



For Christ & the Church

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God's Eternal Purpose

Ephesians 1:1-23

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context*—

1. The book of Ephesians is Paul's essay on the church belonging to Jesus Christ, the glorious bride of Christ, the most precious institution on earth today.
2. The word "church" occurs nine times in the letter (1:22; 3:10,21; 5:23,24,25,27,29,32). The term "body" (referring to the church) occurs nine more times (1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16 (twice); 5:23, 30).
3. Concerning the church, the book reveals that:
 - a. Christ loves her, 5:23.
 - b. It shall be presented to Christ, 5:27.
 - c. God's manifold wisdom is demonstrated by the church, 3:10.
 - d. God is glorified in the church by Christ, 3:21.
 - e. There is one body or church, 4:4.
 - f. Christ is the head of the church, 1:22; 5:23.
 - g. The church is the fullness of Christ, 1:22, 23.
 - h. Christ is the savior of the body, the church, 5:23.
 - i. Christ gave himself for it, 5:25.
 - j. It is to be holy and without blemish, 5:27.
 - k. The church is the beloved bride of Christ, 5:31, 32.

B. *"The Blessing Chapter"*

1. Chapter one of the book:
 - a. Has been called the "blessing chapter" of the Bible, and rightly so.
 - b. Introduces us to the "eternal purpose" of God, 1:9-11; cf. 3:9-11, which specifically mentions "the eternal purpose" in connection with the same thoughts discussed in 1:9-11.
 - c. Furnishes clear cut, simple answers to any questions one might have as to the wonderful blessings of Christianity, or about Christ and his church as the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.
2. To help us see and better appreciate this, we shall divide the chapter into two sections and emphasize what is taught or what is to be learned from each, taking note of how the second is related to the first.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Marvelous List Of Spiritual Blessings God Has Given Us, (Vv. 3-14):

1. God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ," v.3.
 - a. "Blessed us...the saints...and...the faithful in Christ Jesus", 1:1.
 - (1) "Saints" – set apart, consecrated, holy ones.
 - (2) "Faithful" – those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ, 1:13.
 - b. "With all spiritual blessings in Christ."
 - (1) "Spiritual," not material blessings.
 - (2) "All" of these are "in Christ"; "All" – of every kind – are in Christ.
 - (3) To experience or obtain even one of these, one must be "in Christ."
 - c. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed..."
 - (1) That is, "praised be God"
 - (2) Truly God deserves to be praised for so blessings us.
 - (3) Do we really praise him for this as we should?
 - d. The Ephesians are reminded that "ALL" spiritual blessings are "in Christ" and come "through Christ," not through "the great goddess Diana of the Ephesians," or the Law of Moses.
 - e. "In Christ"
 - (1) Used in an instrumental sense – through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ; he is the cause, 1:3-11.
 - (2) It denotes union, a vital spiritual union with him, having been by faith baptized into this spiritual relationship with him, Rom. 6:3-6; Gal.1:26,27; Mt.28:18,19.
 - (3) To be in fellowship with him, 1 Jno.1:3; Jno.15:1-8.
 - f. "In heavenly *places* in Christ"
 - (1) "*Places*" is in *italics*, not in the original text.
 - (2) Thus just "the heavenlies," or where all Christian have their citizenship. Cf. Phil.3:20.
 - (3) "Heavenlies" or heavenly habitation, and identifies the realm of spiritual reality.
 - (a) Spiritual are as real as material things.
 - (b) Furthermore, these blessings originate in and emanate from heaven.
 - g. He is here declared to be "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - (1) Jesus often said God is his Father and he is God's Son.
 - h. The purposes of the spiritual blessings:
 - (1) "That we should be holy and without blemish before God," 1:4 (cf. 5:27).
 - (2) "That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace," 1:6,12.

- (3) "That...he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," 1:10.
2. These spiritual blessings as listed in vv. 4-14: "According as he hath..."
- a. "Chosen us in him," 1:4a.
- (1) Emphasize "Chosen IN HIM"
 - (2) Those "in Christ" are chosen, or elected, of God "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth", and called by the gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; 1 Peter 1:2, 22-25.
 - (3) It's an heavenly calling, Hebrews 3:1.
 - (4) Those "in Christ" are chosen "in Him before the foundation of the world," v.4b.
 - (a) Before the universe was created (cf. 1 Tim.1:9; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).
 - (5) Those "in Christ" are chosen that they "should be holy and without blemish (blame) before him in love," the purpose of the choosing, or the design of God's electing act. Cf. 5:27.
 - (a) Holy living is emphasized. Cf. Matthew 5:8; Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 6:17; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Titus 2:11,12; 1 Peter 1:15,16; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10.
 - (b) "In love," without which no sacrifice is acceptable, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Galatians 5:6; 1 Corinthians 16:14.
- b. "Predestinated ("foreordained," ASV) us unto the adoption of children (sons) by Jesus Christ to himself," 1:5,6.
- (1) "Foreordained" – "to mark out before hand, to define a boundary" of something; "to predetermine" Cf. Builder planning a building.
 - (2) Before the world began God decided and determined the "boundaries" of his spiritual kingdom – who – what kind of people would be included and excluded *in group terms*.
 - (a) All those who would choose to come within the boundaries of his doctrine and remain there will be saved, John 8:31,32; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 9.
 - (b) The invitation is open to all, and all can come on the basis of faith and obedience, Matthew 11:28-30; John 3:16; 6:44, 45; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Hebrews 2:9; 5:8,9; Revelation 22:17.
 - (c) All those who chose Jesus as God's Son shall be God's chosen people.
 - (d) There is no Calvinistic doctrine taught here!
 - (3) This adoption of sons:
 - (a) Means to "place as a son" in God's family.
 - (b) It is by the new birth, John 3:3-5; Acts 2:36-41; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

- (c) All of God's children are in God's house or his family, which is the church, 1 Timothy 3:14,15.
- (d) Is by Jesus Christ and by him alone, his sacrificial death having provided the means of our adoption, and when we by faith obey his gospel the adoption is accomplished.
- (e) Is done "according to the good pleasure of his (God's) will," as are all things God does, v. 5 (cf. Ephesians 1:9; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11).
 - (1) All is conformable to the good pleasure of his will, just as it was according to the purpose of his will.
- (f) His choosing, foreordaining and adopting us as his sons is "to the praise of the glory of his grace," v. 6a.
 - (1) "Praise" means "commendation," and "glory" means "honor, majesty, and exaltation which belong to God— which he rightly deserves.
 - (2) All praise and glory in this life belong to God, "to whom be glory for ever and ever," Galatians 1:5.
 - (3) Jesus possessed that glory before his Incarnation, and received it again when he ascended, John 17:5; Philippians 2:9-11; Ephesians 1:19-23.
 - (4) Those accepted in Christ will receive glory with Christ when he returns, Colossians 3:4; Philippians 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:16-18.
- c. Also, in him "we have redemption," 1:7a.
 - (1) Redemption, refers to deliverance or a releasing from bondage or setting one free by paying a ransom.
 - (a) All sinners are slaves to, held in bondage to, sin and need redemption, John 8:34 (cf. Rom. 7:14).
 - (b) Since all have sinned, all need redemption, Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; 1 John 5:19.
 - (c) No mere man can redeem himself; for redemption he is dependent on God, Jesus Christ and the gospel of Christ.
 - (2) We have redemption through his (Christ's) blood, and only through him and his blood, Ephesians 1:7a (Acts 4:12); Matthew 20:28; 26:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:23-26; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Galatians 3:13; 4:5; Colossians 1:13,14; 1 Timothy 2:5,6; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18-20; 2 Peter 2:1.
 - (3) That redemption is the forgiveness of our sins, 1:7a (cf. Colossians 1:14).
 - (a) Needed because all have sinned, Romans 3:23.
 - (b) To sin is to transgress the perfect law of God, 1 John 3:4.

- (c) The just law of God condemns the sinner to death. Some payment or ransom must be made or the sinner will perish eternally.
- (d) Only the blood of Christ washes away sin, Acts 22:16.
- (e) When this takes place, the demands of the Law of God have been satisfied and it has no further claim against the sinner. He is redeemed from the just claims of the Law of God against his soul.
- (f) God does not pay the redemption price to the Devil. All souls belong to God, even the souls of sinners, and God alone judges and sentences us then.
- (g) The wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23. But the Devil can't collect the wages for service to him, nor exact the penalty, nor receive the ransom paid.
- (h) While in a sense redemption and forgiveness are one action, they speak of two different things with respect to us.
 - (1) In redemption our helpless condition in sin due to our bondage therein is primarily in view, which demands a ransom being paid on our behalf.
 - (2) In forgiveness our own personal responsibility and guilt for that bondage is set before us in all its ugliness, with our need for it dependent upon another and upon his conditions.
- (4) This redemption and forgiveness is "according to the riches of his grace," so freely granted to us that it abounds, 1:7d.
 - (a) God's grace through Jesus Christ is the ground, the basis, of our redemption and forgiveness, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31.
 - (b) Without God's grace, no sinner could be saved! But that grace is conditional, Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 1:11, 12; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:1, 2; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1 Peter 4:17, 18; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:36-41.
 - (c) God supplies all our spiritual needs "according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ," Philippians 4:19.
 - (d) In the spiritual realm his "supply" of grace is more than sufficient to redeem and save all who will obey and serve, Romans 5:20, 21.
 - (e) V. 8 enlarges upon v.7 and the "riches of his grace" by declaring "wherein he hath abounded toward us" (ASV): "which he made to abound toward us" in all wisdom and prudence," 1:17, 18.
 - (f) The concept of God's grace being given to us in great measure is explained also in Romans 5:15-21; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:9-12; 2:2-10; 2 Timothy 2:7
 - (c) Its condition— – gospel obedience, an obedient faith.

- d. Another blessing we have “in Christ” from God: He hath “made known to us the mystery of his will,” 1:9, 10.
- (1) This is a key thought in the great theme of Ephesians.
 - (2) What was once a mystery or hidden or unrevealed has now been uncovered, revealed, made known in its completeness.
 - (3) It was first made known to the apostles of Christ and through them to us in the written word, Ephesians 3:1-6, 9-11; Galatians 1:11, 12; John 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 John 1:1-3.
 - (4) “Made known...according to his good pleasure,” v.9, v.5b. Conformable to his good pleasure; because it pleased him to do so.
 - (5) “Which he hath purposed (“set forth”) in himself (in him, or in Christ, ASV),” 1:9.
 - (6) “That,” as v.10 affirms, “in the dispensation of the fullness of times” (this dispensation of time, when God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law, etc., Galatians 4:4,5), “he might gather together in one all things in Christ...” and under the headship of Christ (1:22,23).
- e. Further still, “in whom also we were made a heritage” (ASV), 1:11,12.
- (1) That is, “We (both Jews and Gentiles) are made the heritage of God himself in Christ.”
 - (2) A heritage is a possession that one owns by right of inheritance, which we have in and through Christ and are promised in the world to come, Hebrews 1:2; Galatians 4:7; Mark 10:30; Titus 1:2; Romans 8:24, 25; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 9; 1 John 2:25.
 - (3) “Being predestinated (foreordained) according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”
 - (a) This was no after-thought, but was according to God’s plan and purpose “in Christ before the foundation of the world,” 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:18-20.
 - (b) His workings are not the result of chance or impulse or arbitrary action. Christ and his church were at the heart of this eternal purpose and program of God.
 - (4) To the end “that we (Jewish believers) should be to the praise of his glory, we (Jewish believers) who had (ASV) first trusted in Christ,” 1:12.
 - (a) The “we” of v.12 refers to Jewish Christians such as Paul and the apostles, et al. The “ye” of v.13 refers to Gentile believers, like most of the Ephesians. See: Acts 2; then Acts 10; Acts 19.
 - (b) “That we should be to (a people devoted to) the praise of his glory.”
- f. Finally, “in Christ,” obedient believers of “the gospel of your salvation” receive “the earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of the

purchased possession (of God's own possession, ASV)," 1:13, 14.

- (1) It's through the gospel of Christ that we receive the earnest of our inheritance.
- (2) "Unto the redemption of the purchased possession"
 - (a) The redemption of 1:7 refers to our redemption from past sins, our forgiveness.
 - (b) The redemption of 1:14, to the final redemption from the grave, when we are glorified at the 2nd Coming of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15.
- (3) "Earnest," meaning, "guarantee," "pledge," "an assurance, pledge or guarantee of something that would be forthcoming, not "a down payment" or "partial payment" for something.
 - (a) Gen.38:15-20 establishes its Bible meaning and usage.
 - (1) When Judah sought the services of one he thought to be a harlot, he promised her "a kid from the flock," v. 17a.
 - (2) Not having the payment with him, she asked for "a pledge, till thou send it," or an assurance or guarantee that he would fulfill he promise to pay, v. 17b.
 - (3) When he asked, "what pledge shall I give thee?" She said, "Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thy hand," v. 18.
 - (4) In v. 20 his payment was sent in order to recover or receive the return of his pledge.
 - (5) Therefore, his pledge was never intended to be a down payment on or a partial payment for her services, but an assurance or guarantee to her that he would pay for her services as promised.
 - (b) Vine's definition, Vol. II, p.11, agrees: "In general usage it came to mean a pledge or earnest of any sort; in the N.T. it is used only of that which is assured by God to believers..."
 - (c) *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, *Young's Analytical Concordance*, *Wilson's O.T. Word Studies*, and *The Theological Word Book of The O.T.*, Vol. 2, p.693, all say the original word for "pledge" or 'earnest' means: "a pawn (given as security), a surety, a pledge, or to give as a pledge," and all of them quote Genesis 38:17,18 among the scripture examples given.
 - (1) Not one of these sources, in their strict definitions of the word "earnest," give it the meaning of "a down payment" or "partial payment" of the Christian's inheritance.
 - (2) It is only in their comments where they function as a

Commentary that they ever do that!

- (4) "The gospel of your salvation...which **IS** the earnest (the pledge, assurance, guarantee) of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession."
- (a) It is not the Holy Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance.
- (5) Think! Where or how do we have present-day divine assurance of, or divine guarantee of, redemption through Jesus Christ and the redemption of the purchased possession?
- (a) If it is not in the gospel of our salvation, then where or how?
- (b) See: Matthew 7:21-27; Romans 1:16,17; Hebrews 5:8,9; 2 Peter 1:5-11,16-21; cf. Romans 8:16-18; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:8.
3. In this first section (1:3-14) we have found and studied the marvelous list of spiritual blessings, all of which, God has given us in Christ, wherein he revealed his eternal plan for the world's salvation.
- a. While all material blessings also come from God and are vital to our physical existence and welfare, and are available to all men, James 1:17; Matthew 5:45; Genesis 8:22.
 - b. All spiritual blessings are found only in Christ, given only to those who are in Christ, and are of much greater value to us than the material, because they provide salvation for the soul, the greatest and most valuable possession we possess, Matthew 16:24-26.
 - c. In view of that, the spiritual should be appreciated more highly and sought after more diligently than the material.
 - d. This eternal purpose of God deals with his people in Christ in this world and in the world to come, both here and hereafter.
4. Therefore, in the second section (1:15-23) we find Paul praying for the believer, the elect in Christ, that they may become so enlightened as to come to a fuller more precise knowledge of God and of the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ in making all this possible.

B. Paul's Prayer for the Believer's Enlightenment Ties Together the Two Sections of This Chapter (1:15-23)—

1. In this prayer to God on their behalf, he makes two requests in vv. 15-18a.
 - a. That God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the (precise) knowledge of him (of himself), vv. 15-17.
 - b. So that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, v. 18a, cf. Colossians 1:9-11; 2:1-3.
2. In his dual request that they might be able to gain more precise knowledge of God, he wanted them to know the following three things about the God of the eternal purpose in Christ, (John 17:3).

- a. "That ye may know what is the hope his calling," v.18b.
 - (1) That living hope which we have in Christ.
 - (2) Romans 8:24,25; Titus 1:2.
 - (3) Prayer for a fuller knowledge and consequent appreciation of this hope.
- b. "And what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," v. 18 c
(1 Peter 1:3-5, 9; 2 Peter 1:5-11).
- c. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, v.19 – which is elaborated on in vv. 20-23, that they may know more about this awesome power.
 - (1) This power used to raise Christ from the dead, v. 20a.
 - (a) Christ being raised, proves all will be raised.
 - (2) This power used to exalt Christ, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all power, and every name, in this world, and the world to come, vv. 20b, 21.
 - (3) This power used to subject all things to Christ, v. 22a (Matthew 28:18, 1 Corinthians 15:27).
 - (4) This power used to make Christ the head over all things, vv. 22b, 23.
 - (a) The church which is his body, v. 23a.
 - (b) The church which is his fullness, v. 23b (Colossians 1:19; 2:9, 10).
 - (1) Fullness signifying that which is filled
 - (2) The church is filled (not just allotted a sample) by Christ with blessings and salvation.
 - (3) It's filled with the riches of God in Christ and all that entails.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Lessons Learned:

1. We ought to pray, as did Paul, that we, all of us, may have the eyes of our heart enlightened about these marvelous things.
2. That we might come to have a more precise knowledge of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through his great power made all these things possible.
3. Robert Shank, in his book, *Elect in the Son*, p.27, said: "Of all passages of Scripture touching the matter of election, Ephesians 1:3-14 is the foundation passage." Then in the entirety of his book he denied that these verses teach anything akin to the Calvinistic doctrine of election. He affirmed that John Calvin's doctrine of election is totally false.

B. Will You Believe on Christ & Be Blessed?

—Edgar J. Dye

“Now in Christ Jesus”

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Paul Addresses Both Jews & Gentiles—

1. To the Jews he said, “We who had before hoped in Christ.”
2. And, unto the Gentiles saying, “In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth the gospel of your salvation.”
3. He declared that both were blessed in Christ (1:12-13).

B. Reminds Them of Their Previous State—

1. They were dead spiritually (v1a).
 - a. Why? The reason stated (v. 1b-3).
 - b. What does it mean to be spiritually dead?
 - c. Are men so by nature?
2. In their condition God’s grace was absolutely necessary (cf. vv. 4-5).
3. As a result they were made to “sit with Him in heavenly places” (cf. v. 5-6).
 - a. **Note:** Heavenly *places* (cf. Ephesians 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10).
 - b. The context is better served by “*heavenly matters and things.*”

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Man Is Saved by Grace through Faith—

1. No issue or quarrel on this matter (Ephesians 2:8-10).
2. What is the issue?
 - a. False positions on grace then, and now (cf., 1 Peter 5:12).
 - b. There is a “true grace of God,” which implies a false (cf., Colossians 1:6).
3. The New Testament records false concepts held, (cf. Romans 5:20-6:11).
 - a. Not to “continue” in sin.
 - b. Rather, they were dead (separated from) life of sin (6:1-11).
 - c. They had changed masters (6:12-23).
 - (1) Figure of speech used— *personification*.
 - (2) *Sin* represented as a *master*; and they as *servants*.
 - (3) They changed masters, now *righteousness* is their *master* (6:17-23).
4. What is the “gift of God”?
 - a. Is “faith” the gift?
 - b. Salvation which is by grace through faith is the gift.

B. The Grace of God Is Conditional—

1. Will all men be saved? No (Matthew 7:13, 14).
2. God’s grace is conditional (Romans 5:1-2).
 - a. Grace will not save *unbelievers* (John 8:24).

- b. Belief alone will not save *disobedient* (Hebrews 5:8, 9).
 - c. God's grace brings salvation to *obedient believers*.
 - d. Two wills are involved— that of God *and* that of man.
3. Excursus on Romans 5:1, 2 and "*access by faith into this grace.*"
- a. Paul affirms we have access by faith into grace producing hope (5:2).
 - b. "Faith" must be understood in light of the context.
 - (1) The immediate context:
 - (a) It is the "obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5; 16:26).
 - (b) Romans 3:26– 4:25 contrasts two systems of justification.
 - (c) Illustrated by life of Abraham (4:1-5).
 - (2) The remote context:
 - (a) The walls of Jericho (Hebrews 11:3– 4, 7– 8).
 - (b) They fell by faith *after* they were compassed about seven days.
 - (3) The faith that saves is the faith that obeys.
 - (a) Access "by faith into grace."
 - (b) Saved when accessed by the *faith* Abraham had (Romans 4:1-10).
 - (c) "By faith Abraham... *obeyed*" (Hebrews 11:8).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. We Are Saved by Grace through Faith in Christ—

1. Eternal glory awaits those that are in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10).
2. How does one enter Christ?
 - a. We enter through the obedience of faith (Romans 6:3, 4).
 - b. It is trusting faith in Christ (Colossians 2:12).
3. How do we remain in Christ?
 - a. The true grace of God demands a faithful life (2 Peter 1:5-11).

B. Be Saved by Grace through Faith, Obey the Lord (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

– – Elmer Moore

The Mystery of Christ

Ephesians 3:1-21

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context:

1. This section begins with "For this cause..." It resumes with "I bow my knees..."
2. Vs. 2- 13 relates to his apostleship, and the "how" of his knowledge.
3. The Apostle identifies himself as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ."
 - a. He was "an ambassador in bonds" (Ephesians 6:20). The "bonds of the gospel" (Philemon 13; cf. Acts 28:30).
 - b. His "bonds in Christ" (Philippians 1:12-17) had "fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."
 - c. He was "a prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."
 - a. "Studied under the other apostles" (see: Galatians 1:17).
 - b. "God revealed them unto us (apostles) by his Spirit..." (1 Corinthians 2:10).
 - (1) His special mission was to the Gentiles (Acts 26:16-19; 9:15).
 - (a) His opposition to Peter in Galatians 2:9ff.
 - (2) The reason for his imprisonment: For preaching the truth on circumcision and the Law (Colossians 2:14; Galatians 5:6, 11).

B. What Is the Mystery?

1. How could God be just in forgiving, justifying, and saving sinners?
2. See: Romans 3:20-31; 1 Peter 1:8-12; Genesis 3:15; 12:3.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Mystery Made Known—

1. It was a "mystery" because it had been kept secret (Romans 16:25-26).
2. Paul's knowledge of the mystery was by revelation (Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:3).
3. Some theories of the origin of Paul's knowledge:
 - a. This is how Jesus said he would aid the apostles (John 16:13).
 - b. Now revealed by the Spirit (Acts 2:1-2).
4. "When you read you may understand" (v. 4).
 - a. The purpose of revelation, writing, and reading (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17; Romans 16:26; 10:17).
 - b. In other ages the mystery not known (1 Peter 1:10-12; cf. 2 Peter 1:2-3).
 - c. This mystery (gospel) existed:

- a. In purpose (Ephesians 3:10)
- b. In prophecy (Genesis 3:15; 12:3)
- c. In preparation (Malachi 3:1)
- d. However, it was unknown to prophets or angels (1 Peter 1:10-12).

B. The Things Revealed—

1. That the Gentiles should be:
 - a. Fellow heirs with the Jews (Galatians 3:28-29).
 - b. Of the same body, the church (Ephesians 4:4).
 - c. Partakers of the same promise (Genesis 12:3).
2. This was the purpose of in Christ Jesus our Lord (v. 11).
 - a. How could anyone conclude that the church was an after- thought or that it is relatively unimportant?
 - b. Such ideas portray a wonderful ignorance of God's plan of salvation.

C. Paul's Prayer for the Ephesian Church—

1. "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 14).
 - a. The whole family in heaven and earth named of Him (v. 15).
 - b. The name must then be important. It is not the name Baptist, Methodist, etc.
2. "That He would grant you" (v. 16).
 - a. "To be strengthened with might" – to be powerfully strengthened.
 - b. "By His Spirit" – the agent.
 - c. "In the inner man" – the spiritual man.
 - d. "That Christ" (the Guest).
 - e. "May dwell in your hearts" – the house
 - f. "By faith" – the door
3. "And that ye may be able to comprehend" (v. 18).
 - a. "The breadth" – as broad as man's necessity (Hebrews 2:9; text v. 20).
 - b. "The length" – "He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1; John 15:13f).
 - c. "The height" – the lofty position of God and glory of Christ (John 17:24).
 - d. "The depth" – the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom and love, as deep and profound as the uttermost sin and wretchedness of man (Hebrews 7:25).
4. "To know the love of Christ...that ye might be filled with the fullness of God."
 - a. That is, a perfect participation in all of God's blessings & gifts.
 - b. A blessing beyond our ability to comprehend.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Unto Him Be Glory in the Church by Jesus Christ—

1. The conclusion: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus" (v. 21).
2. The mystery has been revealed – that is, God's plan for saving man.

3. The church is God's plan of salvation.

B. Will God Be Glorified in You?

1. Are you a Christian, one whom Jesus has added to His church?
2. If you are not, acknowledge God's wisdom, know His love and be saved giving Him the glory.

– – *A.W. Goff*

The Unity of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:1–16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context:

1. The first part of the book of Ephesians:
 - a. Sets forth doctrinal matters of Christianity or the faith of Christ.
 - b. Reveals our *wealth* in Christ, our spiritual wealth: wealth to be found nowhere else, in no one else.
2. The second half of the book:
 - a. Sets forth practical principles of Christianity.
 - b. Reveals our *walk* in Christ. It's a spiritual walk based upon or growing out of the rich spiritual wealth we have in Christ and the faith of Christ.
3. It's a matter of moving from doctrine to application: from what we are to believe and be to what and how we are to practice it; with our text urging a certain kind of "walk" (vv. 1,2) for a definite purpose (v.3) in recognition of and respect for the divine platform of unity (vv.4-6).

B. Biblical Unity Versus Human Prescriptions—

1. What is the unity of believers referred to here?
 - a. It is something desired and much talked about and preached but seldom practiced.
 - b. It is something for which Jesus Christ prayed, John 17:20, 21.
 - c. It is something required by divine directive, 1 Corinthians 1:10– 13; Ephesians 4:1-3.
 - d. It is something to which both Jews and Gentiles, being one new man in Christ, have access, Ephesians 2:11– 3:11.
 - e. It comes only through apostolic teaching, John 17:20, 21; Ephesians 3:1-6; 1 Corinthians 4:17.
 - f. Is something our text identifies as "the unity of the Spirit" which believers are to endeavor to keep in "the bond of peace," v.3.
 - g. Is something which consists of seven specific elements, components, essential parts or seven links, vv. 4-6.
2. There are several totally different human concepts regarding the kind of unity that is to be desired or effected

- a. One idea is that everyone should *conform* to one earthly authority or earthly organization in order to have unity, which is the Roman Catholic idea, with the Pope and the College of Cardinals as the authoritative head.
 - b. Another is that all should *compromise* to find it, which is effected by Ecumenical mergers, such as the various Councils of Churches.
 - c. Still another is that men should simply learn to *coexist*, which is the idea of main- line Protestantism or the system or faith or church of your choice.
3. But in total opposition to all these, the N.T. says it's to be "*the unity of the spirit*" which is set forth in Vv. 1-6.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. First, We Have the Exhortation to Unity (Vv. 1-3)—

1. First, there is the exhortation with reference to God: They are urged to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," v.1.
 - a. "Walk" means the way of life.
 - b. "Worthy," an adverb meaning "worthily," "in a manner worthy of," *Thayer*, 53.
 - (1) "Worthy of the vocation" of believers, in regard to their "walk" or manner of life, Ephesians 4:1.
 - (2) "Let your conversation (conduct) be as it becometh (is worthy of) the gospel of Christ," of a manner of life to be lived in accordance with what the gospel declares, Philippians 1:27.
 - (3) "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord," Colossians 1:10.
 - (4) "That ye would walk worthy of God, who has called you unto his kingdom and glory," of the Christian's walk as it should be, 1 Thessalonians 2:12.
 - c. "Calling" is the invitation of God through the gospel of Christ, the Divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption of through Christ by means of the gospel of Christ, 1 Thessalonians 2:12-14; Romans 1:6; 8:28; Ephesians 1:18; Philippians.3:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:19; Hebrews 3:1; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Hebrews 9:15; (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13,14).
 - d. Take note of three different words which sound alike and have things in common, in order to emphasize the word vocation used here.
 - (1) One is "vacation" which means to leave, vacant, to take off from our occupation or job.
 - (a) This is not the word Paul used.
 - (2) Another is "avocation" and means some subordinate occupation rather than the major occupation, a side line.
 - (a) This also is not the word of this inspired text.

- (b) Don't be guilty of acting as if it were.
- (c) Being a disciple of Christ is not to be treated as just a side line or as something for our spare time.
- (3) The word is "vocation" in the KJV and "calling" in the ASV and means "habitual occupation."
 - (a) It's a "calling" in Christ by means of the gospel of Christ that requires one to put "the kingdom of God and his righteousness first" in all things at all times.
 - (b) The Christian's vocation or calling is to be his life's work, a life-long occupation.
- 2. Secondly, there is the exhortation with reference to each other (v. 23) dealing with the proper attitude toward and treatment of each other or the manner of this worthy walk among themselves.
 - a. Four dispositions Christians are to possess and practice one with another at all times are listed.
 - (1) Walk "with all lowliness and meekness."
 - (a) We are to be lowly in heart, not proud and puffed up.
 - (b) We are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think in our relationship with each other.
 - (c) It is that deep humility, as opposed to vain pride, arrogance and conceit.
 - (2) Walk "with longsuffering" for the cause of Christ and to one another to "suffer- long."
 - (3) Walk "forbearing one another in love," possessing the wonderful attributes of love as expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.
 - (a) This further defines the worthy walk indicating how long-suffering is exhibited.
 - (4) Walk "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 3:8-11).
 - (a) "Endeavoring" means giving diligence, eagerness, putting forth effort to keep it. No easy going indifference enjoined; they will have to "exert themselves" in order to keep it.
 - (b) "Keep" is to guard or preserve, be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit.
 - (c) It is not simply "keep the unity of the Spirit," but "keep (preserve) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - (d) Or "keep in the bond of peace the unity of the Spirit;" the bond which consists of peace– – a peace-loving spirit springing out of humility, meekness and forbearance.

- (1) Just as pride, arrogance and contention are separating, divisive elements, the opposite dispositions are conducive to unity (cf. Colossians 3:15).
- (e) The unity of the Spirit:
 - (1) Is the unity which the Holy Spirit revealed; not mere external uniformity, but inward agreement, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.
 - (2) Is the unity required according to the body of teaching that the Holy Spirit revealed when he guided the apostles of Christ into all truth, John 16:5-15; 17:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13.
 - (3) Is called the doctrine of Christ in 2 John 9-11, which we must not transgress, 1 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Peter 4:11.
 - (4) Is called "the faith" or "the common salvation" in Jude 3 (cf. Galatians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 4:17).
 - (5) Is called "the apostles' doctrine in Acts 2:42, in which the first converts to Christ continued.
- 3. Unfortunately, not every baptized believer so walks. Too often believers allow self and the old man to re-enter the picture with such divisive things as: prejudice, personal opinions, hurts, jealousies, complaints, criticisms, grumbling, gripes, vain pride, arrogance, etc.

B. Next We Are Reminded of What the Unity of the Spirit Consists—

1. First, there is **ONE BODY**, to which all baptized believers belong, all having the same head.
 - a. This one body is the church belonging to Christ, Matthew 16: 18; Acts .20:28; Romans 12:4, 5; 16:16; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 20, 27; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Colossians 1:18, 24; Acts 2:47.
 - b. All baptized believers are in the same body; all belong to the same organization; all are in the same spiritual relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16; Acts 2:47.
 - c. There is unity of organization. There are not two bodies, nor several bodies of believers of different faiths and orders.
 - d. The church at Ephesus was the body of Christ at that place.
2. Secondly, there is **ONE SPIRIT**, the Holy Spirit, by which all baptized believers are guided, 1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-13 ; Romans 8:14.
 - a. God purposes, Christ executes, the Holy Spirit reveals, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 13.
 - b. There is unity of revelation by the Spirit through the apostles of Christ and the revelation is complete, John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Acts 2:4; Galatians 1:11, 12; Ephesians 3:1-5; 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; James 1:25.
 - c. There is but one Spirit to give life, to guide, and direct the body, John 6: 63.

- d. The body animated and guided by the one Spirit is one body, not a multiplicity of bodies, nor is it to be divided in spirit, doctrine or practice, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2, 10-13; 12:12, 13.
 - e. Indeed, it is a mark of a divisive, separating apostasy when it has not the Spirit, Jude 19-21; Galatians 5:22-25.
3. Thirdly, there is **ONE HOPE** or unity of purpose which is centered in a heavenly inheritance.
- a. God makes no distinction in his promises to believers. All are made the same promise; all have the same hope.
 - b. All baptized believers are heirs to the same promise; all share one inheritance, Ephesians 3:1-6.
 - c. Rom.8:24, 25; 15:4; Titus 1:2; 2:11- 13; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 9; Colossians 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
 - d. We are urged to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. This calling has a hope which is the anchor of the soul, Ephesians 1:18; Hebrews 6:13-20.
 - e. Hope is desire to have plus expectation to receive.
4. Fourthly, there is **ONE LORD**, or unity of headship and authority.
- a. Matthew 28:18; 17:5; John 13:13; Acts 2:36; Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2:1-3; 1 Peter 3:21; 11; Acts 4:1 1:12; Philippians 2:9-11; John 8:24; Luke 6:46; 1 Corinthians 12:5; Colossians 3:17.
 - b. There are two ideas involved in this blessed lordship:
 - (1) One is ownership.
 - (a) He is not only Lord of all, but especially Lord of his own people, Titus 2:11-14.
 - (b) We, as baptized believers, are not our own; for we have been redeemed and bought with a price, Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 1 Peter 1:18-19.
 - (2) The other is authority.
 - (a) Therefore, we are subject to him, our reason to his guidance, our conscience to his precepts, and our hearts to his constraining love.
 - (b) There is no part of our being, there is no event in our lives, that is not subject to this authority which brooks no rival, Matthew 28:18-20; 16:24-27; Ephesians 1:19-23; 1 Peter 3:21, 22.
 - (c) It is this subjection of all believers to the Lord that marks and keeps the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the body of Christ or the church belonging to Christ.
 - (d) Loyalty to a common Lord makes them stand together in a common hope, a common life, a common love, and common bond.

5. Fifthly, there is **ONE FAITH**, or unity of belief, doctrine and practice, or one system of faith.
 - a. This can only be possible because we have one faith or one system of faith, or one body of doctrine, which is the faith of Christ, Galatians 1:23; (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:17); Romans 3:19-28; Jude 3; Galatians 1:6-12; 2 John 9-11.
 - b. There is but one Lord and he gave one faith through the one Spirit by means of his apostles, who preached the one gospel, the one message of salvation through the risen Lord.
 - c. All true baptized believers hold to and follow the same system of faith as opposed to and distinguished from Judaism, Paganism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism or, Deism, Pantheism, Denominationalism, Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, Polytheism and Atheism, etc.
6. Sixth, there is **ONE BAPTISM**, a burial in water, water baptism in the name of Christ, the one baptism which saves and puts the believer into Jesus Christ, the one Lord. and the one body, the church belonging to Christ and the family of the one God, and from which one rises to walk in newness of life, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 8:35-38; 10:44-48; 22:16; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 1:21.
 - a. This one baptism puts one into a saved, spiritual relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:18- 19.
 - b. This one baptism completes the process of the new birth in becoming a child in the family of God, the church of Christ, John 3:3-6; Acts 2:36-42, 47; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Timothy 3:14,15.
 - c. All these have taken the same vows upon themselves. They have been consecrated to same God; they have made the same solemn profession of faith.
 - d. There is unity of cleansing by the blood of Christ by this process, Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 3:4-7; Hebrews 10:21-23; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:12- 14; Hebrews 9:11- 14, 22, 26- 28.
7. Seventh, there is **ONE GOD** and Father of all, who is above all and in you all, or unity of worship and service, or one object of worship, who is the common Father of all baptized believers, who are his peculiar people.
 - a. He is the one Creator, Preserver, Benefactor of all and the one object of worship, Matthew 4:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4.
 - b. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:2, 3, 17.
 - c. Mark 12:29; Ephesians 2:18-22; 3:14; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6; 1 Peter 1:3-5.
 - d. Men who have different pursuits and different objects of supreme affection can be expected to have no unity in faith and practice.
 - e. Men who worship many gods cannot hope to be united.

- f. For their affections are directed to different objects and there is no harmony or sympathy of feeling.
- g. But where there is one supreme object of worship and service, there may be expected to be unity.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Great Lessons from a Great Text—

1. The argument here is that there ought to be unity among Christians because there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all, who is above all and in you all.
2. To keep the unity of the Spirit and to please God we have no choice regarding any one of the seven except to believe them and practice what they teach.
3. In light of this, how can any person with knowledge of the N.T. believe in or justify religious division such as we see in Denominationalism?
4. This is not a plea for Denominational unity, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.
5. Wherever proper attention is paid to these seven links in the chain of the unity of the Spirit there are strong bonds of fellowship.
6. Division and disunity are clearly alien to these facts or these elements of unity.
7. In this text we have a persuasive plea for unity, a divine standard of unity and solemn, distinct obligations to keep this spiritual unity in the bond of peace.

B. Will You Walk Worthy of Your Calling in the Unity of the Spirit?

– – *Edgar J. Dye*

Children of Light

Ephesians 5:8

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. "Walk as Children of Light..."

1. Paul uses the figure of "walking" to indicate a life style.
 - a. The figure connecting darkness with sin and light with purity is common.
 - b. This was certainly in order since they were, "once darkness."
2. A change was in order.
 - a. Conversion to Christ involves a number of changes.
 - b. Change of relationship to God.
 - c. A change in lifestyle: a better person, husband, wife, parent, child, employer, employee, etc.

B. "Once Darkness..."

1. Darkness harbors:
 - a. Fear
 - b. Danger
 - c. Discomfort
 - d. The figure will not lose these qualities.
2. They were spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). Why?

C. Children of Light Must "Walk in the Light."

1. To walk as children of light the same as "walking in the light" (1 John 1:7- 9).
2. To walk in the light is to have fellowship with God (1 John 1:7--9).
 - a. To walk in the light is to keep his commandments (1 John 2:3; 2 John 6).
 - b. Also, to walk in truth (2 John 4, 6; 3 John 4).
 - c. And, to abide in the doctrine of Christ, (2 John 9).
3. To walk as children of light is to keep His commandments, walk in Truth and to abide in the doctrine of Christ.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. This "Walk" According to the Context—

1. Paul addresses his subject both positively and negatively.
 - a. An approach that some brethren think ought not to be followed.
 - b. What they were to be and do.
 - c. What they were not to do or be.
2. They must conduct themselves in manner that dignifies their calling:
 - a. Ephesians 4:1-6

- (1) Lowliness
- (2) Meekness
- (3) Long suffering
- (4) Forbearing
- (5) Keep unity
 - (a) In so doing that would produce a peaceful bond.
 - (b) Peaceful bond versus turmoil
- b. Ephesians 4:17-32
 - (1) "put off" (4:22)
 - (2) "put on" (4:24)
 - (3) "put away" (4:25)
 - (4) "let" (4:28, 29, 31)
3. They are to walk bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:9).
 - a. Goodness
 - b. Righteousness
 - c. Truth
4. They are to walk "in love."
 - a. Love for God.
 - b. Love for the truth.
 - c. Love for our fellowman.

B. A Warning Concerning This Walk—

1. "Let no man deceive you" (Ephesians 5:6).
2. God's wrath would be the consequence of that deception.
3. Therefore, do not be partakers with the children of disobedience, but...
 - a. "Walk as children of light..."
 - b. Proving what is well pleasing unto the Lord.
 - (1) Reproving darkness (5:11- 20).
 - (2) Submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord (5:21- 33).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. How the Ephesians Became Children of Light:

1. The Ephesians were saved by grace through faith (2:8-10).
2. They were reconciled to God in the one body (2:16).
3. They were sanctified by the washing of water through the word (5:26).

B. Will You Become a Child of Light Today?

— — Elmer Moore

The Panoply of God

Ephesians 6:10-17

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

1. God's plan for man's salvation had been explained in the previous chapters.
2. This included the nature of the church, the standard of living right, etc.
3. Now he commands the Ephesians to "be strong."

B. The Need For Strength—

1. Because Christians are involved in a spiritual battle.
 - a. The enemy identified in v. 12.
 - (1) Cannot be weaklings and win this battle.
 - (2) Cannot depend on our own strength. Therefore we must "be strong in the Lord" (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:1).
 - b. The intensity of the battle emphasized by the nature of the enemies tactics (wiles).
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 2:11, "We are not ignorant his devices."
 - (2) Consider 1 Peter 5:8 and James 4:7.
2. The Christian can be strong.
 - a. Too many try to excuse themselves saying, "I am weak," or "I don't know."
 - b. How can one be strong?
 - (1) If I can only lift 50 pounds, how can I lift more?
 - (2) We may increase or diminish our abilities by proper attention to the right things.
 - c. The commands of the Lord can be obeyed.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. How To Be Strong—

1. "Put on the whole armor of God."
 - a. Note: We must "put on" the armor. It is not forced on us.
 - b. If we fail, it is not God's fault (1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:37).
 - c. It is our responsibility to "put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12; cf. Colossians 3:12-13).
2. "The armor of God"
 - a. The armor is divine and complete and will bring one to complete victory.

- (1) 2 Corinthians 10:4, "For the weapons of our warfare...are mighty through God."
- (2) Therefore, "fight the good fight" (1 Timothy 6:12) and "endure hardness" (2 Timothy 2:3-4).
- b. The armor will enable one to stand in the evil day.
 - (1) The "evil day" is the day of temptation. The evil days are always with us, Satan never stops.
 - (2) Note that Satan departed Jesus only "for a season" (Luke 4:10-13).

B. The Armour Needed and Supplied—

1. **TRUTH** (6:14).
 - a. The Christian soldier must have his "loins girt about with truth."
 - b. This is basic to the Christian's armor.
 - c. The support he needs (see: 1 Timothy 4:16; John 15:7; 8:32.).
2. **BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** (6:14).
 - a. Taking on the enemy in a do or die battle. No armor for the back— no need to retreat.
 - b. God defines righteousness (1 John 3:7, 10).
 - (1) Observing divine laws: "All thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172).
 - (2) Romans 6:16, "His servants ye are whom ye obey."
3. **THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE** (6:15).
 - a. Ready for war. Not caught unprepared. Not a backslider.
 - b. The main point is preparedness.
 - (1) Soldier of Christ can't defend, conquer, or advance unprepared.
 - (2) If unprepared to deal with temptation, trials, or work in the cause, then will fail.
 - (a) *Note:* Prepare by application of the gospel of peace. The Gospel is sufficient!
 - (b) It is the "gospel of peace" because:
 - (1) The Captain of this army is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).
 - (2) Peace is threatened by the enemy who seeks to disturb & destroy.
 - (c) The gospel creates peace in the inward man in spite of outward war (Philippians 4:7; John 14:27).
 - (d) The enemy of peace must be destroyed.
 - c. All soldiers must be prepared
 1. Not just the preachers & elders.
 2. Takes time, reading, careful study, meditation, etc.
4. **SHIELD OF FAITH** (6:16)

- a. This is “above all.”
 - b. True faith– – unshakeable trust that comes from the word (Romans 10:17).
 - c. We walk by it (2 Corinthians 5:7); live by it (Romans 1:17); overcome by it (1 John 5:4).
 - d. By the proper use we ward off fear, philosophy, envy, etc. (Colossians 3:8ff).
5. **HELMET OF SALVATION** (6:17)
- a. The spiritual assurance of forgiveness, pardon of past sins, and the promise of eternal life in the world to come.
 - b. God is faithful to keep this promise (Mark 16:16; 10:30; Hebrews 10:23)
6. **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT** (6:17)
- a. The “word of God” is the only offensive weapon furnished.
 - b. It is sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-3).
 - c. This sword cuts both ways (Hebrews 4:12).
 - d. With it Christ defeated Satan (Matthew 4:1-11).
 - e. Peter’s use of it on Pentecost (Acts 2). Stephen in Acts 7.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. How Put on this Armor?

1. This armor of God is to be put on with prayer (6:18).
2. This needed in addition to the armor: So “praying always.”

B. Do You Have Your Armor On?

– – A.W. Goff

If Any Man Defile the Temple Of God

I Corinthians 3:17

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. What Is the Temple of God?

1. The Temple of God. What is it? (See: Ephesians 2:19-22).
2. The same as the "house of God" in 1 Timothy 3:15.
3. Note the many different names by which it is called.
 - a. **CHURCH**— called out feature, Matthew 16:18.
 - b. **KINGDOM**— - government feature, Colossians 1:13.
 - c. **TEMPLE**— worship feature, 1 Corinthians 3:17.
 - d. **BODY OF CHRIST**— fellowship, 1 Corinthians 12:20-22.
 - e. **VINEYARD**— work feature, Matthew 20:1-16.
 - f. **SPIRITUAL HOUSE**— family feature, 12:5.

B. A Serious Warning—

1. It seems, if it were possible, the vocabulary of heaven has been exhausted in the use of proper terms, through which to illustrate and express the thought of the nearness, dearness, and blessedness of the relationship of Christ to the church.
2. It was purposed by God, built by Christ, bought with his blood, and he is the Head of it, the Savior of it, loves it.
3. How dare some say it is not essential, or it has no special mission assigned to it?
4. The warning of 1 Corinthians 3:17 must not be taken lightly.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Defiling the Temple—

1. The Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple a type of the Spiritual Temple (see: Hebrews 8– 10).
 - a. Hebrews 8:5 shows the old to be an example of heavenly things.
 - b. Hebrews 9:1f describes the old.
 - c. Verses 8 and 9 show that the old signified and prefigured the new.
 - d. The Old was a pattern (9:23).
2. Many examples of Israel defiling the Old Testament Temple.
 - a. 2 Chronicles 26:16– 21, Uzziah attempting to burn incense in the temple.
 - b. Jeremiah 7:4-14, 30, would destroy this house because of Israel's sinful ways.

c. Matt. 21:12-13, had made the temple a den of thieves.

3. Promise of a New Temple:

a. Samuel 7:12-13; "He shall build a house (temple)...his kingdom forever."

b. Zechariah 6:12, "The Branch...shall build the temple...shall rule on his throne...and shall be a priest upon his throne."

B. Ruler and Priest—

1. Christ is the only one who so rules and serves.

a. He is both Priest & King (Acts 2:37; Hebrews 9:11; 7:1, 17).

2. The Temple of God or the House of God is the church of God (1 Timothy 3:15).

a. The Temple of 1 Corinthians 3:17 is the same as "God's building" in verse 9.

b. Christ is the foundation of it (1 Corinthians 3:10).

c. To this same church Paul said, "Ye are the temple of God" (verse 16; cf. Ephesians 2:19-22).

d. This temple is holy (verse 17).

(1) So, the temple, house of God, church of Christ is holy.

e. Now, "If any man **defile the temple** - house of God - church of God..."

(1) In view of the plan, prophecies, preparations, purchase price, and the head and Savior of it, how dare one tamper with it, defile it!

C. How Can One Defile the Temple?

1. *Defile*, "to corrupt, destroy" (Thayer).

a. The Corinthians were defiling it by division. 3:3-17.

b. How avoid division?

(1) By speaking the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

(2) By "walking by the same rule" (Philippians 3:16; Galatians 6:16).

(3) By "speaking as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

(4) By worshiping "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).

(5) By doing all "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17).

a. Matthew 21:23-27

b. We need to ask, "By what authority?"

2. Some ways the church of God can be defiled:

a. **False doctrine:**

(1) Romans 16:17-18, "divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine"

(2) 1 Timothy 1:3, "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (see: 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:16; 4:3; 2 John 9, 10).

(3) Galatians 1:8-9, forbidden to preach or accept another gospel.

(a) False teaching overthrows the faith of some (2 Timothy 2:18).

(b) Renders worship vain (Matthew 15:9).

(4) Examples:

(a) Premillennialism— R. H. Boll, J. N. Armstrong; George S.

Benson, etc.

(b) Development of “hard” and “soft” preachers & churches. It involves a desire to not be offensive, later called PMA Preaching. It was learned from the Dale Carnegie philosophy of *How to Win Friends & Influence People*.

(c) The “One Cup – No Class” & “head covering” issues.

b. False practices and organizations:

(1) Warnings (Acts 20:28-31; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

(2) Binding or losing where God has not (Romans 14:17, 20, 22; Acts 15:1ff.).

c. False worship:

(1) There are true worshipers and worship (John 4:23-24).

(2) There is vain worshipers and worship (Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:22-23).

(3) True worship outlined for us in the Scriptures.

(a) Why would anyone want to worship other than as ordained?

D. Why Do Men Defile That Which Is Holy?

1. Dissatisfaction with God’s ways:

a. Israel dissatisfied with God as King (1 Samuel 8:5, 7, 20).

(1) Had freedom to choose a king, but not free to choose the consequences

(2) See: Hosea 13:11; Jeremiah 1 – 9; 2:25, “we have loved strangers”).

b. Dissatisfaction with God’s way of evangelization:

(1) So, United Christian Missionary Society started in 1849. Alexander Campbell was the first president.

(a) Then there came a flood of other institutions.

(2) Trust in consolidation of churches & building bigger “plants” with facilities to satisfy the desire of every class.

(a) The “social Gospel” concern for entertainment and recreation.

“Have to entertain them to get them here” (Bus ministry, etc.).

(b) Churches developed “Out Reach” programs; Campus ministries.

These programs include benevolence etc. To all, saint and sinner.

(c) From hence came *What Would Jesus Do?*” by Charles Sheldon (cf.

Lubbock & M. Norvel Young with facilities to LCC; Children’s

Home; and Maternity Home, etc.)

c. Dissatisfied with God’s method of benevolence:

(1) Invention of brotherhood “Orphan Homes.”

(2) Centralized control of church finances and work.

2. Lack of knowledge in God’s ways:

a. The Holy Spirit Controversy began primarily by Dwain Evans, Pat Boone, etc.

b. The “Cross Roads Church” Gainesville, FL. was started by Church Lucas.

- c. Then came the “New Hermeneutics” by Rubel Shelley; Randal Harris, Max Lucado.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Men Have and Are Defiling God’s Temple!

1. They defile it with false doctrine, false worship and false practices.
2. You can defend the Holy Temple by study of God’s word and commitment thereto.

B. Are You Built upon the Foundation of Christ and Building Thereon?

– – *A. W. Goff*

Teaching Them to Observe All Things

Ephesians 4:11-16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Burden of the Local Church—

1. The work divinely assigned to the local church is three-fold: the work of evangelism; the work of benevolence; the work of edification.
2. The work of edification is the burden of this lesson.
3. Our assigned topic is: Teaching Them To Observe All Things.
4. Our primary topic is: Eph.4:11-16.

B. Our Emphasis in the Study—

1. The “them” of our topic refers to the Lord’s disciples. Our topic necessarily implies they are to “observe all things.” But in order for them to observe all things, they must first be taught what the “all things” are.
2. Then, of course, someone is responsible for teaching them. That is what we shall emphasize in our discussion.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Ephesians 4:11-16 Is the Pattern for Edification Work—

1. According to Ephesians 4:8, when Jesus Christ “ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”
2. According to Ephesians 4:11, “he gave some to be apostles; and some to be prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers,” 1 Corinthians 11:27, 28.
3. According to Ephesians 4:12, he gave these gifts, or set them in the church, for definite purposes, involving the saints individually and the church as a whole, or collectively. They were:
 - a. “For the perfecting of the saints”
 - (1) “For” in this expression is from “pros,” not “eis”; and means “with a view to” – i.e., “with a view to the perfecting of the saints,” 2 Corinthians 13:9.
 - (2) “Perfecting” is from a word which means “training, instructing, fitting or adapting.”

- (3) Thus these gifts were given for the purpose of perfecting, completely equipping or preparing the saints through teaching them the whole counsel of God, Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 20:26,27.
- (4) Cf. making a ship sea-worthy or being properly equipped or prepared to perform at sea.
- (5) **All** the saints are to be perfected, equipped, prepared.
- (6) The purpose for perfecting them is specified in the two following expressions.
 - b. "For ("eis" – unto, in order to) the work of the ministry" or the service of Christ they are required to render.
 - (1) As a result of being thus perfected, they would be able to minister.
 - (2) They would be able to perform all service required.
 - (3) **All** the saints are to be equipped and engaged in the service
 - c. "For" ("eis" – – unto, in order to) the edifying (building up) of the body."
 - d. Therefore, no one group alone ministers or edifies the body, for that work has been assigned to each and every member of the body according to v.12.
4. Furthermore, Ephesians 4:15,16 confirms the fact that each member of the body is to perform his or her part of the work for which they are to be perfected or fully equipped, according to v.12.
5. According to Ephesians 4:14-16, the results of the perfecting or completely equipping the saints is doctrinal stability and scriptural work performed, for:
 - a. They are no longer children in spiritual development, or babes in Christ, having need of milk and not of strong meat, v.14a. See: 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14.
 - b. They are no longer subject to be deceived and led astray by the sleight of men in cunning craftiness, teaching false doctrines, v.14b. See: Acts 20:28-31; Romans 16:17, 18.
 - c. They are able to hold to and speak the truth in love, effectively working to the edifying of the body, vv.15, 16.
6. Thus, the **TRUTH** is the **MEANS** whereby the body of Christ is edified, and each member of the body is responsible for his or her part in the work, v.15. Cf. Acts 20:32; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 2:2.
 - a. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 Paul, by analogy, compares the church to the human body, emphasizing that each member of the body of Christ, like those of the human body, has an important function, is useful and needed for the spiritual welfare of the whole body.
 - b. Then in Ephesians 4:11-16, especially vv.15,16, he emphasizes the same important function of each member in the edification work of the church.

B. Teaching Them to Observe All Things, Is the Obligation of All—

1. It is the obligation of the evangelists, 1 Timothy 1:3, 4; 4:6,11-16; 6:17-20; 2 Timothy 2:1,2,14,24-26; 4:1-5; Titus 1:5; 2:15; 3:1.
2. It is the obligation of the elders of the local church, Acts 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 3:2 (“apt to teach”); Titus 1:9-11; Hebrews 13:17 (“for they watch for your souls”).
 - a. Elders are to do more than know what the truth is.
 - b. Do more than simply be able to see that the truth is taught, as some have claimed.
 - c. They are to both be “apt to teach” and to teach the saints!
3. It is the obligation of all the members of the body, Galatians 6:1, 2; Ephesians 6:10-20; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; 2 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2:15; Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:22-24; James 5:19,20; Jude 21-23.
 - a. Saints are not simply spectators.
 - b. They are to be full participators!

C. Collectively, Teaching Them to Observe All Things Is the Obligation of the Local Church Under the Oversight of Its Own Elders—

1. The local church under its own elders may accomplish this:
 - a. By means of Bible classes both public and private for general Bible study.
 - b. By special classes both public and private to teach special subject matter pertaining to some particular need in the work of the church.
 - c. By means of what we call “Gospel meetings” using preachers from outside the local church.
2. The local church has no divine authority to discharge this work through “another organization” – i.e., though an organization separate and apart from, or other than the local church; such as:
 - a. A Missionary Society
 - b. An Edification Society
 - c. A Sunday School Society
 - d. A Bible College, even when operated by brethren
3. Though the Scriptures do not specify the **HOW**, they do specify the **WHO**, and the **WHAT**.
 - a. The **WHO** specified is the local church under its own elders.
 - b. The **WHAT** specified, i.e., what is to be taught, is the **word of God**.
 - c. The **HOW**, or the means or methods of doing the teaching, is not specified; the church has a choice as to means or methods of doing the teaching.
 - d. But the specific **WHO** cannot with God’s approval substitute either for the **WHO** or the **WHAT**!
 - e. Though it may buy the services of human organizations in the performance of its divinely ordained work, it can never, with divine approval, build,

maintain or support such human organizations through which to do its work. (Illustrate)

- f. Moreover, when another **WHO** is set up— a human **WHO**— it must still use the same means and methods available to the divine **WHO**.
4. There is no organization larger, smaller or other than the local church authorized by the Lord to do the work of the local church.
5. The local church and it alone is so charged. Moreover, it is able to do any and all work divinely assigned to it!

III. CONCLUSION:

A. We Must Not Neglect Our Duty—

1. The all-importance of teaching them to observe all things should be obvious to every member of the body.
2. When teaching them to observe all things is neglected or when members of the body neglect or refuse to receive the teaching:
 - a. They remain babes in Christ beyond the time when spiritual maturity is required of them, which is a state unacceptable to the Lord, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14.
 - b. Sinful practices and contrary doctrines prevail which bring condemnation that threaten the very identify of the local church
 - c. May eventually lead to the Lord doing as he threatened the church at Ephesus if they did not repent: “or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place,” Revelation 2:5.

B. Have You Been Taught the First Things?

1. The first things concern the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1- 4).
2. You must be taught these in order to come to Christ (John 6:44, 45; Acts 2:36- 41).
3. Will you obey the Gospel?
 - a. Jesus will add you to His church (Acts 2:47).
 - b. Joining a local church (Acts 9:26) you will be taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded.

— — *Edgar J. Dye*

Tend The Flock of God

I Peter 5:1-3

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The NT Recognizes a Need for Supervision—

1. Proper supervision is important in every walk of life. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28) to which He adds the saved, Acts 2:47, and will present to Himself, is certainly no exception.
2. The text (1 Peter 5:1-3) is a small portion of what is written. We shall endeavor to look at the directions, restriction, qualities, limitations, jurisdiction and admonitions that are written concerning these men who are to tend the flock.

B. Who Shall Supervise the Local Church?

1. A number of different terms and duties in several different passages reflect the serious responsibilities placed upon those in positions of supervision.
2. Titles used to describe these men:
 - a. *Elder* suggests "age and experience."
 - (1) In God's word, leadership also involves a certain lifestyle,
 - (2) Leviticus 19:32, "Honor the hoary head and face of the old man."
 - (3) Not just age and gray hair, Proverbs 16:31, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.
 - (4) All of God's commandments are righteousness, Psalms 119:172 2.
 - b. *Tend*, or *pastor*, term suggests to shepherd (as one who tends to sheep). The same term is translated "feed" Acts 20:28, or "pastor", Ephesians 4:11. Does this mean they do all the teaching? No, Hebrews 5:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:17.
 - c. *Bishops*, Acts 20:28, also *overseers*. Implies that someone is to be "overseen."
 - d. ELDERS=BISHOPS=PASTORS
 - (1) Not three (3) different "offices".
 - (2) These terms have been perverted:
 - (a) Bishop (Episcopal) Episcopalian
 - (b) Elder (Presbyter) Presbyterian

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Charge Allotted to the Elders—

1. There are boundaries or limits to the elders' jurisdiction.

- a. Acts 20:28, "Take heed...to all **THE FLOCK OVER** which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops."
- b. 1 Peter 5:2, "Tend the flock of God **WHICH IS AMONG YOU**."
2. "Not...lording over charge allotted" (1Peter 5:3).
 - a. "Inheritance, lot, part or portion" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*).
 - b. Allot, "To parcel or to assign, to Assign by lot" (*Webster's Dictionary*).
 - (1) God has been assigned something by lot to the elders.
 - (2) They are to tend what they have been allotted. There are limitations and boundaries. They must not to go beyond.
3. That which they were allotted in the text is the local church.
 - (a) The charge allotted is the "Flock of God"
 - (b) The Flock of God is the Church of the Lord, (Acts 20:28).
 - (c) Their allotment is the **LOCAL** Church which "is among you," (1Peter 5:2).
 - (d) As **ELDERS** they cannot scripturally be **OVER** anything else.

B. The Allotment Viewed—

1. Again, it is a local church and only a local church.
 - a. Nothing larger
 - b. Nothing smaller
 - c. Nothing other than
2. These churches are independent
 - a. Not subject to the control of others.
 - b. It is as if it were the only one in existence.
3. These churches were autonomous.
 - a. Having the right of self-government.
 - b. There is equality within among the elderships.
 - c. There is no eldership with more authority over a local church than its own.
4. The relationship between the elders and those allotted (1 Thessalonians 5:12- 13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).
 - a. Know, "approve," Matthew 7:21-23.
 - b. Esteem, "regard with respect" or "favorable regard."
 - c. Double honor, esteem and financial support.
 - d. Obey and submit, in their upholding of divine precept and to their authorized judgment.

C. The Circumvention of God's Allotment—

1. How does the church do anything?
 - a. Through its resources, (1Cor. 16:1,2) or agents, (Acts 11:27-30).
 - b. We have a number of responsibilities: domestic, civil, et. al. Included is our Spiritual responsibility. This involves the Church.

- c. To diminish my support to the church to support work of my choosing raises a question? Take this to its logical end, if all do this?
2. Corruption of autonomy and independence.
 - a. The Sponsoring church.
 - (1) **What is the Sponsoring Church?**
 - (a) Our Brethren said it was an expedient way of preaching the Gospel and was justified by the "law of expediency."
 - (b) An expedient **MUST** come within the scope of an authorized action.
 - b. The Sponsoring church arrangement violates the autonomy and independence of the local church.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. God Has Allotted Oversight of the Local Church to Elders—

1. Their jurisdiction is limited to the local church of which they are members.
2. This is the only capacity in which they may scripturally serve as elders. They cannot oversee more or less than a local church.
3. There is an implicit equality within each eldership and among the elderships of the local churches.

B. God's Allotment Is Corrupted...

1. When men seek to act independently of the oversight of the eldership of the local church of which they are members.
2. When men combine the resources and funds of many churches under the oversight of the eldership of one local church.

– – *Elmer Moore*

Distribution to Every Man

Acts 4:35

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Church Has a Mission—

1. The mission of the Church is threefold:
 - a. Evangelism
 - b. Edification
 - c. Benevolence
2. There was little to no disputation on this until recent times.
 - a. Now, the entertainment business is demanding much attention.
 - b. Kitchens, gyms, entertainment ministers and ministries

B. Our Study Will Consider Benevolence to the Saints—

1. A subject that has involved controversy and division among brethren.
2. Who should be relieved and how shall the church do it?

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Relief to the Saints—

1. "...distribution was made to *every man*..."
 - a. Context: "the multitude of them that believed," 4:32.
 - b. Benevolence was to "every man...among them that believed...according as he had need."
2. Not a pooling of all possessions and dividing them equally.
3. But those that had possessions sold them in order to provide for those who had need, 2:44-45.

B. Congregational Action in Benevolence—

1. The church did provide benevolence in some instances.
 - a. Acts 6:1-7, providing for the necessities of the Grecian widows among the disciples. Not every needy widow in Jerusalem.
 - b. Acts 11:27-30, relief was sent "to the brethren which dwelt in Judea."
 - (1) In view of the "dearth." No doubt others than the brethren were in need, but relief was sent from the disciples to them, but to the brethren.
 - (2) Nor was it sent through a sponsoring church.

(3) Was never thought of until it was prophesied, and the "sending of relief" stopped when the "need" was supplied.

c. 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, thirteen years later the Jerusalem church was in need.

(1) These churches gave "out of their abundance" (2 Corinthians 8:14), so that the Jerusalem church could take care of her own.

2. These texts show that relief was always directed toward saints, that it was temporary in nature and always collected and distributed in such a way as to maintain congregational independence and autonomy.

C. Church To Care For Its Own—

1. Care for its own is the extent of the church's obligation in benevolence.

2. Every verse of scripture on this subject so teaches.

a. Acts 2:43-46, "All that believed" were involved.

b. Acts 6:1-6, the context shows that only the **disciples** were under consideration.

c. Acts 11:27-30, "Relief to the **brethren**...sent to the elders..."

d. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, "...concerning the collection for the **saints**..."

e. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, "...ministering to the **saints**..."

f. 2 Corinthians 9:1-5, "For as touching the ministering to the **saints**..."

g. Rom 15:25-31, "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister to the **saints**..."

h. 1 Timothy 5:9-16, the church was to "relieve widows indeed."

D. Benevolence Among Saints Limited—

1. The church cannot assume the responsibility of the individual, 1 Timothy 5:8.

a. The church was forbidden to "take into the number" any but widows indeed (1 Timothy 5:9, 11).

b. "If any...have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged..." 1 Timothy 5:16.

2. What about orphans?

a. Children who have no relatives to care for them, and have a right to look to the church for help, may be relieved.

b. Unless these restrictions are observed, the door is thrown wide open.

E. The Church not Authorized to Operate in Some Fields—

1. Individuals, family, government to serve in:

a. Secular education

b. Entertainment

c. Politics

2. The church is restricted where the family is not..

- a. Why is the church so restricted?
- b. He who asks this question fails to recognize Christ is the **head** of the church.
3. All recognize there must be laws to govern the family, state and the church.
Cannot contend lawfully without laws, 2 Timothy 2:5.
 - a. There can be no laws without vested legislative authority.
 - b. Legislative authority in the family is vested in parents, Ephesians 6:1-4.
 - c. Legislative authority in the church belongs to the Head. Ephesians 1:22-23.
 - d. There is no legislative authority for the church to act in the field of general benevolence. To go beyond is dangerous, 2 John 9.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Signs Of Departure—

1. A desire to be "like the nations" about us, 1 Samuel 8:19-20, Hosea 13:11.
 - a. Israel a distinct people, Deuteronomy 14:2.
 - b. Their distinctiveness consisted in the fact they did what the Lord said.
 - c. Note how they lost this distinctiveness, Malachi 2:8, "But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi..."
 - d. They had once been a happy, prosperous, God-fearing people. Prosperity proved their undoing.
2. The church is also a distinct people, 1 Peter 2:9, Titus 2:14.
 - a. Once the church prospered, and grew from a small band into a prosperous nation in a land where there were many nations.
 - (1) Holy men took their place in the army of God, and with the word of God won every battle.
 - (2) God's word accomplished what pleased Him (Isaiah 55:11).
 - (3) We drank from the fount of living waters, and were nourished with living Manna.
 - b. Developed an unholy desire to "find our place in the sun."
 - (1) Heads were turned to gaze across the borders at other nations.
 - (2) "Peculiarity" began to be replaced with "popularity."
 - (3) God's people, like Israel, began to "sit down and eat and rise up to play."
 - (4) The clamor for change grew louder and louder.
3. Then when the Bible was preached as "all sufficient," also, "the sufficiency of the church," many began to squirm and cry "hobby-ism."
 - a. Some changes in terms and identifying marks:
 - (1) Re-consecrations, plants (buildings); dedications; responses.
 - (2) Hard preachers and soft preachers. Same kinds of churches.

b. Then came the Orphan homes, Herald of Truth, College support, sponsoring churches; recreation centers; fellowship halls, ball teams; camps; puppet shows; joy bus; ping-pong.

(1) Pews out-last the banqueting tables. Lord's money used for game rooms.

(2) The smell of coffee, cake and chicken permeated the places of worship.

(3) Get anything from a cup of coffee to a quotation of the Lord's prayer.

B. Bible Lovers Are Alarmed—

1. Bellies are being filled and souls starved.

a. We keep remembering, "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"

b. And, "Let not the church be charged..."

2. Such churches have lost their peculiarity. The Golden Calf is finished, and the daughter of the strange god has marched down the isle, and the wedding ceremony has begun.

a. Jerusalem has been over-run with an unholy mob. The Devil will demand his dues, and God will pay with the souls of those who bow before the gods of denominationalism to do like others.

b. The saved are still the separate, distinct, peculiar people of God.

— — *A. W. Goff*

Tell It to the Church

Matthew 18:15-17

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Implications of the Text—

1. This topic and the text of necessity require a study of church discipline.
2. Our text teaches there is a distinction between the individual Christian, individual duty and action, and the local church, collective duty and action, 1 Timothy 5:16.
3. Jesus in our text reveals two things about telling it to the church when one member sins against another.
 - a. There is a time not to tell it to the church.
 - b. There is a time to tell it to the church.

B. Plan of the Study—

1. We will consider what is to be done before it is time to tell it to the church.
2. We will take note of what must be done in telling it to the church, and what the church must do when told.
3. We will discern what the purpose is in telling it to the church.
4. Finally, we will learn what the church must do when having been told a brother repents of that error and sin.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. What Is to Be Done Before It Is Time to Tell It to the Church?

1. The offended is to seek the offender (and him alone) and the offender is likewise to seek the offended (and him alone). And neither is to wait for the other, Matthew 18:15; 5:23, 24.
 - a. Why?
 - (1) It's commanded of God.
 - (2) To show him his fault – – get him to see it; get him to repent.
 - (3) For the purpose of gaining his brother– – not from a desire to humiliate him, or to seek revenge against him.
 - (4) To seek reconciliation with his brother.
 - (5) To ensure the acceptability of worship of God. God will neither accept the man nor his offering unless he accepts both, Genesis 4:5.
 - b. Thus a personal effort is to be made to solve the problem for both parties, an effort that does not in any way involve the local church.

2. But if the offender will not hear the offended, then he is to go again, this time with one or two more brethren as witness to try to bring the offender to repentance, v.16.
 - a. To this point it is still a private affair between individuals.
 - b. But witnesses are now needed in case he still will not hear his brother, because of the next step that must be taken, wherein the testimony of witnesses will be necessary.
 - c. Once again personal efforts are made to solve the problem, efforts which, as yet, do not involve the church.
3. If the offending brother still refuses to hear them, it is now time to tell it to the church, v. 17.
 - a. Not to tell it to the courts of the unbelievers, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.
 - b. The final court of appeals for the offending brother in such matters is the local church.

B. When the Time Comes to Tell It to the Church, What Is Involved? What Does And What Must the Church Do?

1. A brief summary of what the church must do based on Matthew 18:17.
 - a. Hear the accusation, the evidence for it, and the progressive attempts to rectify it.
 - b. Determine the guilt or innocence of the one charged.
 - c. Try to bring about repentance if guilty as charged, and reconciliation between both parties whether or not guilty.
 - d. If he will not hear the church, or still refuses to repent, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," – – as one no longer worthy of or to be considered as in fellowship with the church.
2. Specific scriptural proof for the action to be taken by the church to bring a sinning member to repentance in addition to Matthew 18:17.
 - a. Galatians 6:1 teaches (a duty both individually and collectively):
 - (1) You are to seek to "restore" (mend, set right, perfect, complete) the brother "overtaken in a fault" ("caught by the trespass," *Vine*, III, p. 153; not necessarily caught in the act of sin).
 - (2) That "ye which are spiritual" (referring to those in Christ who are faithful, who walk so as to please God; those who are not "caught by the trespass,") have the responsibility to do this.
 - (3) We are to do it "in the spirit of meekness" (gentleness, not with self-assertiveness and self-interest).
 - (4) We are to do it being ourselves on guard against temptation, or lest we also be tempted to sin; perhaps in our attitude toward the one and or in our treatment of the one we would restore.

- b. 1 Thessalonians 5:14, "warn them that are unruly" (disorderly, out of line).
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:24, 25a teaches that the servant of the Lord:
 - (1) "Must not strive (fight, quarrel); but be gentle (fair, mild, inoffensive, courteous) unto all."
 - (2) Must be "apt to teach (skilful in teaching, able to teach), patient (forbearing when wronged, ready to endure malice, or overlook grievances)."
 - (3) Must "in meekness instruct those who oppose themselves (the opposition, those who go against the teaching)."
 - d. Titus 1:9-11, and the elder's tremendous, all-important responsibility in striving to bring sinning members to repentance. Each elder:
 - (1) Is to "hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught."
 - (2) Is to do this "that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort (entreat) and to convince (convict, refute) the gainsayers (contradicters, to say against)."
 - (3) There always will be some and there were at that time "many unruly (not subject to rule) and vain (empty, aimless) talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision (Judaizers).
 - (4) The elders (who, as elders, always act for and oversee the local church) were charged with stopping (bridling, closing) the mouths of these who subvert (overthrow, turn upside down, lead astray) whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy (greedy, shameful) lucre's sake."
 - (a) How they are to do this: with the word; by sound doctrine.
 - (b) Not by lawsuits; locking buildings; spreading false rumors; branding them as false teachers without proof, etc. etc.
 - e. 1 Timothy 5:19, 20
 - (1) Receive no accusation against an elder without proof- – "but before two or three witnesses."
 - (2) But when there is proof, even an elder who sins is to be "rebuked before all," before the whole church.
3. Specific scriptural proof for the action to be taken by the local church when the sinning member can't be brought to repentance by instructive discipline, which is preventive in nature.
- a. Romans 16:17, 18
 - (1) "I beseech (exhort, urge, entreat, implore) you, brethren"
 - (2) "Mark them ("take note of them") which cause division and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned."

- (3) "And avoid them", KJV; "turn away from them," ASV; "dissociate yourselves from them," TCNT; "to turn away from," *Vine*, I, p. 91.
- (4) Such are not serving the our Lord, but are slaves to their own base desires; they are serving "their own belly."
- (5) By their smooth, flattering words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the innocent, unsuspecting, guileless."
- b. 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5, 11, 13, concerning the impenitent fornicating brother:
 - (1) "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together..."
 - (2) "Deliver such an one unto Satan."
 - (3) "With such an one no not to eat," i.e. have no social engagements with such an one; keep him aware that he is in Satan's camp as long as he continues without repentance.
 - (4) "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
- c. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15
 - (1) "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly (out of ranks; deviating from the prescribed order or rule)," v.6.
 - (2) It's commanded "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," v.6.
 - (3) "If any man (any brother or sister) obey not our word by this epistle note (mark, put a tag on) that man, and have no company with him," v.14.
 - (4) "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish (caution, warn, reprimand) him as a brother," v.15.
- d. 2 Timothy 3:1-9 describes perilous times in the last days and "men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith," demanding "from such turn away."
- e. Titus 3:10, 11, concerning the "heretic," who holds or maintains heretical opinions to the division of the church, Romans 16:17, 18.
 - (1) There is to be a "first and second admonition" seeking correction of his heretical views.
 - (2) When that fails he is to be rejected (shunned, refuse fellowship).
 - (3) Knowing he is subverted (perverted, corrupt, turned inside out), and condemned of himself (self-condemned)."

C. What Is the Purpose of This Action of Withdrawing Fellowship From the Impenitent Member?

- 1. 1 Corinthians 5:4-7
 - a. To save the sinning brother: "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (fleshly lust) that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," 1 Timothy 1:19, 20.
 - b. To save the church; that the local church might be purged and preserved as pure, 5:1, 26, 7-13 (with emphasis on vv. 6, 7).

- c. To magnify, exalt, and maintain the honor and authority of Jesus Christ, vv.1, 2, 4; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Luke 6:46.
2. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, “withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly...and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”
 - a. “Ashamed of himself; to put to shame”
 - b. Literally, “to turn in; that is, to turn one upon himself and so produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome shame, which involves a change of conduct,” *Vine, I, p. 77.*
3. 1 Timothy 1:19, 20, when there is proof positive that an elder has sinned, he is to be rebuked before all to bring him to repentance.
 - a. To save his soul.
 - b. “That others also may fear” – – be warned and stand in wholesome awe.
4. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 teaches that the servant of the Lord who must not strive, fight or quarrel, but “in meekness instruct those who oppose themselves” (or the opposition, those who go against the teaching)– – are to do this:
 - a. “If God peradventure (in hope that God) will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”
 - b. “And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil (the devil’s trap), who are taken captive at his will (or en– trapped by him to do his will).”
5. Revelation 2:4, 5; 3:15-19

D. If and When the Disciplined Member Publicly Repents Before the Church, What Is the Church to Do?

1. 2 Corinthians 2:6-11, we must stand ready to receive him back.
 - a. Let him know we are ready to receive him; not just talk about it, do it! Make it plain by both word and deed!
 - b. “Forgive him, and comfort (encourage) him.”
 - c. “Confirm your love toward him” (reaffirm your love toward him; restore him to his place in you affections, love and fellowship).
 - d. Don’t be guilty of always saying, “Well, I’m going to wait and see!” “I’ll wait until he proves himself to me!”
 - e. Let your forgiveness and restoration of him to your fellowship be as public as your withdrawal was.
 - (1) “Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up (overwhelmed, driven to despair) with overmuch sorrow (by the excess of his sorrow or grief).”
 - (2) “Lest Satan should get the advantage of us,” v.11a.
 - (a) “We don’t want Satan to win any victory here,” J.B. Phillips.
 - (b) “To keep Satan from getting the better of us,” Good-speed.

- (3) "For we are not ignorant of his devices," v.11b.
2. Mt.5:23, 24; 18:15, 16, whether the offender or the offended, we must seek forgiveness and reconciliation.
3. According to Mt.6:12, 14, 15, we must forgive in order to be forgiven.
 - a. All of us want forgiveness.
 - b. But not all of us always want to forgive!
4. Luke 17:3, 4 teaches that whether once or many times, when "thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Let's Avoid the Necessity of Having to Tell It to the Church—

1. The command for the local church to exercise corrective discipline or the withdraw fellowship, such as that commanded in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, has been said to be "the most neglected command in the Bible."
2. If we will cultivate a faithful serving spirit in God's service and a forgiving heart one toward another, there will never be a need to "tell it to the church," except as Paul and Barnabas did in Acts 14:25-27 to the church in Antioch, at the end of Paul's first preaching tour, when they had left from Antioch at the start of it and returned to Antioch at the end of it to report to the church on what "God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

B. God's Grace & Mercy Are Yours Now—

1. The erring can be restored.
2. The alien can be born again into the Kingdom of Heaven.

— — Edgar J. Dye

Preach the Gospel

Mark 16:15-16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text a Statement Jesus Made to His Apostles—

1. The parallel passages: Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24 44-49.
2. Important to understand WHO is speaking and WHO is being addressed.
 - a. The apostles were well qualified to do this. See the promise of Mark 16:17-20.
 - b. Able to speak the language of ALL nations, and validate message with signs.

B. They Were to Preach the Gospel of Jesus, Not Another—

1. It is possible to preach another Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-5).
2. The gospel of Christ
3. Another Gospel, the Social Gospel
4. Effects seen
5. Preaching man's concept

C. The Gospel of Christ Describes Limitations—

1. Going beyond what is written (2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 4:6)
2. Binding where God has not (Matthew 16:19)

D. The Church Has Responsibility of Preaching the Gospel—

1. The parables indicate responsibility to preach, Matthew 13:1-23, cf. Luke 8:4-15.
 - a. Kingdom is used to describe those who are RULED by Christ (Matthew 6:10).
 - b. The King of the kingdom is the head of the church. The Law, territory, and subjects are the same of the kingdom and the church.
2. Examples of the church preaching the Gospel, Philippians 4:15-16.
3. How does the church do anything?
 - a. Through AGENCY and/or its RESOURCES.
 - b. Acts 15:13

E. Some Organization Necessary to Carry Out This Responsibility—

1. Question: Do men have the right to devise any organization through which the church may discharge its responsibility of preaching the gospel? Has the Lord provided the organization; and identified it?
2. To answer we must have a proper understanding of the word CHURCH.
3. First apostasy of the church.
 - a. The result being the Catholic church.
 - b. The word CATHOLIC means universal through Roman Hierarchy.

4. Second Apostasy

- a. Missionary Society
- b. We have witnessed the same departure in our lifetime.

F. Elders of Local Church Assuming Role of Universal Elders—

1. Sponsoring church.

- a. Local elders assuming a work to which all other churches are equal.
- b. Soliciting funds from individuals and churches.
- c. Explain: Broadway in Lubbock

2. Institutionalism:

- a. A human organization
- b. A medium created by man through which the church universal may act
- c. Doing the work assigned to the church.

III. CONCLUSION: There is no greater need or greater work than preaching the Gospel. Christ has willed that the Church do this great work. May we all diligently work in whatever capacity we have to see that the work is done.

—*Elmer Moore*

The House of God

I Timothy 3:14-16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Our Study Has Three Main Divisions—

1. The house of God is God's spiritual house or house in the spiritual realm.
2. The house of God is the church of the living God.
3. The house of God is the pillar and ground of the truth.

B. Our Plan Is to Develop These Three Points in the Order Given—

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The House of God Is God's Spiritual House or God's House in the Spiritual Realm—

1. Some ways in which the term "house" is used.
 - a. A building intended for or used as a habitation or shelter; any place of abode or lodging; as a home, residence, dwelling, or domicile, Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 11:22; 2 John 10.
 - b. Our physical body, the tabernacle of the spirit, 2 Corinthians 5:1.
 - c. "The house of Israel," or God's covenant people under the law of Moses, Matthew 15:24.
 - d. The members of a family; a household, sons and daughters, etc., John 4:53; Acts 16:15, 31, 34; 18:8; 1 Timothy 3:4,5; Hebrews 11:7.
2. What is the house of God in the spiritual realm?
 - a. Since it's a spiritual house in the spiritual realm, it can't be:
 - (1) A material building, a residence, a dwelling or a domicile.
 - (2) Our physical body, the tabernacle of the spirit.
 - (3) "The house of Israel," or National Israel, God's covenant people, under the law of Moses, because physical, fleshly, National Israel, is no longer God's house, or the Israel of God under the N.T.
 - b. Therefore it must be his sons and daughters who make up his spiritual house or his spiritual family, in the N.T. dispensation
3. The family concept in the spiritual realm is found throughout the N.T.
 - a. Galatians 6:10 speaks of it as "the household of faith."
 - b. Ephesians 2:19-22 says of God's children: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 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."

- c. 1 Peter 2:5 says: "As lively stones, are built up a spiritual house..."
 - d. Hebrews 3:6 identifies Jesus Christ as "...a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."
 - (1) The "we" of this verse are identified in V.1 as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling."
 - e. Hebrews 10:19-22 says: "Having therefore, brethren...an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..."
 - f. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priest-hood, an holy nation, a peculiar people..."
 - (1) "A peculiar people", i.e.,
 - (a) A people claimed of God for his own.
 - (b) God's own people.
 - (c) God's people as no others are.
 - (d) A purchased people, 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 1 Peter 1:18,19.
 - (2) This house has Jesus Christ:
 - (a) As a Son over it, Heb.3:6.
 - (b) As the chief corner stone, elect, precious, 1 Peter 2:6; Ephesians 2:20.
 - g. In 1 Peter 4:17 Christians, the spiritually righteous, are identified as "the house of God."
4. God is always identified as the Father in this house, with his family being composed of his children, his sons and his daughters, who are brethren and sisters in Christ.
 - a. Christ is even identified with them as their brother, and one who himself likewise took on human nature, or was in all things made like unto his brethren, or like the children which the Father gave him, Hebrews 2:11-17.
 - b. Thus, it's an expression showing both ownership and relation-ship and signifies the spiritual family God.
 - c. God, the Father, has no illegitimate children outside his spiritual family.
 - d. Faithful children always honor, reverence and obey the Father submitting to his will, following the example of their elder brother, Jesus Christ, who always did his Father's will.
 - e. His faithful children remember who they are wherever they are!
 5. How does one become a member of God's house, his spiritual family, a son or daughter of God in the spiritual realm?

- a. By means of the new birth, being born again, or being be-gotten by the Father, one becomes a child of God, 1 Peter 1:22-25; John 3:1-7.
- b. When one is born again he becomes a “new creature.” But one is said to be “a new creature” in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- c. But one is said to be a child of God (therefore in God’s family or the house of God) “*by faith in Christ Jesus*”, by virtue of having “*been baptized into Christ*,” Galatians 3:26,27; Cf. Romans 6:3-6; 1 John 5:1; 3:1.

B. The House of God Is the Church Of The Living God—

1. It is commonly referred to as:
 - a. “The church of God,” 1 Corinthians 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5.
 - b. “The church of God (or “the church of the Lord”) which he hath purchased with his own blood,” Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16.
 - c. “The church of God...to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,” 1 Corinthians 1:2
 - d. “The churches of God which...are in Christ Jesus,” 1 Thessalonians 2:14.
 - e. “The church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” 2 Thessalonians 1:1.
2. The word “church” in our English translations such as Matthew 16:18 is from the Greek term EKKLESIA, meaning “called out.”
3. The church of the living God, therefore, is composed of those who have been called out of the world by their faith in Jesus Christ and their obedience to the gospel of Christ, 2 Thessalonians 2:13,14; Mark 16:15, 16; Romans 1:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 15:1, 2; Hebrews 3:1; Galatians 1:6-9,11,12.
4. Therefore, this designation signifies the relationship which the church must sustain to the world, called out from, separated from the world, a peculiar people of God, 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1; Titus 2:11-14.
 - a. The church is in the world; but it is not OF the world.
 - b. Too often, however, the problem is that the world is IN the church instead of the church being in the world, but not of the world.
 - c. In too many places the local churches are losing their identify because they are not separate from the world.
 - d. Illustrate the danger: Ship in the water, all is well. That’s the way it should be. Water in the ship, disaster is imminent.
 - e. This is often evident by the way professed believers refer to the church, or want to identify it, or how local churches pervert the work and worship of the local church.

C. The House of God Is the Pillar and Ground of the Truth—

1. This designation indicates that the church is the support, the defender, and the dispenser of God's truth among men.
 - a. It's a post of great responsibility!
 - b. It's both a duty and a privilege.
 - c. It's the "pillar", not "pillow"; the latter is entirely too soft!
 - d. It is not the originator of truth, but the support, defender and dispenser of it.
 - e. It does not determine what truth is, but it supports, defends and dispenses it.
 - f. The church came into existence by virtue of truth preached, believed and obeyed.
 - g. The church lives by being faithful to the truth, thus being faithful to God.
 - h. It is the church's business to maintain, proclaim, support and defend the truth with all her might.
 - i. It's the duty of the church, not just the preachers, or the elders, or the deacons, or the class teachers – but the whole church, 2 Timothy 2:1, 2; 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 8:4; 11:19-21; 18:24-26.
2. What is the truth of which the church is the pillar and ground?
 - a. John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5; John 16:13; 17:8 (Deuteronomy 18:18,19); 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; John 12:48-50; Galatians 1:6-12; Acts 20:28-32.
 - b. 1 Timothy 3:16 suggests to us the grandeur of the truth (the faith of Christ, the true system of religion) of which the church is the pillar and ground.

The facts particularized as follows:

 - (1) "He who was manifest in the flesh"
 - (a) Referring to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, John 1:1,14; 1 John 4:2,3; Matthew 1:23.
 - (b) The Incarnate God a mystery, but a fact. He was both God and man, a real man.
 - (2) "Justified in the Spirit,"
 - (a) Vindicated by the resurrection," Acts 2:21-36, Romans 1:1-4; 1 Peter 3:18.
 - (b) Matthew 17:5; John 3:16,17.
 - (3) "Seen of angels"
 - (a) His apostles as his earthly messengers? Acts 10:40, 41; 1:1-3; 2:32?
 - (b) Angels (spirit beings) saw him, announced his advent, ministered to his wants, announced his resurrection and attend him in his glorified humanity?
 - (4) "Preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world"
 - (a) The Savior, crucified, buried and raised from the dead, is the theme of the gospel and the object of the faith preached to the nations.

- (b) The gospel preached is the revelation of him who came to seek and to save the lost.
 - (c) As such he was and is accepted by perishing men who are made believers through the preaching, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:1-8; Ephesians 3:1-9; Colossians 1:3-6,21-23.
 - (d) To believe on him is to be saved here and hereafter.
- (5) "Received up into glory"
- (a) This is the exaltation of Jesus Christ, Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9; 2:33-36; John 17:5; Philippians 2:9-11.
 - (b) The Incarnate God and Savior is now reigning in glory at God's right hand.
 - (c) He is there awaiting his 2nd Coming, the final judgment and delivering up the kingdom to God, the time when the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, may be also glorified, with the glory which shall be revealed in us, Romans 8:16-18.
3. Without a doubt, this passage testifies to the obligation the church has in maintaining, proclaiming, supporting and defending the truth of the gospel, which is God's power to save the believer.
- a. No other body, as an organization, has been charged with or placed in this position – only the house of God, which is the church of the living God!
 - b. When we get to be too "nice" to boldly proclaim and defend the truth against all enemies of truth – both the "nasty" and the "nice," we are too nice to be what God wants us to be, or to do the work God requires us to do!!
4. Why is it that we do not have more conflict with the preachers of error, with the world and the religious groups of the world, including the Denominations?
- a. Answer: Because we, as a body, as a whole, are not challenging them as brethren did in time past!
 - b. Answer: Because they ignore our challenges – because they have learned they can't win by a "head-to-head" confrontation with the truth in open, public debate.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. The Blessings of Being Included in God's House—

1. What a great privilege to be a child of God by faith in Christ, a member of God's family, his spiritual house, the church!
2. As children of his house, we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together...with the glory that shall be revealed in us," Romans 8:16-18.

3. We are said to be “joint-heirs with Christ” because God hath appointed him “heir of all things,” Hebrews 1:1,2.
4. Our inheritance in, by, through and with Jesus Christ is “incorruptible, and undefiled...that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven” for us, “who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” 1 Peter 1:3-5.

B. Our Responsibilities in God’s House—

1. Let us not forget the great responsibility that is ours as the house of God, nor the need to suffer with the Lord while waiting for the end of our faith, “the salvation of our souls,” Romans 8:17,18; 1 Peter 1:9; 4:12-19.

—*Edgar J. Dye*

God's Husbandry

I Corinthians 3:9

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Definitions:

1. The word *husbandry* occurs two times, (1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Chronicles 26:10).
2. Definition of word according to W.E. Vine:
 - a. "Denotes tillage, cultivation, husbandry" (1 Corinthians 3:9), where the local church is described under this metaphor suggestive of diligent toil...suggestive too, of the effects in spiritual fruitfulness also, to till the ground (Hebrews 6:7)."
 - b. The word suggests a place of cultivation and toil and fruitfulness.
 - c. **Not:** idleness, slothfulness or un- profitability because the members are *to work!*

C. Our Study Will Examine Both the **PLACE of the WORK and the WORKERS.**

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Describe the Situation at Corinth:

1. Elevating men, (1:10- 12; cf. 4:6 (KJV)).
2. Proper value 3:5-8, "each according to his labor" (v. 8).
3. Paul and Apollos were "fellow-workers;" the Corinthians, the church at Corinth were God's "husbandry, God's building" (v. 9).
4. Each person held accountable for his own efforts (10-15).

B. The New Testament Addresses This Concept—

1. There is a place of work: the Kingdom of Christ, the church.
2. Note the Parables of Jesus:
 - a. The parable of the soils (Matthew 13:3-23)
 - b. The parable of the Laborers (Matthew 20:1-16)
 - c. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25: 1- 30)
3. Plain Statements (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; Galatians 6:4- 15).
4. Paul's prayer for his brethren (Philippians 1:9-11).
 - a. In application to their affection, love may abound in acting toward an object in a beneficial way.
 - b. In application to intellect, "approve the things that are excellent" (put first

things first).

c. In application to conduct, "Filled with fruits of righteousness."

5. Paul's prayer for his brethren (Colossians 1: 4-6). He heard of their Love and Faith.

To hear of faith and love involved *action*.

6. Considered in judgment, (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

7. Implication from other figures:

a. Family (1 Timothy 3: 15)

b. Imperative that each member of the family have and perform chores.

III. CONCLUSION: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

—*Elmer Moore*

The Bride of Christ

Ephesians 5:22-25

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Text in Context—

1. Ephesians 5:22-25 the most glorious section of the book.
2. So many miss the import of this section of chapter five.
 - a. Paul is not writing an essay on domestic relationships, but on Christ and the church. Note verse 32.
 - b. “Nevertheless let every one of you love his wife...” v. 33.
 - c. The lessons of husband and wife are fine and worthy of our study but they are secondary to the great lessons on Christ and the church.

B. Teaching on Home Necessary, More So the Church—

1. Verse 22– – Wives told to submit to their husbands.
2. Teaching needed on this, but Paul gets to the point in verse 23.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. “Even As Christ Is The Head Of The Church”

1. He has every right to be the head.
 - a. Because God gave Him the authority Ephesians 1:22-23.
 - b. Because Christ “gave himself for it,” Ephesians 5:25.
 - (1) All that God has to show for the death of Christ is the church bought with his blood, Acts 20:28.
 - (2) “He gave himself for it,” this was all he had to give. And the church is all he has to show for it.
 - (a) This is why the church is “the fullness of Christ,” Ephesians 1:23.
2. “He gave himself”– – his blood– – all of it– – for the church & the church only.
 - a. None went to purchase anything but the church.
 - b. Therefore we need to know what the church is.
 - c. What did he purchase when he purchased the church?
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; “Ye are bought with a price...”
 - (2) So, he bought people who, considered collectively, are called the church.
 - d. The thing purchased must be of equal value with the purchase price. Since “He gave himself for the church,” its value must equal His.
 - (1) Then if saved without the church, saved without the blood.
 - (2) If saved out of the church, then saved out of Christ.

3. "He gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it," vv. 25-27.
 - a. If saved out of the church, then saved without cleansing and sanctification.
 - b. Such cleansing and sanctifying is by the "washing of water by the word."
 - (1) "Washing of water" = baptism
 - (2) "By the word" = obedience to the word
 - (3) John 15:3; 17:19.
 - d. There is no cleansing without the washing: No washing without the water. No sanctification without both; no salvation without the whole of it— and that makes the church.
 - e. The same process that saves one, connects him to the church, called the "Bride" of Christ.
 - f. Christ has only one bride (Ephesians 4:4). He does not practice spiritual polygamy.
 - g. Christ taught that from the beginning one man was made for one wife, Matthew 19:8
 - h. If all denominations are His, then He violates His own teaching.
 - i. Strange claim to be his bride but will not wear his name!
4. "He is the Savior of the body," v. 23.
 - a. Saves presently, Mark 16:16
 - b. Saves eternally, Mark 10:17-30; 1 John 2:25

B. The Glorious Bride of Christ—

1. The cleansed, sanctified church is His glorious Bride.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 11:2 "...espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ."
 - b. Their former condition, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Now cleansed, sanctified.
 - c. Now "chaste" because their sins had been washed away.
 - d. Then the Lord added them to the church— because of the cleansing.
 - e. None can be cleansed, sanctified, added to the church, become a part of His bride in any other way.
2. Ephesians 5:28-33 "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies..."
 - a. Most intimate of all human relationships used to illustrate the closeness of the relationship of Christ and the church.
 - (1) "None ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the church,*" v. 29.
 - (2) This covers the field of all that is useful & needful, Romans 8:32.
 - b. The closeness of the relationship driven home in v. 30.
 - (1) Demonstrated when one "leaves father & mother and cleaves to his wife. They become one flesh.

(2) Christ and the Christian become one. He is one with Christ.

(3) His thoughts, purposes, love is the same as that of Christ.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. The Church His Glorious Bride—

1. As the Bride of Christ, we are...
 - a. Sanctified
 - b. Holy
 - c. Cleansed
 - d. Chaste
 - e. Separated
2. Christ as our head...
 - a. Loves us
 - b. Cherishes us
 - c. Died for us

B. Are You Married to Christ?

—A. W. Goff

The Royal Priesthood

I Peter 2:4-9

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Plan of This Study—

1. The plan of our study shall be to first identify the body of people referred to by the terms— the holy and royal priesthood— who or what organization is referred to and who or what is not.
2. When this is done, we shall, by the terms used to identify these people, see that they are in a special sense the people of God, and that the verses applied to them as the holy and royal priesthood, *emphasize the worship and service* they are to render to God as his people who make up “the house of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:14,15), the “spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5), the “holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God” (Ephesians 2:21,22).
3. Then we shall examine in outline form the various passages which refer to the holy and royal priesthood, and to the individual Christians as priests in their sacrifices and service as priests of God through Jesus Christ.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Definition of Terms & a Brief Exegesis of I Peter 2:4-9

1. Defining the term “priesthood” involves understanding the definition of “hood”.
 - a. *Reader’s Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder*: “A suffix forming nouns, indicating a collection or group (sisterhood, brother-hood, priesthood).”
 - b. *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*: “A suffix denoting (a) state...as child-hood, fatherhood, priesthood, (b) collectively, a body or organization; as, brotherhood. It is equivalent to – *head* in such words as *Godhead*.”
2. *W. E. Vine*, III, 212, *HIERATEUMA*, “denotes a priesthood, a body of priests, consisting of all believers, the whole church (not a special order from among them) called ‘a holy priesthood,’ in 1 Peter 2:5; ‘a royal priesthood,’ v.9; the former term is associated with offering spiritual sacrifices, the latter with the royal dignity of showing forth the Lord’s excellencies...”
3. *Thayer*, 298: “the order or body of priests...so Christians are called, because they have access to God and offer not external but ‘spiritual’ sacrifices...”
4. Therefore, in 1 Peter 2:5,9, the church collectively is called a “holy priesthood” and a “royal priesthood”.

5. Of course, if the collectivity is a “priesthood” or a “hood of priests”, then the individual members of the “hood” are “priests”.
6. Furthermore the ASV in Revelation 1:6 says they are “made to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father,” and in Revelation 5:10, says he “madest them to be unto God a kingdom and priests,” and 20:6 says, “they shall be priests of God and of Christ.”
 - a. Of course, Christians are nowhere said to be kings.
 - b. Collectively, they are a kingdom, and they are a “kingdom of priests”.
7. Priests— all priests— are ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices (Hebrews 8:3); wherefore, it is of necessity that Christians, who are priests in the service of God through Jesus Christ, have something to offer.
8. Jesus Christ, our High Priest of the N.T., offered the one perfect, ever-present, ever-effective sacrifice in its atoning virtue and cleansing power; through that one sacrifice the priests of the spiritual house, the spiritual temple, the habitation of God, offer up sacrifices acceptable to God, which are comprehended under two major headings: praise and obedience in service to God and man.
9. Don’t be misled into believing that offering a sacrifice to God means suffering the loss of something dear and precious and very costly to the one offering the sacrifice.
 - a. Sacrifice primarily denotes the act of offering; then, objectively, that which is offered.
 - b. In Philippians 2:17 it is even said of one’s faith: “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith,” (KJV).
 - c. *Goodspeed*: “Even if my life is to be poured out as a libation as you offer your faith in a service of sacrifice to God.”

B. The Life And Sacrifices of this Priesthood Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ—

1. 1 Peter 2:4-9: Christians as the spiritual house, the temple of the Lord, the habitation of God.
 - a. They are the material of the true and spiritual temple.
 - (1) They are built in and upon the Cornerstone, Jesus Christ himself, v.6; 1 Corinthians .3:11.
 - (2) They are, individually, living stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy temple of the Lord, and habitation of God, v.5, Ephesians 2:21,22.
 - b. They are the priesthood of the true and spiritual temple.
 - (1) This is affirmed of the whole body of the faithful, the chosen of God, and precious, as lively (living) stones, vv.4,5.
 - (2) The character of this priesthood is stamped as “holy”.
 - (3) The office of this priesthood is specified: spiritual sacrifices are to be offered.

- (a) Though not specified here, other N.T. passages leave us in no doubt as to what they are.
 - (b) They are comprehended under two headings: praise and obedience, which we shall notice as those passages are discussed.
 - (4) The acceptance of such spiritual sacrifices is assured through the intercession of Jesus Christ, our high priest.
 - c. The blessed obligation of this chosen generation, this royal priesthood, this holy nation, this peculiar (purchased) people: "That (in order that) ye should show forth (proclaim, publish abroad, give wide publicity to) the praises (virtues, excellencies and gracious dealings) of God" exhibited in his great scheme of human redemption, v.9.
 - (1) This is the purpose, design or end to which you have been chosen made priests and purchased,
 - (2) Of course, this can only be done through our priestly function of a life of continual sacrifice and service acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 2. Hebrews 13:15,16 is another N.T. text emphasizing and revealing the life and sacrifices of believers who are priests.
 - a. The ones who are to offer these sacrifices: "Let us offer..." – Christians.
 - b. The One to whom these sacrifices are to be offered: "To God," Matthew 4:10.
 - c. The nature and kinds or classes of the sacrifices which are required of Christians, which are twofold:
 - (1) There is to be the sacrifice of prayer and praise to God – the fruit of our life which make a confession of thanks to his name.
 - (a) These sacrifices are not expiatory or atoning, but eucharistic – praise and thanksgiving.
 - (b) The great atoning sacrifice in all its perfection has been offered. To it nothing can be added.
 - (c) But we should continually praise and confess the name of God, and gratefully acknowledge his great goodness to us, and celebrate his infinite perfection.
 - (2) There is to be the sacrifice of beneficence to man: "to do good and communicate forget not"
 - (3) "For with such sacrifices God is well pleased," 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 6:10.
 - d. The medium through which these sacrifices are to be offered.
 - (1) "By him therefore let us offer..." or "through him let us offer..." i.e., through the mediation of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Through no other or no other medium can they be offered and accepted. Cf. Ac.4:11,12; Jno.14:6.

- e. The time when these sacrifices should be offered.
 - (1) The sacrifices to God should be offered “continually” – it’s a life- long occupation and obligation.
 - (a) It’s a daily sacrifice, an abiding disposition of the soul.
 - (b) It must not be an occasional exercise.
 - (2) The sacrifice of beneficence to men should be offered according to opportunity and ability.
- f. The favor with which these sacrifices are regarded by God.
 - (1) With them God is “well pleased”.
 - (2) He not only accepts them, but is gratified by them.
 - (3) He regards such acts as done to him, Matthew 25:40.
 - (4) Not even the least of them escapes his notice, or will fail of his reward, Matthew 10:40; Hebrews 6:10.
- 3. Romans 12:1, the Christian’s living sacrifice in worship of and service to God through Jesus Christ.
 - a. Consider the motive urged in order to induce the sacrifice required.
 - (1) “I beseech you therefore...by the mercies of God”
 - (a) He entreats or appeals by the loving kindness of God.
 - (b) He, no doubt, includes in this God’s spiritual favors be-stowed upon them mentioned earlier in the epistle.
 - b. Consider what he enjoins us to present to God and how this presentation is regarded.
 - (1) “Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God”
 - (a) It is a living sacrifice, not the bodies of brute animals, but our bodies gratefully and willingly laid as a sacrifice upon the altar to God.
 - (b) Our bodies presented as a sacrifice and service to God, replete with life and energy to God’s will, Romans 6; 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1.
 - (2) A living sacrifice means a constant, continuous sacrifice.
 - (a) Not just an occasional dedication of one’s body.
 - (b) Not for today, then take it back into one’s own hands to do his own thing tomorrow and the next day.
 - (c) It means living for God on a daily basis, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
 - (3) A living sacrifice means a sacrifice of one’s body wherever the body is.
 - (a) A particular or some certain place is not required for this.
 - (b) It’s to be done at home, abroad, on the job, on vacation, at a neighbor’s house, facing the enemy in the battle for souls, both your own and others.
 - (4) A living sacrifice means one lives for God by faithfully serving God in harmony with his revealed will, and at all times sacrificing one’s own

fleshly, selfish desires in the interest of serving God's holy requirements whatever they are.

- (a) God's will comes first with him, Matthew 6:33.
 - (b) Such an one does not pollute nor contaminate one's self with the sins and corruptions of this world: neither the lust of the flesh, nor the lust of the eyes, nor the pride of life, 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4.
- (5) Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God means total dedication to the worship and service of God and Christ.
- (a) Anything less than total devotion to God is short of God's glory
 - (b) It demands dedication of our bodies, our very lives, body and soul.
 - (1) It is not to be made to self: living as one wishes; doing one's own thing, Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 6:46.
 - (2) It is not to be made to others: living for family, wife, husband, children, parents; or for friends, or employer, Matthew 10:37-39; Luke 14:36,37.
 - (3) It is not to be to something else: material things, houses, lands, money, cars, profession, recreation, luxury or beds of ivory, power, recognition, fame, or retirement.
- (6) Such living sacrifices are holy and spiritual in character.
- (a) The animals offered under the O.T. law were "without blemish."
 - (b) A sprinkled body is not sufficient; a pure heart and a contrite spirit are required.
 - (c) When it meets these conditions it is a sacrifice "acceptable unto God," and carries God's blessings to the offerer.
- c. This sacrifice is represented as your "reasonable service" (KJV), "spiritual service" (ASV).
- (1) Though the body is said to be offered, its presentation is the expression of inner spiritual worship and service; it's from the heart or spirit.
 - (2) It's not merely mechanical or formal.
 - (3) It's not substitutionary, nor representative, but personal.
 - (4) It's a sacrifice of our feelings and our affections for a loving God.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. What Is the Holy & Royal Priesthood?

1. The holy, royal priesthood is made up of priests of God, who offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, and of beneficence to men according to ability.
2. "A holy priesthood" is associated with offering "spiritual sacrifice" to God.
3. "A royal priesthood" is associated both with offering "spiritual sacrifice" and with the "royal dignity" of doing so.

4. They, as priests of God, do it gratefully and willingly, imitating the perfect example of Jesus the High Priest, who willingly gave himself as the one perfect, ever-present, ever-effective sacrifice in its atoning virtue and cleansing power, through whom they serve God.

B. What Sacrifices Do They Offer?

1. To identify the holy and royal priesthood and to emphasize the worship and service— the sacrifices— to be offered by the individuals of that priesthood, we cited and examined 1 Peter 2:4-9; Hebrews 3:15,16; Romans 12:1.
2. Basically, the nature, kinds and classes of sacrifices required are two-fold.
 - a. There is to be the sacrifice of prayer and praise to God, with all that entails.
 - b. There is to be the sacrifice of beneficence to men, with all that includes.

—*Edgar J. Dye*

The Kingdom of Heaven

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Kingdom of Heaven Much Misunderstood—*

1. A much misunderstood subject.
2. Many conflicting positions advanced about it.
3. The N.T. will present the truth about our subject.

B. *The Kingdom of Heaven Is Important—*

1. Citizenship in it is very important, 1 Corinthians 15:24.
2. It will be delivered to God the Father.
3. Our lesson will endeavor to give Bible answers to several important questions.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. *Meaning Of The Word “Kingdom”.*

1. “Primarily an abstract noun, denoting sovereignty, royal power, dominion... then by metonymy, a concrete noun, denoting the territory or people over whom a king rules” (W.E. Vine, p. 634).
 - a. Generally- rule or power
 - b. Specifically- the people ruled
2. Jesus defines Kingdom (Matthew 6:10)
 - a. “Thy kingdom come”
 - b. “Thy will be done”
 - c. The word “Kingdom” describes people who allow the Will of God to rule in their hearts and life.

B. *Different Terms Describing the Same Institution—*

1. “Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 3:2)
 - a. Called “Kingdom of God” (Mark 1:15)
 - b. Thus, the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Heaven
2. “Kingdom of Son” (Matthew 16:28)
 - a. “Kingdom of God” (Mark 9:1)
 - b. Thus, the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of the Son.
3. Conclusion: Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of the Son are all the same.

C. *When Was the Kingdom Established?*

1. Some contend that it is still FUTURE.

- a. The postponement theory: “Jesus intended to establish His Kingdom; but when the Jews rejected Him He postponed it and set up the church as an after thought. He will, in the future establish His kingdom”.
- b. They tell us that the time was right as the prophets predicted. Yet He didn’t establish it. How do we know He will do so the next time He comes?
- 2. It was near When Jesus was here on earth, Matthew 3:2.
- 3. Isaiah 2:2, 3 tells us when the Kingdom established.
 - a. The time– – “the last days”
 - b. The Place– – Jerusalem
 - c. The circumstances– – Law of the Lord goes forth
 - d. The people– – All nations, but Jews first
- 4. Kingdom established (Acts 2.1-47).
 - a. Kingdom would come when the power came (Mark 9:1).
 - b. Power would come when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8).
 - c. The Holy Spirit came on Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
- 5. Jesus was on His throne (Acts 2:29-36).
 - a. He was at the right hand of God exalted.
 - b. The Holy Spirit promised that He would sit on David’s Throne, v. 30.
 - c. Peter said He received what the H.S promised.
 - d. Therefore He was at that time seated on His throne.

D. What Does “Inherit the Kingdom” Mean?

- 1. What does “inherit the kingdom” mean?
 - a. Not the kingdom but that promised to those in the kingdom (Matthew 25:34).
 - b. The Kingdom is named when the blessing of citizenship is intended, eternal life (Romans 2:4-6).
- 2. Terms “church” and “kingdom used interchangeably (Matthew 16:18, 19).

	CHURCH	KINGDOM
HEAD	Ephesians 1:21, 22	Acts 17:7
LAW	1 Corinthians 15:1-4	Acts 8:12
SUBJECTS	Ephesians 2:16-19	Ephesians 2:16-19
TERRITORY	Colossians 3:15	Hebrews 8:10-11

- 3. The called out, the church, are those who are ruled by Christ.
- 4. How does one become a citizen of the kingdom of heaven?
 - a. John 3:1- 8
 - b. Galatians 3:26, 27
 - c. 1 Corinthians 12:13

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Have You Entered the Kingdom?

1. Jesus declared in Matthew 7:21 that not just those who profess, but those who do.
2. In parallel statement, Luke 6:46, He declared, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say"
3. Good question! (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinth 15:24).

B. Will You be Born Again Today?

—*Elmer Moore*

The Fullness of Christ

Ephesians 1:23

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *Ephesians Is Paul's Essay on the Church*—

1. His proposition stated in Ephesians 1:3, He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in **heavenly places in Christ**"
2. He offers the proof in the following chapters.

B. *The Church in God's Eternal Purpose*—

1. Chapter 1:3-8 God's choice in predestination and adoption of children by **Jesus Christ** was according to His will, 1:4-5.
 - a. He abounded toward **us** in wisdom and prudence, 1:8.
 - b. He made known unto **us** the mystery of His will, 1:9.
2. This was according to **HIS PURPOSE**, not an accident, afterthought.
 - a. **HIS WILL**: "that he might gather together all things **in Christ**..." 1:10.
 - b. "**In Whom** we have obtained an inheritance...who *first* trusted **in Christ**," 1:11-12.
 - c. "**In Whom** ye also trusted..." 1:13.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. *The Exalted Christ (1:19-23)*—

1. The Great Power of God, 1:19.
 - a. It took His great power to exalt Christ to be over all, including the church, 1:20-23.
 - b. The honor and power given Christ was commensurate with the importance of the office.
 - (1) A name above every name. What greater honor could He have? (Philippians 2:5-8).
 - (2) If it takes all the power and might given Him to be head over the church, which leaves nothing for any other institution.
2. Note four things in verses 22, 23:
 - a. God made Christ head of the church.
 - (1) God raised His Son from the dead to establish the church.
 - (2) He elevated His Son to be **HEAD** over the church.
 - (a) Same number of churches as there are heads.

- (b) One body (Ephesians 4:4), but one body (1 Corinthians 12:20).
 - (c) The church is His body, Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18.
 - (d) Christ built only one church, Matthew 16:18.
 - (e) He purchased only one church, Acts 20:28.
- b. He is head over all things to the church.
- 1. He is the **HEAD** of the church— His prerogative to say what the church must do.
 - 2. All church problems, questions, etc. must be Christ solved.
 - 3. Many unwilling to let Him rule as Lord, Luke 6:46.
 - 4. Forbidden to alter His will (Word) in any way, Galatians 1:8-9; 2 John 9; Revelation 22:16-19.
- c. The church is His body.
- 1. The church is His **BODY**.
 - 2. To be in Christ is to be in His body. Therefore, if one is in Him he is also in His body, church. And, if one is not in His church he is not in Him.
 - 3. It is only through the church that we have spiritual connection with Him.
- d. The church is the fullness of Christ.
- 1. The fullness of Christ, Ephesians 1:23.
 - 2. What does “the fullness of him that filleth all in all” mean?
 - 3. An old rule: “If the revealed sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.”
 - 4. What could make more sense than to say that the church which He purchased, for which He died, over which He reigns as head, is “the fullness of Him”?

B. A Survey Of “Fullness” in Other Passages—

- 1. In Colossians:
 - a. 78 of the 95 verses in Colossians resemble Ephesians (Bullinger).
 - b. “Fullness” used an equal amount of times in both Ephesians & Colossians.
 - c. “Filled” from the same Greek word (pleroma) each time.
 - (1) Colossians 1:9, Paul prayed: “...that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”
 - (2) Colossians 1:19, “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”
 - (a) God translated them “into the kingdom” of His Son, v. 13.
 - (b) “**In Whom**” they had the spiritual blessings of redemption, forgiveness.
 - (c) Note again the Son’s exalted position & power, 1:16-17.
 - (d) Additionally, “He is the head of the body, the church...” 1: 18.
 - (e) “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” 1:19, or

all spiritual blessings mentioned through the church.

(3) Now, Colossians 2:9 "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

(a) Here emphasizing the same as Colossians 1:19. Neither of which is describing Christ's nature, attributes, etc.

(b) "**In Him**" refers to the Christian's spiritual relationship to Him, not to the powers of the Godhead residing in Him.

(1) Thayer's description of "in," a person to whom another is wholly joined and to whose power and influence he is subject....so used in the writings of Paul and of John particularly of intimate relationship with God or with Christ, and for the most part involving contextually the idea of power and blessing resulting from that union...*In Christ*...engrafted as it were in Christ, in fellowship and union with Christ, with the Lord." (p. 211).

(c) "**Bodily**" is an adverb modifying the main verb, used figuratively meaning "wholly" or "substantially." In Colossians 2:9 "bodily" describes the manner of the dwelling, substantially or wholly.

2. Recapitulation—

- a. Colossians 1:9 identifies "filled" with "in all wisdom & spiritual understanding."
- b. Colossians 1:19 describes the location of all the blessings and powers.
- c. Colossians 2:3, 7, 9, 10, 11 are all describing the fullness, completeness of "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*." (Ephesians 1:3).
- d. Paul's conclusion is "**Ye are complete in Him**," Colossians 2:10.

C. The Fullness of Christ (Ephesians 1:23)—

1. The church is the fullness of Him.

- a. Can't have "all spiritual blessings" without being a part of his church. If there is one saved man out of the church, then it is not the fullness of Him.
- b. Christ adds the saved to the church, Acts 2:47; Ephesians 2:6.

2. Other passages emphasizing completeness in Christ:

- a. Ephesians 3:19, "...that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."
 - (1) Not all the powers & attributes of God, but all spiritual blessings.
- b. Ephesians 4:11-13, "...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."
- c. Romans 15:29 "...I shall come in the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ."
- d. Other similar passages: Luke 6:21; 2 Corinthians 1:20.

3. The fullness of Christ includes: love, grace, faith, redemption, forgiveness.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. How Have the Fullness of Christ?

1. Must be “in Him” (Ephesians 1:23).
2. How does one get “into Him?” (See: Galatians 3:27).

B. Paul’s Prayer for the Ephesians in 3:14-21

—A.W. Goff

Purchased by His Blood

Acts 20:28

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. "The Cost of a Thing Indicates It's Worth"—

1. You get what you pay for.
2. The text, Acts 20:28: "the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."
 - a. Something COST the blood of Christ. "So what !" One might ask.
 - b. We must determine if there is any value in the medium of exchange. The medium is the BLOOD OF JESUS.

B. What New Testament Says about the blood of Christ?

1. Introduction to John 6. Look at setting.
2. John 6:49-59, eat & drink flesh & blood.
3. Not Talking about the Lord's Supper.
4. The Blood of Christ and what it provides for mankind.
 - (a). Ephesians 1:7, redemption, through His BLOOD, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.
 - (b) John 6:27, fellowship with Christ (1 John 4:13, 16).
 - (c) John 6:27, eternal life, John 6:40, 47, 54, 68.
5. Summation of the blessings, RESULTING FROM appropriating the BLOOD OF CHRIST.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Blood of Christ Bought the Church Of The Lord—

1. Acts 20:28
2. Ephesians 5:25, 27, 32
3. One must be a part of that which was purchased by the blood of Christ, and "walk worthily of the calling wherewith he was called" to enjoy the benefit of His blood.
 - a. *Illustration:* Benefit from money spent for coat.

B. The New Testament Identifies the Church & How One Becomes a Member—

1. Whatever is necessary to receive benefits of the blood of Christ; is what one must be and do to become a member.
2. For the blood of Christ to benefit one, 1 John 6:26-29, 37, 40, 44-45, 54, 63.

3. To become a member, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Acts 2:36-47.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Have You Been Purchased by the Blood of Christ?

1. Must be in Christ.
2. Must be a member of His church.
3. Baptism of the penitent believer puts one into Christ.

B. The Price has Been Paid—

1. You are responsible for informing yourself; and submitting to God.
2. Be bought with a price by Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20).

— — *Elmer Moore*

I Will Build My Church

Matthew 16:18

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. We Need regular teaching About the Church—

1. Insufficient teaching on this subject in recent years.
2. The organization, mission, autonomy, and essentiality of the church misunderstood by too many.
3. The church identified by many different terms which enlighten us on this subject.

B. The Church In Purpose—

1. The church was in God's eternal purpose and plans, Ephesians 3:10.
2. It is not an afterthought, but "according to the purpose of Him who worketh **all things** according to the **purpose of His own will**," Ephesians 1:11.

C. What Did Christ Build? (Matthew 16:18).

1. Not a physical, material building, but a "spiritual house," 1 Peter 2:5.
 - a. The figure is that of constructing a temple in 1 Corinthians 3:9-17.
 - b. Living stones put together upon the proper foundation, 1 Peter 2:5.
 - (1) Sometimes the messengers are called the builders. 1 Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 2:20-22.
 - (2) Still, the essential truth is maintained; that is, He is bringing together people who heed his call.
2. As a (convened) assembly, or "called out" body of people they are, when considered as a whole, likened unto a building.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. There Must Be a Plan to Follow—

1. The importance of a pattern, blueprint, and purpose of any building:
 - a. Must be an architect, builder, material.
 - b. Material must be purchased, placed in the building.
 - c. Each part must bear its own burden.
 - d. Material must measure up to the architect's specifications.
2. the Father's special part was to draft the plan, furnish the blueprint and specifications, Ephesians 3:10-11.
 - a. Prophecy of this plan, 1 Peter 1:10-11.

- b. Kept secret, therefore a mystery til revealed, Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:3-5.
- c. Old Testament types prefigured the church, Hebrews 9:8-9, 23, 10:1.
- 3. The Holy Spirit's special part was to reveal the plan, Ephesians 1:9; 3:3.
 - a. To enable the apostles to make known the plan, John 14:26; 16:13.
 - b. Before this, the plan had not entered into the minds of men or angels, 1 Corinthians 2:9ff., 1 Peter 1:10-12.
- 4. Therefore, nothing lacking on the part of God or the Holy Spirit. Should be able to follow the plan and path as drafted and revealed.

B. There Must Be a Builder—

- 1. Christ is that builder, Matthew 16:18-19, Hebrews 3:4.
 - a. Therefore, not built by Luther, Wesley, Smith, etc.
 - b. Christ built it as the Father willed it, John 6:38, "I came not to do my own will."
 - c. He had workers under Him, 1 Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 2:20.
- 2. The material of this spiritual house is people, Acts 2:41, 8:12; 1 Peter 2:5-9.
- 3. The material must be purchased, Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:20 (1 Corinthians 7:22-23; Galatians 5:1).
 - b. Prophecy of this paid price, Isaiah 53.
 - c. By His death he acquired people, one by one, saving each from his sins as he humbly obeyed.
- 4. The material must be properly prepared, Ephesians 5:26-27.
 - a. Cleansed people who submit to "the washing of water by the word."
 - b. A reference to truth and obedience.
 - c. The cleansing takes place as individuals (Tom, Sam, Ann, etc) see their lost condition and come to Christ in His appointed way for salvation.
 - d. Each one believes, repents, confesses, and is baptized.
 - e. This cleansing continues on through life on an individual basis as each one repents and prays, Acts 8:13, 18f.
- 5. Some Lessons From These Facts—
 - a. Christ built, bought, cleansed the church.
 - (1) The foundation has been laid; the purchase price has been paid, the cleansing blood has shed.
 - (2) His sacrifice was once for all, Hebrews 10:10.
 - (3) A sense in which the construction work continues as living stones are placed on the foundation, 1 Peter 2:5.
 - (4) The cleansing power of the His blood continues, 1 John 1:7; 2:1-3.

- b. Christ did not build, buy, cleanse some sort of a vehicle into which you come, sit, and ride home to heaven.
- c. But He will build you into his building, buy you from the slavery of sin, cleanse you from all spiritual filth— if you will come to Him.
- d. Then you will be a part of the people saved by His grace, and of His church.

C. Some Simple Truths—

1. Hundreds of churches claim relation to the church of the New Testament, yet seem reluctant to consider some obvious truths set forth about it.
 - a. *The Church belongs to Christ.*
 - (1) He built it, purchased it, gave himself for it.
 - (2) It is not my church, your church, the preacher's church.
 - (3) Don't take liberties w/ another's property, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.
 - b. *Christ is the head of His Church.*
 - (1) His word is authority, Ephesians 1:22– 23.
 - (2) Its characteristics must then be Christ determined.
 - (3) Its questions must be Christ answered.
 - (4) Its problems must be Christ solved. This rules out synods, etc.
 - (5) If it is important enough to be an issue, it is important enough to let Christ settle it.
 - c. *Christ is the way, the truth, the door.*
 - (1) Only those coming by Christ may enter, John 10:7ff, 14:6.
 - (a) It is His prerogative to say what one must do to be saved.
 - (b) Feelings, mother, the multitudes have nothing to do with it.
 - (2) Christ sent the apostles to bring people to Him, Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38.
 - (a) If you have not gone through that door you have not entered Christ, Galatians 3:26-27.
 - d. *Christ is the final judge.*
 - (1) Men may say these things are not important, but Christ is the final judge.
 - (2) He will judge on the basis of His word, John 12:48-50; Luke 10:16.
 - (3) We are to be "doers@not "judges," James 4:10-11; 1:22-23; 2:10.
 - e. *The New Testament church is the church of Christ.*
 - (1) Romans 16:16
 - (2) Is this an odd conclusion?
 - (3) What possible objection could one have to calling it His church?

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Christ Has Built His Church—

1. If you are not a part of His church you are not His, and have not been bought with His blood, nor freed from slavery to sin, nor cleansed from your sins, nor saved.
2. Are you interested in any of these?
3. Are you willing to let Him be your Savior?

B. Are You on the Solid Foundation of Jesus Christ?

– – *A.W. Goff*

“And the Lord Added to the Church”

Acts 2:47b

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *Misconceptions about Church Membership*—

1. Our purpose is to examine the expression in Acts 2:47b: “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
2. Some people are not members of any church, or have not “joined” any church, because they do not believe it is necessary to be members of any church.
3. A few have “joined” this church or that church because they have been taught and believe it makes no difference to which church one belongs.
 - a. I say, “A few,” because most who are members of certain churches do not actually believe “it makes no difference” even though they say they do.
4. Some have “joined” a certain church because their families also “joined” that church— – mother, father, wife, husband, children, etc.
5. Still others have “joined” a certain church because it is good for business.
6. With many of these people their church affiliation is secondary. They have “joined” because it is popular; it is convenient; it is expected of them; it is just the thing to do; they do not want to be referred to as the “un-churched.”
7. But many people are not members of any church because they “do not know which one of the many to join.” Example: Bud Acres & Woodrow Adkins at Kennett, MO.

B. *There is a Right Church of Which to Be a Member*—

1. But Acts 2:47b and other sections of Scripture show us what church to be a member of, who became members of that church, and how they were made members of it. (Read the text at this point and briefly review the chapter.)
2. From Acts 2:47b, it should be obvious to one and all that the Lord:
 - a. Added all who were members.
 - b. Added only the saved, but he added all the saved.
 - c. Added them to the one he wanted them to be members of, not the church of their choice, or to some denomination, but the church of the Lord’s choice!

3. In view of this, let us talk about Acts 2:47b and some things necessarily implied by the expression “and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Since the Lord Added Them to the Church of His Choice, They Were Added to the Right One—

1. Question: Which is the right one? Which one was it?
 - a. Obviously, it was the one the Lord wanted them in.
 - b. The Lord knows the one to which the saved should belong.
 - c. If you let the Lord do the adding, there can be no mistakes and you will not have to worry about being in the wrong one.
 - d. One thing for sure, the Lord would not add anyone to a church that didn't belong to him; so we know *they were added to the Lord's church*.
2. Question: Which one is the Lord's church?
 - a. It must be the one we read about in the Bible, the N.T.
 - b. It must be the one which can be identified by the N.T.
 - c. To illustrate: Compare the FBI's search for a criminal— his ID sets him apart from all others. They have all of his identifying characteristics, habits, job preference, etc.
 - d. Just so, the Lord's church can be identified by its scriptural name or designations, by its scriptural worship, by its scriptural work, by its scriptural organization— in other words, by its identifying characteristics, all of which are revealed in the N.T.
 - e. Note some churches one cannot read about in the Bible; churches which do not have the scriptural characteristics, or have only some of them. Churches which did not exist then; which came into existence hundreds of years later.
3. The Bible knows nothing about any more than one church belonging to the Lord.
 - a. Narrow? Yes! Still the truth, though.
 - b. Narrow-minded? No! Truth is always narrow. Cite examples.
 - c. Scriptural proof that there is one, but only one church belonging to the Lord.
 - (1) The Lord promised to build only one, Matthew 16:18.
 - (2) He purchased only one, and that with his blood, Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 1:18,19; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20.
 - (3) He is the head of only one, Ephesians 1:22,21; 5:23; Colossians 1:18.
 - (4) He added all the saved, but only the saved, to that one, Acts 2:47.
 - (5) He has promised to save only one, and is the Savior of only one, Ephesians 5:23; Matthew 15:13ff; Psalms 127:1.

4. Every figure of speech in the N.T. referring to the church represents the church as one in number, with its ownership being the Lord's.
 - a. One bride, John 3:25-30; Romans 7:1-4.
 - b. One household, or family, Ephesians 2:19; Galatians 6:10.
 - c. One building or house, 1 Timothy 3:14,15; Cf. Psalms 127:1.
 - d. One fold and one shepherd, John 10:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4.
5. Names and designations by which the Lord's church is and is not known.
6. Churches which did not exist at that time (name plus when):
 - a. Roman Catholic not before 606 A.D.
 - b. Lutheran not before 1517 A.D.
 - c. Presbyterian not before 1536 A.D.
 - d. Church of England not before 1534 A.D.
 - e. Congregational not before 1550 A.D.
 - f. Baptist not before 1607 A.D.
 - g. Methodist not before 1739 A.D.
 - h. Mormon (Latter Day Saints) not before 1830 A.D.
 - i. Adventists not before 1830 A.D.
 - j. Christian Scientist not before 1866 A.D.
 - k. Jehovah's Witnesses not before 1872 A.D.
7. As a counter to this, what men often claim about A. Campbell and the church of Christ, which the N.T. easily belies, Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Romans 16:16; etc.
8. What men often claim the Lord's church is: The one church made up of the saved of all the denominations, or of each and every denomination. This the N.T. also easily refutes, 1 Corinthians 1:10– 13.

B. Since the Lord Added All the Saved to the Church, They Obviously Got in or Entered the Right Way—

1. Since the Lord added them, this means they were not "voted" in.
 - a. If you were voted in the church of which you are member, you are not in the Lord's church, the one to which he adds the saved.
 - b. People do not decide who has the right to be added to the one church; the Lord has done that and revealed it in the N.T, by which we are guided— our rule of faith and practice— our only rule of faith and practice in religion.
 - c. One "joins" the local church, but not the church universal, the body of the saved in the aggregate, Acts 9:26-28
2. The Lord adds the saved; only the saved; **ALL** the saved to the church, Acts 2:47b.
 - a. This means there are no saved outside the Lord's church!

- b. If you claim to have been saved and then joined the church of your choice—
 - it was not the Lord’s church you joined— – and you are not in the Lord’s church, nor among the saved, because you are not in the body of the saved.
 - c. Or if you claim to be saved and not a member of any church; then, obviously, your claim is false!
3. When we learn what they did to be saved, and how they learned it, we will know what the right way into the Lord’s church is and how to enter it, Acts 2:21, 36-47; Mark 16:15,16; Romans 1:16,17; 1:5; 6:16– 18; 16:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; 2 Timothy 2:10; Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:26-29.

C. Bible Examples of Some Who Were Added to the Church by the Lord—

- 1. The Corinthians
 - a. They heard the gospel, believed the gospel, were thus saved and added to the church by the Lord.
 - b. Acts 18:8-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2; 15:1, 2.
- 2. The Ephesians, Ephesians 2:8; 1:13, (Acts 18:24-19:5), 5:25-27.
- 3. Others: 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Acts 6:7; 11:19-26.
- 4. John 6:44,45.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Of Which Church Are You a Member?

- 1. The only one you can afford to be a member of is the Lord’s.
- 2. The only way you can be a member is to be added to it by the Lord himself.
- 3. The Lord adds only the saved, all the saved, when they are saved.

B. Are You Saved?

- 1. The only way a sinner can be saved is through the blood of Christ by means of his faith in and obedience to the gospel of Christ.
- 2. Why not believe and obey the gospel now and let the Lord save you and add you to his church, the church of his choice?
- 3. The same thing that saves you and makes you a Christian, a child of God, a brother with Jesus Christ, also makes you a member of the Lord’s church, his body, his family. See: Mark 16:15,16; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

– – *Edgar J. Dye*

Reconciled In One Body

Ephesians 2:16

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Some Important Questions:

1. Why the need of reconciliation?
2. By what means is this accomplished?
3. Where does this occur?
4. Who is to be reconciled?
5. What is this one body?

B. The New Testament Will Give Us The Answer—

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Why Did Man Need Reconciliation?

1. He was separated from God as a result of sin, Isaiah 59:1-4.
 - a. Sins that he committed, Ephesians 2:1-3.
 - b. Mankind- Both Jew and Gentile.
 - c. He needed forgiveness, Romans 1:18-29.
 - d. Sinned against God and fellowman, Matthew 22:34-30; Romans 3:9, 23
2. Both Jew and Gentile had privilege of accessing reconciliation, Ephesians 2:13-18.
 - a. The cross is named for what happened on that cross.
 - b. He died, shed His life blood, for all men, Hebrews 2:9; 9:14, 22; Romans 3:21-26; 5:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19.
 - c. Man appropriates the blessings of His shed blood.

B. Where Is Man Reconciled to God?

1. The same place where he receives forgiveness of sins and redemption through His blood, Ephesians 1:7-9.
2. In Christ we have:
 - a. All spiritual blessings (1:3).
 - b. His chosen ones (1:4).
 - c. Redemption through blood (1:7).
 - d. The forgiveness of sins (1:7).
 - e. Salvation (2 Tim. 2:10).
 - f. Son-ship of God (Galatians 3:26).
 - g. These are the results of reconciliation.

C. What Does the New Testament Identify as the Body?

1. "The church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2)
 - a. A Local Church "at Corinth"
 - (1) "Them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints"
 - (2) Sanctified- – Saints
 - b. The Universal Church- "every place"
 - (1) "With all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus. ..." (1:2)
 - (2) Called upon the name of the Lord- – saved
 - (3) 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18; 24.
2. Will only members of the Church of Christ be saved?
 - a. Some important questions:
 - (1) Who is the Judge?
 - (2) Where can I read his decision?
 - (3) Who is the Saviour of the saved?
 - (4) What does the Judge state about the church and the saved?
 - (5) You must ask and find the answer to these questions.
 - b. The record of the Judge- –
 - (1) Only *few* will be saved (Matthew 7:13-14; 22:14).
 - (2) *Many* will be lost (Matthew 7:22-23).
 - (3) Only those who believe (John 3:16) & obey Jesus (Hebrews 5:8-9).
 - (4) Unbelievers and disobedient are lost (John 8:24, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 - (5) The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47).
 - (6) Jesus will present the church to Himself (Ephesians 5:27).
 - (7) Jesus built *one* church (Ephesians 4:4).
 - (8) There is one and only one body, the church (Ephesians 1:23; 5:23).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Be Ye Reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20)

1. God has placed reconciliation in Christ that "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (5:21).
2. To be in Christ we must be "added to the church" (Acts 2:47) having been "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3, 4) and "into his body" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

B. Are You in Christ?

– – Elmer Moore

Baptized Into One Body

I Corinthians 12:13

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Heaven's Terminology—

1. It seems the vocabulary of heaven has been exhausted, if that were possible, in the use of terms, words, and expressions by which to impress upon us the place and the importance of the church of Christ.
2. Some of those terms:
 - a. Vineyard (Matthew 20:1)
 - b. Sheepfold (John 10:1)
 - c. Elect (2 Tim. 2:10).

B. These Terms Give Different Views of the One Church—

1. As a convened assembly, it is "the church," Matthew 16:18.
2. As a governed body of people, it is a Kingdom, John 18:36.
3. As a people dedicated to worshipping God it is called a building or temple in 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:19.
4. As a people of special possession it is a family, 1 Timothy 3:14-15.
5. It is also called a body, Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 20. The focus of this study.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. To Be In Christ Is to Be in The Church—

1. Notice that salvation is **in Christ**, Acts 4:12.
 - a. All the blessings of the gospel are realized **in Him**, Ephesians 1:3.
 - b. "If any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature," 2 Corinthians 5:17.
 - c. "**In Whom** we have redemption" Colossians.1:14, Galatians 1:7.
 - d. "Ye are complete **in Him**," Colossians 2:10.
 - e. "It pleased the Father that **in Him** should all fullness dwell," Colossians 1:19.
2. Seeing that all blessings are in Christ, how do we get into Him?
 - a. Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27 contain the answer.
 - b. The Holy Spirit's platform for unity (Ephesians 4:4-6), baptism is one item.
 - c. God's plan to "reconcile both (Jew & Gentile) in **one body**," Ephesians 2:16.
 - (1) Reconciled unto God in one body, and Jesus gave himself for it, Ephesians 5:25.

(2) "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," Ephesians 5:26.

(a) Not a washing with the Word, but a washing *with water* by the word.

(b) Clearly a reference to obedience in baptism to the word.

B. Five Prepositions: In, By, With, For, and Into—

1. Upon these we base five propositions:

2. Namely, we are baptized *in* something, *by* something, *with* something, *for* something, *into* something. All refer to water baptism.

a. *In* the name of the Lord, Acts 10:48; 19:5.

b. *By* the Spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 12:13.

c. *With* water, Matthew 3:11; Acts 10:47.

d. *For* the remission of sins, Acts 2:38.

e. *Into* Christ (Galatians 3:27), *into* one body (1 Corinthians 12:13).

3. Baptism puts one into Christ. But it also puts one into the *one body*.

a. That one body is the church, Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18.

b. Ephesians 4:4 says there is one body.

(1) So, to be in Christ is to be in the church, and vice versa.

(2) Salvation is in Christ (Acts 4:12), but one cannot be in Christ and not be in the church.

(3) If one is not in the church, he is not saved, for the Lord adds the saved to the church, Acts 2:47.

4. The Colossians were joined to Christ in baptism, Colossians 2:12.

a. And they were "complete **in Him**," Colossians 2:10.

b. But to be **in Him** is to be in the one body, the church. Therefore, they were complete in the church, Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:19.

C. Baptism And The Kingdom—

1. The church and the kingdom are one and the same, Matthew 16:18-19.

a. One cannot **see** (experience any state or condition) the kingdom without baptism, John 3:3-5.

b. The Lord's Supper was in the kingdom, Luke 22:18, 30.

c. however, Christians observed the supper in the church, 1 Corinthians 11:20-34; Acts 20:7.

d. The Colossians were in the Kingdom, Colossians 1:13.

e. They were in the kingdom by being "buried with Christ in baptism," Colossians 2:12.

2. Christ is **Head** of the church, **King** of the kingdom.

a. His prerogative to say what the church can do.

- b. All questions must be Christ answered; its problems Christ solved.
- c. Christ must reign over the kingdom to the end, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.
 - (1) He is both **Lord** and **Christ**, Ruler & Messiah, Acts 2:38.
 - (2) He is ruling now, and He is the Messiah now.
 - (3) At the end He will deliver the kingdom, church (the saved) up to God, 1 Corinthians 15:24.

III. CONCLUSION: You must see the importance of being baptized into the one body!

– – *A.W. Goff*

The Church of the Firstborn

Hebrews 12:18-24

I. INTRODUCTION:

1. Our text, with emphasis on vv.22,23, says, "For ye are not come unto...but ye are come unto...the ... church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven..."
2. Assuming the "church of the firstborn" refers to:
 - a. The church of the "firstborn ones", the church of Christ on earth.
 - b. The disciples of Christ, or God's children in the N.T. age.
 - c. The whole body of baptized believers.
3. And taking note of the fact that the epistle is written to certain Jewish converts to Christianity who were then living in Palestine, or to those making up the body of the Christ, the church belonging to Christ in Palestine, it raises the question in my mind: How can the church be said to be "come unto the church"?
4. The answer is to be found in the purpose for which the epistle was written and in what the author was trying to get them to understand, and as a consequence to prevent its stated purpose, and in how he argued his case before them.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Why the Epistle Was Written:

1. Early on their faith was strong enabling them to suffer persecution and endure it joyfully, Ch.10:32-34.
2. But by the time this epistle was written they had experienced a change in attitude and were in danger of apostasy. Evidenced as follows:
 - a. They were now neglectful, 2:3.
 - b. Dull of hearing, 5:11.
 - c. Still spiritually immature long after they should have grown to spiritual maturity, 5:12,13.
 - d. Failing to exercise their senses to discern both good and evil, 5:14.
 - e. Sluggish, 6:12.
 - f. In need of being taught the first principles of God's word, 5:12
 - g. Forsaking the assembling of themselves together, 10:25.
 - h. They were in danger of unbelief in falling away from the living God, 3:12.

- i. Drifting, 2:1.
 - j. Casting away their confidence, 10:35.
 - k. Being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, 3:13.
 - l. Being led astray by false teaching, 13:9.
 - m. Returning to the Jewish sacrificial system, 10:26-31.
 - n. Failing to obtain the grace of God, 12:15.
 - o. Missing the eternal rest, 3:12-4:3.
 - p. Some perhaps had already gone into complete and irreversible apostasy, 6:1-11; 10:26-31,39.
3. Thus, it was written to try to strengthen their faith and prevent their apostasy, their reverting to that which they had left behind when they were converted to Christ.

B. Theme of the Epistle: the Imminent Danger of Apostasy—

1. Key references, 2:1-4; 3:12-19; 4:1-3; 6:1-8; 10:25-39; 12:1-29.
2. The theme is developed by showing the superiority of Christ, the New Covenant, and Christianity, to which they had been converted, over Moses, the Old Testament, and the Jewish system, which they had left behind, but to which they were in danger of reverting.
3. Thus offering a series of scriptural reasons why they should remain faithful to Jesus and the N.T. system.

C. How the Author Developed His Case In View of Their Need—

-
1. Ch.1 – Jesus Christ, God’s Only Begotten Son, the heir of all things, and who sits at God own right hand, is his official spokesman in this dispensation, who being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
 2. Ch.2 – Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is also a man, the Son of man, the fleshly seed of Abraham, that in all things he might be made like unto his brethren, that through physical death he might destroy the devil who had the power of death, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; thus he was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man, in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise to bless all nations.
 3. Ch.3 – Jesus Christ is “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” and is superior to Moses, the great Lawgiver of the O.T., “inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is builded

by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house **as a servant**, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ **as a Son** over his own house, whose house **are we**, if we hold fast our confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," vv.1-6.

4. Ch.4 – A rest remains for the people of God, through Jesus as their great high priest, who labor in faith, hold fast their profession, and come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy and help in time of need.
5. Ch.5 – Jesus Christ is a priest called of God, called of God an high priest, who is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, who is the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey him. Cf. Mt.17:5; Ac.3:22,23; Heb.5:8,9.
6. Ch.6 – The danger of apostasy is emphasized with the assurance of the immutability of God's promise of salvation through Jesus Christ our high priest in fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise to bless all nations.
7. Ch.7 – Perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood of the law of Moses, which necessitated a change in the priesthood from the order of Aaron to the order of Melchisedec, of which Jesus was made a priest forever, which made of necessity a change also in the law, because under the law priests could come only from the tribe of Levi, and Jesus was of the tribe of Judah.

Since Jesus is a priest forever and has an unchangeable priesthood, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Cf. Rom.5:9,10; 8:34.

8. Ch.8 – Jesus both obtained a more excellent ministry than those of the law of Moses, and is the Mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises than the first covenant, the covenant made at Mt. Sinai with the Jews. The establishment of this better covenant was prophesied by Jer.31:31-34.
9. Ch.9 – Under the Law of Moses, the priestly functions in the first tabernacle, and the high priest's offerings in the second, the most holy place of the tabernacle, simply signified "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing," (v.8). But Christ, of the N.T., an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, entered in once into the holy place by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us; once he appear-ed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; he was once offered to bear the sins of many; he offered himself to purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God; for this cause he became the mediator of the N.T., that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance; he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

10. Ch.10 – The sacrifices of the law of Moses – animal sacrifices – could not take away sins (except in a relative sense), but the blood of Jesus Christ can and does (in the absolute sense). By his one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. He took away the first, that he may establish the second. We now have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. Thus they are urged to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, to hold fast the profession of our faith (hope) without wavering; warning against drawing back to perdition.
11. Ch.11 – They are encouraged by a long list of O.T. faithful who looked for that city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God, all of whom died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, embraced them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; these all remained faithful in spite of great persecution.
12. Ch.12 is a chapter which first encourages and admonishes to faithfulness in face of affliction and the danger of failing of the grace of God, vv.1-17.
 - a. Why believers should endure, vv.1-4.
 - (1) The example of those gone before, v.1.
 - (2) The example of Jesus Christ, the Author (Captain) and finisher (perfecter) of the faith, and his suffering for sin compared to our light suffering, vv.2-4.
 - b. Why believers experience hardship (There is purpose in their suffering), vv.5-11.
 - (1) It is chastening or discipline of God, vv.5-7.
 - (2) Because God loves them, v.6.
 - (3) Because they are God's children, not bastards, vv.7,8.
 - (4) To learn subjection to the Father, v.9.
 - (5) In order to "live," v.9.
 - (6) For their "profit" or "good," v.10.
 - (7) To be partakers of God's holiness, v.10.
 - (8) To produce the peaceable (peaceful) fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby, even though it is often painful, v.11.
 - (9) Because of persecution by evil men, v.4.
 - c. The admonition to faithfulness then follows in vv.12-14.
 - (1) "Wherefore" or "Therefore," which means since the discipline or chastening of the Lord and is even painful, believers should react in faith to make it beneficial, v.12.
 - (2) Figurative part of the admonition, vv.12,13.

- (a) "Lift up the hand that hang down (drooping hands)," v.12a.
- (b) "And the feeble knees (strength or steady you weak or trembling knees)," v.12b.
- (c) "And make straight paths for your feet," v.13a.
- (3) Literal part of the admonition, v.14.
 - (a) "Follow (strive for) peace with all men," v.14a.
 - (b) Qualified by "and holiness," v.14b.
 - (c) Why? "Without which no man shall see the Lord," 14c
- d. Why this admonition was given, vv.15-17.
 - (1) "Lest any man fail of the grace of God," v.15a.
 - (2) "Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled," v.15b.
 - (c) "Lest there be any fornicator (sexually immoral)," v.16a.
 - (d) "Or profane person (irreligious person)," v.16b.
- 13. Ch.12 then adds an all important final reminder of what they have come to in Jesus Christ and the New Covenant as opposed to what they had left behind in the old Jewish system to which they were in danger of reverting, vv.18-24.

D. "That to Which Ye Are Come": a Contrast Between that Which Was Done Away & that Which Remains—

- 1. Negative: "For ye are not come unto..." vv.18-21.
 - a. "The mount that might be touched," v.18a.
 - (1) To Mt. Sinai at the giving of the law of Moses to the Jews, Exo.19,20; Deut.5.
 - (2) To what is earthly, material or tangible.
 - b. "The mount that burned with fire," or a "blazing fire," v.18b.
 - (1) The Lord descended upon the mountain in a fire, Exo.19:18;
 - c. "Nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest," v.18c.
 - (1) Cf. Exo.19:16a: "thunder, and lightings, and a thick cloud upon the mount."
 - (2) Instead of "tempest," NIV has "storm," NEB has "whirlwind"
 - d. "And the sound of a trumpet," v.19a. Cf. Exo.19:16b,19a.
 - e. "And the voice of words," v.19b.
 - (1) "Which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more," v.19c.
 - (2) "For they could not endure that which was commanded," v.20
 - f. "And so terrible (terrifying) was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" ("I tremble with fear"), v.21.

- g. Lenski: "You have **not** come" – to what is here described = to remain with this as the final thing." (a completing, a perfecting, a fulfillment, accomplishment, or the event which verifies a promise).
- (1) The law made nothing perfect or complete, Heb.7:9.
 - (2) With this perfect tense the writer says: "You have not come to Sinai as the destination where you are to remain.
 - (3) As he taught in Gal.3, the Abrahamic promise to bless all nations in the seed of Abraham could not be fulfilled by the law, for the inheritance was not to be of the law because God gave it to Abraham by promise through his seed, which is Jesus Christ.
2. Positive: "But ye **are** come unto..." vv.22-24.
- a. "Mount Sion," v.22a.
 - (1) Cf. Isa.2:2-4: "In the last days...out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."
 - (2) They are reminded they are no longer to be connected with or to be part of the law that came from Sinai, but with the one which came from Zion.
 - b. "And unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," v.22a
 - (1) The city for which Abraham looked, Heb.11:10.
 - (2) The law made no provision for them to enter this city, Heb.9:8-10.
 - (3) That could come only through Christ, Heb.9:11-28.
 - c. "And to an innumerable hosts, to the general assembly of the angels," or "to myriads of angels in festal assembly," vv.22b,23a.
 - d. "And church of the firstborn," v.23b. (More later)
 - e. "And to God the Judge of all," v.23c.
 - (1) He will judge all through Jesus Christ, Jno.5:22,27.
 - f. "And to the spirits of just men made perfect," v.23d.
 - (1) To the faithful who "died in faith".
 - g. "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling (sprinkled blood), that speaketh better things than that of Abel," v.24. Cf. Heb.9:15-17; 11:4.
 - h. "But ye **are** come unto," v.22
 - (1) While the law of Moses, the former things which you left behind "made nothing perfect" (Heb.9:17), "the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God," (Heb.9:17b).
 - (2) To this "ye **are** come".
 - (3) By use of the same perfect tense as in v.18, where he said "you have **not** come," by contrast he now says, "But ye **are** come," i.e., **are still there ever to remain** to mount Zion.

- (a) When Israel came to Sinai, Israel had reached only a way station.
- (b) Sinai was not to be the completion of the testament and the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham.
- (c) The completion, the fulfillment, is Mount Zion and all that goes with Mount Zion.
- (4) His readers have come to the actual fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham through his seed Jesus Christ in the new covenant by means of their faith and obedience to the gospel of Christ.
- (5) Vv.18-24 must be read in the light of this history. This is how believers, those in the church can be said to have come unto the church. (Still assuming this is referring to the church)
- (6) Believing this, standing fast in this, they would avoid taking a fatal step back to a system that was temporary, provisional, and meant to lead them to Jesus for redemption from sin.

E. To Whom Does “The Church Of The Firstborn” Refer?

1. Negatively–
 - a. Not to Jesus, though he is called “the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15), and “the firstborn from the dead” (Col.1:18), and “the first begotten of the dead” (Rev.1:5).
 - b. Not to the angels, for they are mentioned separately in v.22.
 - c. Not to “the spirits of just men made perfect”, v.23.
2. Proof positive.
 - a. Both the context and definition of terms say it refers to the born again believers, the body of baptized believers, the new creatures in Christ, he heirs of God and joint of Christ, or the church.
 - b. Robert C. Welch, Commentary on Hebrews, p.211, commenting on “firstborn” in Heb.12:23: “The plural of the word in the Hebrew passage is determined by the words following it. ‘Who are enrolled in heaven,’ tells who the church of the firstborn are. ‘Are’ is plural number. From the original as well as from the context we can see the passage is saying that it is the church made up of the firstborn ones.” Ibid: “...the word **church** is a collective noun and the word **first-born** tells us the kind of people which make up the church.” (The notes in the following two points are mainly from the same source, p.212)
 - c. The historical significance of the term “**firstborn**” will help us understand its significance in our text.

- (1) It historically signifies there are certain ones who have a special place in God's direction and blessings.
 - (2) Under the O.T. the firstfruits of the harvest were to be offered to God in order for the rest of the harvest to be accepted of him.
 - (3) The firstling of every female animal was to be offered to God in order for the rest of the offspring to be acceptable.
 - (4) The firstborn male child belonged to God for his special service.
 - (5) Later God substituted the tribe of Levi for this special relationship, Num.3:44,45.
 - (6) Therefore, when Jesus is declared to be the firstborn from the dead it is an assurance to us that we too will be raised, and not necessarily that Jesus is the first ever to be raised, 1Cor.15:20-23.
- d. Thus, in its spiritual application, it's easy to see the significance of "**firstborn**" in our text – that it is of rank or privilege or special place or blessing, not precedence in time.
- (1) All who have been begotten by the gospel, baptized into Christ, and added to the church, hold this special relationship with God that was held by the firstling of the flock, by the firstborn male child and the acceptable substitute made by God in the tribe of Levi for his special service, and by the firstfruits of the harvest.
 - (2) In fact, the term to describe all of these things which especially were to be given to God is the general term "**first-fruits.**"
 - (3) It has its spiritual application to all those who become his children by being born again, by obedience to the gospel, the word of truth: "Of his who will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures," Jas.1:18.
 - (4) These "firstfruits of his creatures" are the "firstborn one" of Heb.12:23 who make up the church. Thus they are not **ordinary, or common**, they are his **own possession**, with special privileges and blessings.
 - (a) They are "chosen of God, and precious," 1Pet.2:4.
 - (b) They are "a peculiar people" (i.e., a people of his own possession; a people claimed by God as his own; his people as no others are), 1Pet.2:9.
 - (c) They are "God's elect, holy and beloved," Col.3:12.
 - (d) They are "called the sons of God," with God's love bestowed upon them as upon no other people, 1Jno.3:1.
 - (e) These "firstborn ones...are enrolled in heaven," Heb.12:23. Cf. Lk.10:20.
 - (f) Their "names are in the book of life," Phil.4:3; Cf. Rev.21:27.

- (g) If we stand born of God and by faith overcome the world, the Lord
“will not blot out his name out of the book of life,” 1Jno.5:4,5;
Rev.3:5.
- (h) The moment one is pronounced righteous by God (i.e., justified),
his name stands recorded in heaven.

III. CONCLUSION:

1. Heb.12:25-29 contain a final admonition to hear and heed the one who speaks from heaven.
2. In view of the preceding what are we commanded to do? V.25a.
3. Why:
 - a. It is impossible to escape his wrath if we refuse, v.25b.
 - b. By the power of his word he will remove (or change) the present world system, whereas the earth quaked at Sinai, at the end, he will shake both earth and heaven, vv.26,27.
4. A two-fold admonition based on the previous statements follows in vv.28,29.
 - a. Let us be grateful for having received God’s unmovable kingdom, v.28a.
 - b. Let us offer to God acceptable worship, vv.28b,29.
 - (1) How? “With reverence and godly fear,” v.28b.
 - (2) Why: “For our Lord is a consuming fire,” v.29: Cf. 10:27,31

– – *Edgar J. Dye*