessalonica to remember him in prayer. His request was that God’s Word would be preached freely and be triumphant wherever it was proclaimed.

H. PAUL’S EXAMPLE

Scripture Reference: II Thessalonians 3:7-13

Paul reminded them of his example of laboring night and day that he might provide for his own needs. He had the right to have them provide for him, but he did not exercise that right, that he might provide them a proper example.

The result of idleness and laziness was that they became busybodies and walked disorderly. Paul emphasized the principles that if they did not work, neither should they eat. He urged them to work quietly and eat their own food.

I. INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISCIPLINE

Scripture Reference:

Lesson Twelve

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (II Thessalonians 3:14, 15).

In verse 6, the Thessalonians were commanded to withdraw from every brother who walked disorderly. This is repeated in verse 14 where they were told to have no company with him. Yet he was not to be treated as an enemy, but as a brother who was to be admonished.



Self Help Test: Epistles II

Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians

1. II Thessalonians was written to correct erroneous views concerning

2. The word *rest* in 1:7 means _____

3. The “man of sin” is _____

4. The “mystery of iniquity” is _____

5. The “he” in II Thessalonians 2:7 refers to _____

6. The judgment for those who will not receive the love of the truth is

7. Paul taught that if a person did not work, he should not _____

8. _____ and _____
resulted in the people becoming _____ and walking
_____.

Missionary Spotlight: Lucille Farmer

December 31, 1915 - December 20, 1997

God called Lucille Farmer to be a missionary on June 8, 1943. Her husband had recently deserted her, leaving her destitute and solely responsible for her four children that ranged in age from six months to five years. Because of her impoverished circumstances, Lucille knew that it would be quite awhile before she could answer the call, so her calling became a secret that she kept to herself.

On May 16, 1945, Lucille and her four children arrived by bus in Superior, Wyoming, at the invitation of her friend Bernice Davis to help start a Sunday school. During the next six years, the Lord blessed the sacrifice of these women, and the church grew to almost one hundred people. At the end of 1951, Lucille turned the church over to George Eads and moved with her family back to Albuquerque.

During the years that followed, Lucille worked with Carrie Eastridge among the Indians in Gallup, New Mexico, worked as a supervisor at First National Bank in Albuquerque, and started a children's church for the black and Hispanic children that now populated her neighborhood.

Lucille stated:

The years passed, and finally my children were all through high school and on their own. Two of my girls were

already married. Finally I wrote to Brother Stairs [secretary of Foreign Missions] and told him that I was ready to

go. He answered my letter and said, "I'm sorry, Sister Farmer, but we have changed our policy. We are not sending single women anymore." That was a great blow to me and to my vision of going to the foreign field.

Instead, I decided to go to Gallup, New Mexico, and help my brother, David Darrah, and his wife, who were working with the Navajo Indians at that time.

The Foreign Missions Board finally approved Lucille for missionary

appointment at the 1963 General Conference in Memphis, Tennessee. She departed for Colombia April 17, 1964, spent some time with Lewis and Sallie Morley refreshing her Spanish, and arrived in Ecuador in July 1964—twenty-one years after her initial call.

Edwin and Evelyn Judd visited Sister Farmer in Ecuador in 1965. He stated,

We found her living in a humble, little apartment, cooking on a two burner plate with no refrigerator and happy to do it. She could have had more but would not because the national pastor didn't have it and could not have it. . . . For us it was but a week, and we moved on to other areas and lifestyles.



For her, by her own choosing, it was her continual lifestyle throughout the land of Ecuador where a foundation was laid by her for a great revival to follow. Today, there are over a hundred churches scattered throughout what was then a very 'pioneer' mission field in the most anti-Protestant nation in South America. Only eternity will reveal the credit that Sister Lucille Farmer deserves for what has been accomplished."

Sister Farmer planned to furlough in April 1969, five years after she arrived on the field. Believing that a man should head the work, she wrote to the director of Foreign Missions, Oscar Vouga, asking that he send a man. As God orchestrated the events, Daniel and Joy Scott arrived as missionaries to Ecuador in late April 1969.

The Lord surprised Lucille by telling her that she would not be returning to Ecuador. She accepted His will but wondered what she should do. Several doors of opportunity opened and she walked through them.

Eventually the Lord revealed His will and she met the Foreign Missions Board and expressed her desire to go to Israel. However, an appointment was not possible as Israel did not permit missionaries. Nevertheless, as Lucille continued to seek God's will, she decided to go on her own. Golda Meir, the Israeli prime minister, helped her get a visa. Lucille arrived in Tel Aviv April 14, 1971.

Living frugally on meager wages and donations from the States, Lucille ministered wherever and whenever she could. Through her humble, quiet witness, she won many souls to the Lord. She was a woman given to prayer and fasting, always seeking direction from the Lord. She was a woman of great but simple faith, and miracles followed her ministry.

It was during her time in Israel that she developed Parkinson's Disease. Torn

between her family's pleas to come home and her desire to stay in Israel, Lucille looked to the Lord for direction. When Israel cancelled her visa, she took that as a sign from the Lord and flew home to Portland, Oregon, July 26, 1979.

Lucille settled with her daughter Ann, in Hood River, Oregon, where a home missions church was just beginning. Her burden for Spanish-speaking people and her consistent ministry of prayer became one of the reasons why Apostolic Tabernacle of Hood River grew. She was a faithful member of the church up to her death on December 20, 1997.

Lucille once said:

I don't have any talents. I can't sing. I can't preach. I'm not a preacher and never have been. I never felt called to be a preacher. I don't have any talents that you could call a talent except maybe one thing—I'm just willing.

When I went to be a home missionary in Wyoming, the only recommendation I had for that was I'd been a church janitor. But I tried to do the best job I could. I entered the Lord's work by accident. It really wasn't an accident; I had Someone planning for me. From that day to this, I've just been willing, ready to jump in and do the best I could.

May Lucille Farmer's example of a willing heart set the course for generations to follow.

Recommended Reading: Loudermilk, Mary, *A Willing Heart: The Life and Missionary Work of Lucille Farmer, (Hood River, Oregon: Alpha Bible Publications, 1991).*