

THE MIRROR TRANSLATION

August 2011

The Mirror Translation is a paraphrased translation from the original text. While strictly following the literal meaning of the original text, sentences have been constructed so that the larger meaning is continually emphasized by means of an expanded text. Some clarifying notes are included in italics.

This is a paraphrased study rather than a literal translation. While the detailed shades of meaning of every Greek word have been closely studied, this is done taking into account the consistent context of the entire chapter within the wider epistle, and bearing in mind the full context of Jesus and his finished work, which is what the message of the Bible is all about.

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Translated books: *(August 2011)*

Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, James.

Other portions translated: John 1, 1 Cor.1-9, 2 Peter 1, 1 John 1.

Afrikaans: Efesiërs.

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More about the Mirror Translation and Francois

The Bible is God's amazing conversation with man. Here we engage with God's words that find its crescendo in the revelation of His Son, Jesus Christ. The greatest joy is to discover and realize that you as an individual are included in this conversation. The Bible is all about Jesus, but everything about Jesus is about us. The message of the Bible reveals how God determined and succeeded to redeem his image and likeness in man. By inclining our ear to this message we find the life that flows from it and discover the favourable opinion of God towards mankind.

Thank God for the many translations of the Bible that we have available today; as each one brings a dimension of God's communication in a specific way. However, some translations make it difficult for the reader to truly discover the heart of the Father. It was the mission of Jesus to reveal the Father; studying scripture outside of the context of the finished work of Christ on man's behalf causes one to miss out on understanding and appreciating the Father's loving intention with humanity.

The Mirror Translation brings a dimension in which this revelation is facilitated in a way that makes it not only easy to understand, but also life changing in its powerful impact as the revelation dawns in one's heart.

The Mirror Translation of these key books and chapters of the Bible is in all probability one of the greatest contributions in the last few years to the broader church. It is imperative that every Christ follower discovers their true identity declared in Christ Jesus. The most liberating revelation is the fact that we have not only died together with Christ, but that we were also raised with Him in resurrection life. Even going beyond this is to discover that we are seated with Him in a new position in heavenly places, where we function from a position of authority and influence within this world. The premise of the good news of the Gospel is that we are not required to strive to attain something through personal achievement, but rather to discover who we already are and what we already have in Christ, as revealed in the glorious Scriptures.

May the Mirror Translation impact your life as much as it has mine, and may it facilitate your Spiritual journey to truly relocate your mind, living from the new vantage point of this glorious life in Christ.

ALAN PLATT the visionary leader of Doxa Deo - www.doxadeo.co.za

Why the Mirror Translation?

One day I had the pleasure of taking a very famous photographer on a scenic boat trip in the bay of our home town, Hermanus South Africa. I could tell by the size of his camera lenses and equipment that he was not your average tourist.

He explained to me that he needed to sell only two photographs a year to cover his budget! I felt privileged and was delighted to watch the artist at work. With fluent skill he would exchange lenses and film and go about his work.

After about two hours with the wonderful Southern Right whales we were on our way back to the harbour when we witnessed a flock of a few hundred Cape Cormorants. The next moment they all took off in flight; the rhythm and unison of their wings were like a ballet reflecting on the water.

Our photographer friend was happily clicking away when suddenly he shouted: "I've got it, I've got it!"

It was amazing to witness the joy in the man's face. He knew that he had captured a moment that would perhaps be worth more than all the equipment in the boat.

He immediately proceeded to pack away his expensive gear and carefully zipped up the waterproof bags.

I then watched him relax and sit back glowing with delight.

I couldn't help but reflect on what must have been the greatest moment when for the first time in the history of the universe the invisible Creator witnessed his image and likeness on display in fragile, tangible human form. And God saw everything that he had made and said, "Behold, it is very good! And entered into his rest!

The Sabbath was a celebration of perfection, rather than a break from a busy schedule to observe a religious ritual! Gen.1:31.

I became absorbed with the thought of photography; magic moments of light, shape, colour and movement arrested and stored on film or in memory to be reproduced in a million glossy magazines or framed in art galleries. These exhibitions would be appreciated in any culture or language, for countless years to come. I imagined how the artist would document these gems in a way that no virus would flaw the original detail; regardless of what would happen to the prints, whether they be framed, forgotten or destroyed.

Almost like words storing images of rare beauty to be repeated at any time in any language or thought.

In the beginning was the Word.

In one of her classic novels, *Gentian Hill*, Elizabeth Goudge paints the picture of little Stella listening to her stepfather reading from the Bible: "All through the Book, even in the dreadful parts, the language would now and then suddenly

affect her like an enchantment. The peculiarities of Father Sprigg's delivery worried her not at all. It was as though his gruff voice tossed the words roughly in the air separate particles of no great value, and immediately they fell again transmuted, like the music of a peal of bells or raindrops shot through with sunshine and vista beyond vista of incomparable beauty opened before the mind. It was a mystery to Stella that mere words could make this happen. She supposed the makers of these phrases had fashioned them to hold their visions as one makes a box to hold one's treasure, and Father Sprigg's voice was the key grating in the lock, so that the box could open and set them free. That transmutation in the air still remained as unexplainable as the sudden change in herself, when at the moment of the magical fall her dull mind became suddenly sparkling with wonder and her spirit leaped up inside her like a bird..."

I am fascinated with words, language intrigue me! Man is in essence a communicator and an interpreter of thoughts and meaning. We live in the most amazing age of a global communication explosion. Age old traditions, interpretations and philosophies are 'Googled' and questioned with deliberate scrutiny.

One wonders why Deity did not delay the spectacular event of the incarnation, his life, his parables, his miracles his love his death his resurrection, with two thousand years. Imagine we had the technology then to capture a glimpse of the Messiah on high definition multi mega pixel cameras and evidence his death and resurrection on undeniable tangible record.

Yet no technology still to be invented in the far future could possibly match the capacity and wonder of a single DNA strand, with its three billion individual characters mirror repeated seventy five trillion times, which is how many cells there are in one person. This dwarfs any terabyte into insignificance.

Their inaudible voice resonate the light of life!

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both. Proverbs 20:12. Mankind is the god-kind, designed to live by the complete word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

yet their sound transmits through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and there is nothing hid from its heat. Psalm 19:1-6.

"All flesh shall see it together!"

Isa 40:3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isa 40:4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; every crooked place shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth.

Isa 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

In the incarnation God deleted every definition of distance; every possible excuse man could have to feel separated or even neglected by God was removed in one day, through one sacrifice, once and for all!

Life documented in the Rock of ages, now inscribed on hearts of flesh! Hear the echo, feel the resonance! Christ is all and in all!

You are living Epistles, known and read by all men!

More than two thousand years ago the conversation that had begun before time was recorded, and sustained in fragments of thought throughout the ages, whispered in prophetic language, chiseled in stone and inscribed in human conscience and memory, became a man. Beyond the tablet of stone and the papyrus scroll or parchment roll human life has become the articulate voice of God. Jesus is the crescendo of God's conversation with humankind; he gives context and content to the authentic thought. Everything that God had in mind for man is voiced in him. Jesus is God's language. His name declares his mission. As Saviour of the world he truly redeemed the image and likeness of the invisible God and made him apparent again in human form. Hebrews 1:1-3. The destiny of the logos was not the printed page. A mirror can only reflect the object; likewise the purpose of the page was only to reflect the message, which is "Christ in you"; he completes the deepest longing of every human heart. The incarnation is the ultimate translation.

In the words of the song of Moses, "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distil as the dew, as the gentle rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb.

For I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Ascribe greatness to our God! "The Rock, his work is perfect; Deuteronomy 32:1-4.

Mankind has forgotten their Maker and in the process, their identity.

You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth. Deuteronomy 32:18.

Jesus did not come to begin a new religious movement called Christianity, his mandate was to reveal and redeem the image and likeness of God in human form.

While none of Jesus' brothers believed in him during the three years of his ministry, (John 7:5) his brother James discovers his own true identity when

Jesus appears to him after the resurrection (1 Cor 15:4-7) and declares, "It was his delightful resolve to give birth to us; we were conceived by the unveiled logic of God." James 1:18.

He continues, "By being a mere spectator in the audience you underestimate yourself (you come to an inferior conclusion about who you really are). You are God's poem. The difference between a mere spectator and a participator is that both of them hear the same voice and perceive in its message the face of their own genesis reflected as in a mirror; they realize that they are looking at themselves, but for the one it seems just too good to be true, he departs (back to his old way of seeing himself) never giving another thought to the man he saw there in the mirror.

The other one is mesmerized by what he sees; he is captivated by the effect of a law that frees man from the obligation to the old written code that restricted him to his own efforts and willpower. No distraction or contradiction can dim the impact of what he sees in that mirror concerning the law of perfect liberty (the law of faith) that now frees him to get on with the act of living the life (of his original design.) He finds a new spontaneous lifestyle; the poetry of practical living. (The law of perfect liberty is the image and likeness of God revealed in Christ, now redeemed in man as in a mirror. Look deep enough into that law of faith that you may see there in its perfection a portrait that so resembles the original that he becomes distinctly visible in the spirit of your mind and in the face of every man you behold. Let us briefly consider these two words that James use here, parakupto and parameno. I translated the word parakupto with mesmerized, from para, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection, and kupto, to bend, stoop down to view at close scrutiny, parameno, to remain under the influence. The word often translated, freedom, eleutheria, means without obligation.) James 1:23-25.

A word in any language can be most fascinating. Seed stores the life energy and the genetic detail of a plant species, in much the same way thoughts and concepts are concealed in words and language.

Individual words can greatly influence the meaning and interpretation of any conversation.

For many years deliberate as well as oblivious errors in translations were repeated and have empowered the religious institution of the day to influence, manipulate and even abuse masses of people.

Consider the word metanoia, consisting of two components, meta, together with, nous, mind, suggesting a radical mind shift. This word has been translated regularly as repentance, which is an old English word borrowed from the Latin, which means penance. This gross deception led to the perverted doctrines of indulgences, where naive ignorant people were led to believe that they need to

purchase favor from an angry god! Most cathedrals as well as many ministries were funded with guilt money!

English translations do little to help us understand what repentance truly is. Until Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation, the word metanoia was commonly used. For instance, Tertullian wrote in 198 A.D., "In Greek, metanoia is not a confession of sins but a change of mind." But despite this the Latin fathers begin to translate the word as "do penance" following the Roman Catholic teaching on doing penance in order to win God's favor.

In 1430, Lorenzo Valla, a Catholic theologian, began a critical study of Jerome's Latin Vulgate and Valla pointed out many mistakes that Jerome had made.

Sadly, the Vulgate-Only crowd of Valla's day forced him to renounce many of the changes that he noted needed in the Vulgate including the poor translation of metanoia.

The business of religion desperately needs paying and returning customers! They crucified Jesus for this reason; their entire system of keeping people dependant on their hierarchy was challenged and condemned!

Isa 55:8-11 gives meaning to metanoia: your thoughts were distanced from God's thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth, but just like the rain and the snow would cancel that distance and saturate the soil to awaken its seed, so shall my word be that proceeds from my mouth.

The Greek preposition meta means together with; together with implies another influence; this is where the gospel becomes so powerful since it appeals to our conscience to reason together with our original design... the authentic thought, the mind of God realized again; the distance caused by Adam's fall, heaven higher than earth, is cancelled in the incarnation.

Your belief in God does not define him; his faith in what he knows to be true about you defines you.

In Mark 11:22 Jesus says, 'have the faith of God'. Unfortunately most translations say, 'have faith in God'; there is a vast difference.

God's belief in you gives substance to your faith. Jesus is what God believes about you!

If our point of departure is not God's faith in the finished work of Christ we have no valid gospel to preach! If our faith is not sourced and sustained in him as the mirror image of God revealed and redeemed in us we are deceiving ourselves with yet another religious disguise called Christianity.

There are countless 'errors' bound in expensive leather books, sold over many years under the notion of "the authentic word of God!" The book is not the word of God; the message it contains certainly is. Millions of lives have been ignited, transformed and blessed by every translation imaginable, in spite of errors in text and translation.

I salute the effort and contribution of the multitudes of people who have painstakingly preserved, documented, gathered fragments, scrutinized and compiled, copied and translated texts over the centuries; then those who translated and literary lost their lives in order to introduce the text in a language that ordinary people could understand.

The Mirror Translation does not replace any other translation; it is simply a study tool that will assist the casual reader as well as the student of scripture to gain highlighted insight in the promise and the Person documented and revealed in the Bible as the mirror image of the likeness of God redeemed in man.

Jesus blows our definitions and doctrines apart with one statement: "Whatever you have known about God that is unlike me, is not God!"

If you have seen me you have seen the Father! This was his purpose, to resonate and redeem the Abba echo in every human heart!

"You have your heads in your Bibles constantly because you think you'll find eternal life there. But you miss the forest for the trees. These Scriptures are all about me!" John 5:39 The Message. See also Luke 24:27,44,45.

Jesus is what the Bible is all about, and man is what Jesus is all about!

Man is the expression of the greatest idea that ever was! John 5:39.

Every invention begins with an original thought. You are God's original thought. You are his initiative; the fruit of his creative inspiration, his intimate design and love-dream.

The first Hebrew word in the Bible, bereshet, literally means 'in the head.' You are his work of art; his poem says Paul in the Greek text of Eph 2:10. Man began in God.

When God imagined you he had a being in mind whose intimate friendship would intrigue him for eternity!

Every human life is equally valued and represented in Christ. He gives context and reference to our being as in a mirror; not as an example for us, but of us. The 'ugly duckling' saw reflected in the water the truth that freed the swan! Ps 23 says, "He leads me beside still waters, and restores my soul" or, "by the waters of reflection my soul remembers who I am!"

"The ends of the earth shall remember and return to the Lord!" Psalm 22:27.

He has come to introduce us to ourselves again, so that we may know, even as we have always been known! Jeremiah 1:5, 1 Corinthians 13:12.

Even illiterate Peter learns to write, he declares, "we were born anew by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3.

I love his motivation, "I make it my business to thoroughly arouse you until these truths become permanently molded in your memory." 2 Peter 1:13.

"We are not con-artists, fabricating fictions and fables to add weight to our account of his majestic appearance; with our own eyes we witnessed the powerful display of the illuminate presence of Jesus the Master of the Christ life. (His face shone like the sun, even his raiment were radiant white. Mat.17)

He was spectacularly endorsed by God the Father in the highest honor and glory. God's majestic voice announced, "This is the son of my delight; he has my total approval."

For John, James and I the prophetic word is fulfilled beyond doubt; we heard this voice loud and clear from the heavenly realm while we were with Jesus in that sacred moment on the mountain.

For us the appearing of the Messiah is no longer a future promise, but a fulfilled reality. Now it is your turn to have more than a second hand, hear-say testimony; take my word as one would take a lamp at night; the day is about to dawn for you in your own understanding. When the morning star appears, you no longer need the lamp; this will happen shortly on the horizon of your own hearts..." 2 Pet 1:16-19.

Now we all with new understanding see ourselves in him as in a mirror; thus we are changed from an inferior mindset to the revealed opinion of our true Origin. 2 Corinthians 3:18

May this translation ignite many hearts with the light of life!
Francois du Toit ~ August 2011

Understanding the Bible

The Incarnation Code

The Bible is a dangerous book! It has confused and divided more people than any other document. Yet its profound and simple message continues to appeal, overwhelm and transform the lives of multitudes of men and women of any age or culture. It is still the best seller on the planet.

If it is such a dangerous document, how does one approach the book? What is the key that unlocks its mystery message?

The romance of the ages is revealed here. The heart of the Lover, our Maker is hidden in Scripture and uncovered in the pages of this book. He says in Isaiah 65:1 "I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'"

What would it be that attracts God to engage with man?

Man began in God.

Man is the greatest idea that God had ever had!

It is not our brief history on planet earth that introduces us to God. He has always known us.

We are not the invention of our parents! Maybe your arrival was a big surprise to them, but according to Jeremiah 1:5 God knew you before he formed you in your mother's womb!

The Bible records how the invisible engineer of the universe found expression of his image and likeness in visible form in human life!

When God imagined you, he thought of you on equal terms as he would of himself; a being whose intimate friendship would intrigue him for eternity. Man would be partner in God's triune oneness! His image and likeness unmasked in human life.

Jesus says in John 10:30: "I and the Father are one." And again in John 14:20: "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

God has found us in Christ before he lost us in Adam! He associated us in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)

He has always known us; now in Christ he invites us to know ourselves even as we have always been known! (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Jesus Christ is the context and meaning of Scripture; his work of redeeming the image and likeness of God in man, is what the Bible is all about! (Colossians 1:13-15)

The whole Bible is about Jesus and Jesus is all about you! This makes the Bible the most relevant book. Jesus is God's mind made up about man. The meaning of his name declares our salvation.

Initially the prophetic shadow of the Old Testament introduces us to the Promise. He is the Messiah-Christ, the Incarnate Word.

He represents the entire human race. In the economy of God, Jesus mirrors humanity. The heart dream of God realized in the redemption of man; in one man, through one act of righteousness, in a single sacrifice! (Romans 5:18)

The conclusion is clear: it took just one offence to condemn mankind; one act of righteousness declares the same mankind innocent.

"We see then, that as one act of sin exposed the whole race of men to God's judgement and condemnation, so one act of perfect righteousness presents all men freely acquitted in the sight of God!" (Romans 5:19 Phillips)

The disobedience of the one man exhibits humanity as sinners, the obedience of another man exhibits humanity as righteous.

(Greek, *kathistemi*, to cause to be, to set up, to exhibit.) Mirror Bible

Act 10:28: God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

When Jesus joins the two confused disciples on their way back from Jerusalem he introduces himself to them through the eyes of Scripture:

Luke 24:27: "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Also in Luke 24:44 he does the same when he appears to his disciples: "He said to them, 'These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.'"

Luke 24:45: Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Philip joins the chariot of the chief treasurer and asks him, "Sir, do you understand what you are reading?"

It is possible to read the right book and get the wrong message!

Acts 8:35: Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news of Jesus.

The destiny of the Logos was not intended to be caged in a book or a doctrine but to be documented and unveiled in human life! Human life is the most articulate voice of Scripture.

Jesus is God's language; mankind is his audience. (Hebrews 1:1-3)

Diligent research and study is not the key to understanding the Scriptures; Jesus says, "You study and search the Scriptures thinking that in them you will find eternal life, but if you miss me, you miss the point.

The Message translation reads, "You have your heads in your Bibles constantly because you think you'll find eternal life there. But you miss the forest for the trees. These Scriptures are all about me!" (John 5:39)

Jesus is the context of Scripture. (Isaiah 53:4, 5)

*Long before the first line of Scripture
was penned on papyrus scroll,
the Word, unwritten,
existed as the mind of God.
Before the books were gathered
collated as sacred text,
the Word, intangible; invisible,
was planning, was ordering
the ages that were to come.
This Word predates the Bible,
this Word predates creation,
this Word is alive and active
and speaking still today.*

— Andre Rabe

John, now more than ninety years old, finally learns to write; unlike Mathew and Luke he has no concern with the genealogies that point to the natural lineage of the Messiah; he introduces us to a beginning before Abraham or even Adam was, he says in John 1:1 To go back to the very beginning is to find the Word already present there. The Logic of God defines the only possible place where humankind can trace or locate their genesis. The Word is I am; God's eternal eloquence echoes and concludes in him. The Word equals God. (*The Word was 'with' God; here John uses the Greek preposition pros, which indicates direction; forward to; that is toward the destination of the relation. Face to face. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return, having accomplished its purpose (cancelling distance and saturating the earth with heaven's blessing; the incarnation), so shall my word be that proceeds from my mouth." Isa 55:10,11.*

Three times in this sentence John uses the imperfect of eimi, namely en, to be, which conveys no idea of origin for God or for the Logos, but simply continuous existence. Quite a different verb egeneto, became, appears in Joh.1:14 for the beginning of the Incarnation of the Logos. See the distinction sharply drawn in Joh.8:58 "before Abraham was born (genesthai from egeneto) I am" (eimi, timeless existence.))

John 1:2 The beginning mirrors the Word face to face with God. *(Nothing that is witnessed in the Word distracts from who God is. "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.")*

John 1:3 The Logos is the source; everything commences in him. He remains the exclusive Parent reference to their genesis. There is nothing original, except the Word!

John 1:4 His life is the light that defines our lives. *(In his life man discovers the light of life.)*

John 1:5 The darkness was pierced and could not comprehend or diminish this light. *(Darkness represents man's ignorance about their redeemed identity and innocence. Isa.9:2-4, Isa.60:1-3, Eph.3:18, Col 1:13-15.)*

John 1:9 A new day for humanity has come. The authentic light of life that illuminates everyone was about to dawn in the world! *(This day would begin our calendar and record the fact that human history would forever be divided into before and after Christ. The incarnation would make the image of God visible in human form. In him who is the blueprint of our lives there is more than enough light to displace the darkness in every human life. He is the true light that enlightens every man!)*

John 1:10 Although he was no stranger to the world; he always was there and is himself the author of all things, but somehow no one took any notice!

John 1:11 It was not as though he arrived on a foreign planet; he came to his own, yet his own did not recognize him. *(Ps.24:1)*

John 1:12 But to everyone who realizes their association in him, convinced that he is their original life, in them he confirms that we are indeed his offspring, begotten of him. *(Gr. lambano, comprehend, grasp, identify with. This word suggests that even though he came to his own, there are those who do not grasp their true origin revealed in him, and like the many Pharisees they behave like children of a foreign father, the father of lies. Neither God's legitimate fatherhood of man nor his ownership is in question; man's indifference to his true origin is the problem. This is what the gospel addresses with utmost clarity in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to introduce man to himself again; humanity has forgotten what manner of man he is by design! James 1:24, Deut*

32:18, Ps 22:27. "He has come to give us understanding to know him who is true and to realize that we are in him who is true." 1 John 5:20. The word, exousia, traditionally translated 'power' to become, is a compound word, ek, always denoting origin or source and eimi, I am, thus out of I am! This gives legality and authority to our sonship! "He has given," Gr. didomi, in this case to give something to someone that already belongs to them, thus to return, the fact that they already are his own, born from above, they have their beginning and their being in him is now confirmed in their realizing it! See Eph.3:18, "empowered to comprehend." These same two words are used, Gr. exousia, ek + eimi and lambano, comprehend, grasp, identify with. Msg. "He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves.")

John 1:13 These are they who discover their genesis in God beyond their natural conception! Man began in God. We are not the invention of our parents!

John 1:14 Suddenly the invisible eternal Word takes on visible form! The Incarnation! In him, and now confirmed in us! The most accurate tangible display of God's eternal thought finds expression in human life! The Word became a human being; we are his address; he resides in us! He captivates our gaze! The glory we see there is not a religious replica; he is the authentic monogenes (begotten only by the Father and not by the flesh; in him we recognize our true beginning). The Glory (that Adam lost,) returns in fullness! Only grace can communicate truth in such complete context! (In him we discover that we are not here by chance or accident, or by the desire of an earthly parent, neither are we the product of a mere physical conception; we exist by the expression of God's desire to reveal himself in the flesh; his eternal invisible Word, his Spirit-thought, became flesh. Gr. ginomai be born; theaomai to gaze upon, to perceive. We saw his glory, doxa, the display of his opinion, the glory as of the original, authentic begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The original mind, or opinion of God, preserved and now revealed in Christ. He is both the 'only begotten', monogenes, as in the authentic original mould, as well as the first born from the dead. Col.1:18, 1Pet.1:3. He is the revelation of our completeness. 'And of his fullness have we all received, grace against grace.' Greek garin anti garitos, grace undeserved. "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. He who is in the bosom of the Father, the only original, authentic begotten of the Father, he is our guide who accurately declares and interprets the invisible God within us." Interesting that the revelation of the Incarnation in v 14 doesn't follow v 2 or 3, but v 12 and 13! Gen.1:26 redeemed!)

John 1:15 John the Baptist raised his voice to announce emphatically that Jesus was what his ministry and prophetic message was all about. He declared that Jesus, though younger than him, ranks above him and was "born" before him, since he always was!

John 1:16 He is the source of our completeness. Grace against grace! (*Grace prevailed against the tide of darkness due to Adam's fall. His fullness is the source of all that grace communicates as our portion, against all the odds!*)

John 1:17 Against the stark backdrop of the law; with Moses representing the condemned state of mankind, Jesus Christ unveils grace and truth! (*He is the life of our design redeemed in human form*).

John 1:18 Until this moment God remained invisible to man; now the authentic begotten son, (*monogenes, begotten only of God*) the blueprint of man's design who represents the innermost being of God, the son who is in the bosom of the father, brings him into full view! He is the official authority qualified to announce God! (*Greek, eksesato, from ek, preposition denoting source, and hegeomai, official authority.*) He is our guide who accurately declares and interprets the invisible God within us.

The mission of Jesus was not to start the Christian religion or to win protest votes against Moses, Mohammed, or Buddha. His mandate was twofold: first to reveal and then to redeem the blueprint image and likeness of the invisible God in human form!

Instead of an instruction manual, the Bible is a mirror revealing our redeemed identity.

We are not window-shopping the promises; we are gazing in the mirror of our true likeness!

Any striving to become more like Jesus through personal devotion and diligence, no matter how sincere, bears the same fruit of failure and guilt.

Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to free the world. Religion has majored on guilt and will-power driven sentiment which engaged man in futile efforts to save and improve himself.

The Bible was never meant to be a manual; its message is all about Emmanuel! God with us! Every definition of distance is cancelled in Christ. (Isaiah 40:4, 5)

When Scripture is interpreted as a mere instruction manual for moral behaviour, its message is veiled!

2 Corinthians 3:15: "Whenever Moses is read the veil remains."

John 1:17: "Moses represents the law; Jesus reveals grace and truth. It is only in the mirror where the miracle transformation takes place, and the blueprint image of our Maker is again realized in us! (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Jesus did not come as an example for us, but of us. Beholding Jesus in any other way, sentimentally or religiously will bring no lasting change. Now in Christ we may know ourselves, even as we have always been known;

1 Corinthians 13:12: This is the truth that frees us to live the life of our design.

John 8:32: John writes that this is not a new message, it is the word that was from the beginning, and yet it is new, he says, "for that which is true in him, is equally true in us!"

1 John 2:7, 8. "We know that the son of God has come, and he has given us understanding to know him who is true; and this is the understanding, that we are in him who is true!"

1 John 5:20: Paul brands his gospel with the words, grace and peace in order to distinguish the message of the revelation of the finished work of Christ from the law of Moses. It is a matter of, grace vs. reward and peace vs. striving, guilt and condemnation. Grace and peace express the sum total of every beneficial purpose of God towards us realized in Christ.

To discover yourself in the mirror is the key that unlocks the door to divine encounter. Tangible beyond touch the genesis of our being is unveiled. Our most intimate and urgent quest are satisfied here.

"And we all, with new understanding, see ourselves in him as in a mirror; thus we are changed from an inferior mindset to the revealed opinion of our true Origin." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

As much as the world of science depends upon the senses to perceive, measure and calculate the facts and then to form reliable conclusion, faith perceives the reality of God and extends the evidence to reason. Faith is to the spirit what your senses are to your body. Faith is not airy-fairy; Jesus Christ is the substance of faith. He is both the author and conclusion of our faith. He is the accurate measure of the blueprint of our design. (Ephesians 4:7)

The gift of Christ gives dimension to grace and defines our individual value. (Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.) *Mirror Bible*

This is the mystery that was hidden for ages and generations; it is Christ in you! (Colossians 1:27)

He is not hiding in history or in outer space, or in the future! He is I am in you!

Anticipate the revelation of Christ within you. There is no greater reason for studying Scripture!

Jesus did not point to the sky when he gave the address of the kingdom of God; he said, "The kingdom of God is within you!" (Luke 17:21)

In Matthew 13:44 he says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in an agricultural field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

There is infinitely more to the field than what meets the eye! Jesus has come to unveil the real value of the field! Human life can never again be underestimated! The treasure exceeds any agricultural value that any harvest could possibly yield! The treasure defines the field!

Paul says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels!" (2 Corinthians 4:7), but while in our unbelief we do not agree with God about us, our minds are veiled and we do not realise the image of God unveiled in Christ as in a mirror. (2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:4)

We are not designed to live by bread alone. Bread represents the harvest of our own labour. He challenges us no longer to look for the wrong harvest but to lift up our eyes and see the harvest that is already ripe! The seed in the fruit matches the seed that was sown! The single grain of wheat did not abide alone! (John 12: 24, John 4:35, John 2:19-21, Hosea 6:2, Ephesians 2:5)

"From now on, we no longer know any man after the flesh!" (2 Corinthians 5:14, 16; Titus 3:2-5)

JOHN'S ENCOUNTER OF JESUS

Introduction

LIFE DAWNED ~ HOSANNAH! Salvation NOW!

Sixty years after he last saw Jesus in the flesh, John, now in his nineties, reflects on the mystery that was revealed which transformed his life from an illiterate fisherman to a saint. He spent most of the latter part of his life (*about 30 years*) living in Asia Minor and more specifically at Ephesus; much of Paul's emphasis in teaching therefore reflects in John's writing. This he did either from Ephesus or from the Isle of Pathmos where he spent a few years in exile. (*Compare Col.1:15-17, John 1:1-3,16-17, 1Jn 5:20, "He has given us understanding to know him who is true and we are in him who is true!"*) None of the other disciples better captured the conclusion of the mission of Christ than what John did in John 14:20, "In that day you will know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you!"

He has no desire to outwit the others in giving an even more accurate historic account of Christ! The life that was manifest within his sacred gaze and now tangible embrace is a fellowship of the highest order! He must write, he must extend this reality to the next generations! "I am writing this to complete your joy!" 1 Jhn.1:4.

Unlike Mathew and Luke who wrote 30 years prior to John, he did not bother to locate Jesus in the setting of his natural lineage.

Instead he declares, "In the beginning was the Word!" Before history was ever recorded the Word was!

Man pre-existed in the Logic of God! He understands that the Word was both the eternal source and destiny of all things and that nothing could ever reduce or confine the Word to an isolated island experience, neither could the Word be trapped in human doctrine or tradition. No inferior translation or interpretation could compromise God's original intent.

The authentic integrity of God's thought would forever be preserved and celebrated in the incarnation; human life would be the uninterrupted future of the Word.

Notice how often John uses the word, *egeneto*, from *ginomai*, meaning birth or origin in the first chapter: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was towards God, and the Word was God. All things came into being (*Gr.ginomai, from genos, to give birth to*) through him; and nothing has any authentic existence outside of their origin (*Gr.ginomai*) in him. In him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not comprehend it. (*Greek: kata+lambano, to seize upon, to grasp*) The true light that enlightens every man has come into the world. The world was made (*Gr.ginomai*) through him, yet the world knew him not; he came to his own, and his own received him not. (*Gr.para+lambano,to grasp, associate with*) But to everyone who by faith, comprehends him to be their true origin, (*Gr.lambano, comprehend, grasp, identify with*) in them he confirms the integrity of their son-

ship, (*Gr.didomi, in this case to give something to someone that already belongs to them, thus to return*) the fact that they already are is own, born from above, they have their beginning and their being in him!' (*Gr.eksousia, integrity, legality, authority, legal grounds.*) Jesus has come to reveal man's true sonship; he vindicated our origin and design. "And the Word became (*Gr.ginomai*) flesh and now tabernacles in us!" (*Not 'amongst us' as many translations would suggest!*) John 1:1-14. "We are not preaching a new doctrine, but the word that was from the beginning; yet it is new in that what is true in him is equally true in us!" 1 John 2:7+8. In him we discover that we are not here by chance or accident, or by the desire of an earthly parent, neither are we the product of a mere physical conception; we exist by the expression of God's desire to reveal himself in the flesh. As God said to Jeremiah, "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb." Jer 1:5. His eternal, invisible Word, his Spirit-thought, became (*Gr.ginomai, be born*) flesh. James says: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth...if any man hears this word, he sees the face of his birth as in a mirror." Jm.1:17,18,23. Now we may know even as we have always been known! 1 Cor 13:12.

God never compromised his original thought. "The word became flesh and has taken up residence (*tabernacled*) in us, and we gazed with wonder and amazement upon the mystery of our inclusion in him; (*theaomai to gaze upon, to perceive*). We saw his glory (*Greek, doxa, the display of his opinion*); the glory as of the original, authentic begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (*The original mind, or opinion of God, preserved and now revealed in Christ. He is both the 'only begotten', monogenes, as in the authentic original mould, as well as the first born from the dead. Col.1:18, 1Pet.1:3*) He is the revelation of our completeness. "Of his fullness have we all received, grace against grace." (*Gr.garin anti garitos, grace undeserved*) "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. He who is in the bosom of the Father, the only (*original, authentic*) begotten of the Father, he is our guide who accurately declares and interprets the invisible God within us." Jn.1:1-5, 9-14,16-18. "The Word that was from the beginning, what initial reports concerning him have reached our ears, what we indeed bore witness to with our own eyes to the point that we became irresistibly attracted to him; what it was that met our gaze and the touch of our hands, yes, life dawned! (*Gr.psallo,to touch the string of a musical instrument, thus resonance*) The same life that was with the Father from the beginning, now dawned on us! The infinite life of the Father became visible before our eyes in a human person! This life now finds expression in a fellowship union with the Father and the son that is without limit or interruption. In all these years since the ascension of Jesus, John continues to enjoy unhindered friendship with God and desires to extend this same fellowship through his writing to every believer, "so that joy may be yours in full measure." 1 John 1:1,2,4.

"Long before the first line of scripture was penned on papyrus scroll, the Word, unwritten,

existed as the mind of God.
Before the books were gathered
collated as sacred text,
the Word, intangible; invisible,
was planning, was ordering
the ages that were to come.
This Word predates the Bible,
this Word predates creation,
this Word is alive and active
and speaking still today." Andre Rabe

Man comes from above. "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb." (*Jer 1:5.*) In our make-up we are the god-kind with an appetite for more than what bread and the senses could satisfy us with. Jesus proves that we come from above. It would not be possible for man to access the heavenly sphere if man did not originate from there; the son of man is in heavenly places in the bosom of his Father whilst on this planet in an earthly body. Jhn3:13. His death and resurrection prepared a place for us so that we may be where he is! The fullness of Deity bodily indwells him! Col 2:9. Jesus said to Nicodemus unless you're born from above, anouthen (*meaning unless you originate from above*), you could not access heavenly realities; you would have no appetite for heavenly things! Jn 3:3. John records how Jesus defended his message when he declared to the disgust of the religious leaders, "I and the Father are one!" John 10:30. He quoted Ps 84, "I say you are gods, all of you are sons of the Most High!"

Man began in God; we are not the invention of our parents!
Our original life was redeemed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, when in the economy of God the human race was represented; "one died for all, therefore all have died!" 2 Cor.5:14-17; we died in his death and we were raised to newness of life in his resurrection! Hos.6:2, Eph.2:5, 1 Pet 1:3 "We were born anew when Jesus was raised from the dead!"

CHAPTER 1

1:1 To go back to the very beginning is to find the Word already present there. The Logic of God defines the only possible place where humankind can trace their genesis. The Word is I am; God's eternal eloquence echoes and concludes in him. The Word equals God. (*The Word was 'with' God; here John uses the Greek preposition **pros**, which indicates direction; forward to; that is toward the destination of the relation. Face to face. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return, having accomplished its purpose (cancelling distance and saturating the earth with heaven's blessing; the incarnation), so shall my word be that proceeds from my mouth."* Isa 55:10,11.

*Three times in this sentence John uses the imperfect of **eimi**, namely **en**, to be, which conveys no idea of origin for God or for the Logos, but simply continuous*

existence. Quite a different verb *egeneto*, became, appears in Joh.1:14 for the beginning of the Incarnation of the Logos. See the distinction sharply drawn in Joh.8:58 "before Abraham was born (*genesthai* from *egeneto*) I am" (*eimi*, timeless existence.)

1:2 The beginning mirrors the Word face to face with God. (*Nothing that is witnessed in the Word distracts from who God is. "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."*)

1:3 The Logos is the source; everything commences in him. He remains the exclusive Parent reference to their genesis. There is nothing original, except the Word!

1:4 His life is the light that defines our lives. (*In his life man discovers the light of life.*)

1:5 The darkness was pierced and could not comprehend or diminish this light. (*Darkness represents man's ignorance about their redeemed identity and innocence. Isa.9:2-4, Isa.60:1-3, Eph.3:18, Col 1:13-15.*)

1:6 Then there was this man John (*Jesus' cousin*) commissioned by God;

1:7 his mission was to draw attention to the light of their lives so that what they witnessed in him would cause them to believe (*in their original life redeemed again*).

1:8 His ministry was not to distract from the light, as if he himself was the light but rather to point out the light Source.

1:9 A new day for humanity has come. The authentic light of life that illuminates everyone was about to dawn in the world! (*This day would begin our calendar and record the fact that human history would forever be divided into before and after Christ. The incarnation would make the image of God visible in human form. In him who is the blueprint of our lives there is more than enough light to displace the darkness in every human life. He is the true light that enlightens every man!*)

1:10 Although he was no stranger to the world; he always was there and is himself the author of all things, but somehow no one took any notice!

1:11 It was not as though he arrived on a foreign planet; he came to his own, yet his own did not recognize him. (*Ps.24:1*)

1:12 But to everyone who realizes their association in him, convinced that he is their original life, in them he confirms that we are indeed his offspring, begotten of him. (*Gr. lambano, comprehend, grasp, identify with. This word*

*suggests that even though he came to his own, there are those who do not grasp their true origin revealed in him, and like the many Pharisees they behave like children of a foreign father, the father of lies. Neither God's legitimate fatherhood of man nor his ownership is in question; man's indifference to his true origin is the problem. This is what the gospel addresses with utmost clarity in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to introduce man to himself again; humanity has forgotten what manner of man he is by design! James 1:24, Deut 32:18, Ps 22:27. "He has come to give us understanding to know him who is true and to realize that we are in him who is true." 1 John 5:20. The word, **exousia**, traditionally translated 'power' to become, is a compound word, **ek**, always denoting origin or source and **eimi**, I am, thus out of I am! This gives legality and authority to our sonship! "He has given," Gr. **didomi**, in this case to give something to someone that already belongs to them, thus to return, the fact that they already are his own, born from above, they have their beginning and their being in him is now confirmed in their realizing it! See Eph.3:18, "empowered to comprehend." These same two words are used, Gr. **exousia**, **ek** + **eimi** and **lambano**, comprehend, grasp, identify with. Msg. "He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves.")*

1:13 These are they who discover their genesis in God beyond their natural conception! Man began in God. We are not the invention of our parents!

1:14 Suddenly the invisible eternal Word takes on visible form! The Incarnation! In him, and now confirmed in us! The most accurate tangible display of God's eternal thought finds expression in human life! The Word became a human being; we are his address; he resides in us! He captivates our gaze! The glory we see there is not a religious replica; he is the authentic **monogenes** (*begotten only by the Father and not by the flesh; in him we recognize our true beginning*). The Glory (*that Adam lost,*) returns in fullness! Only grace can communicate truth in such complete context! (*In him we discover that we are not here by chance or accident, or by the desire of an earthly parent, neither are we the product of a mere physical conception; we exist by the expression of God's desire to reveal himself in the flesh; his eternal invisible Word, his Spirit-thought, became flesh. Gr. **ginomai** be born; **theaomai** to gaze upon, to perceive. We saw his glory, **doxa**, the display of his opinion, the glory as of the original, authentic begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The original mind, or opinion of God, preserved and now revealed in Christ. He is both the 'only begotten', **monogenes**, as in the authentic original mould, as well as the first born from the dead. Col.1:18, 1Pet.1:3. He is the revelation of our completeness. 'And of his fullness have we all received, grace against grace.' Greek **garin anti garitos**, grace undeserved. "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. He who is in the bosom of the Father, the only **original, authentic** begotten of the Father, he is our guide who accurately declares and interprets the invisible God within us." Interesting that the revelation of the Incarnation in v 14 doesn't follow v 2 or 3, but v 12 and 13! Gen.1:26 redeemed!)*

1:15 John the Baptist raised his voice to announce emphatically that Jesus was what his ministry and prophetic message was all about. He declared that Jesus, though younger than him, ranks above him and was "born" before him, since he always was!

1:16 He is the source of our completeness. Grace against grace! (*Grace prevailed against the tide of darkness due to Adam's fall. His fullness is the source of all that grace communicates as our portion, against all the odds!*)

1:17 Against the stark backdrop of the law; with Moses representing the condemned state of mankind, Jesus Christ unveils grace and truth! (*He is the life of our design redeemed in human form*).

1:18 Until this moment God remained invisible to man; now the authentic begotten son, (*monogenes, begotten only of God*) the blueprint of man's design who represents the innermost being of God, the son who is in the bosom of the father, brings him into full view! He is the official authority qualified to announce God! (*Greek, eksesto, from ek, preposition denoting source, and hegeomai, official authority.*) He is our guide who accurately declares and interprets the invisible God within us.

1:19 -

1:20 -

1:21 -

1:22 -

1:23 I echo Isaiah! The same voice, the same urgency! I articulate the prophetic voice, crying in the wilderness, "At once! Level the highway of the Lord!" (*His appearance is apparent, without delay!*)

ROMANS REVEALED

Introduction

The free eagle

During our honeymoon in January 1979 in the Blyderiver Canyons in Mpumalanga South Africa, Lydia and I met a nature conservation officer who told us of a fascinating incident when they released a Black Eagle that was in the Pretoria zoo for ten years. This happened about a week prior to our visit. She told us how excited they were when the bird finally arrived in its wooden crate. They knew that this was the day for this eagle to be freed and to return to the life of its design. But their excitement soon turned to frustration when, after opening the cage, the bird refused to fly! The ten years of caged life seemed to have trapped its mind in an invisible enclosure! How could they get the eagle to realise that it was indeed free? No amount of prompting and prodding seemed to help. Then, after some hours the bird suddenly looked up, and in the distance they heard the call of another eagle; this was the moment of true freedom! Immediately the zoo-eagle took off in flight! No flying lessons are required when truth is realised!

This dramatic story left a deep impression on my mind. I knew that in the light of Paul's revelation of the good news, we are left with one urgent priority, which is to announce to the nations with bold confidence the truth about their original identity and mirror reflect the integrity of their redeemed innocence.

This gives such clarity and content to the fact that Jesus came to the planet not to upgrade the cage of Jewish or any other religion by starting a new brand called, Christianity; but to be the incarnate voice of the likeness and image of God in human form! He came to reveal and redeem the image of God in us! His mission was to mirror the blueprint of our design, not as an example for us but of us! Col.1:15, 2:9,10.

In God's faith mankind is associated in Christ even before the foundation of the world. Jesus died humanity's death and when the stone was rolled away, we were raised together with him! Every human life is fully represented in him! Hosea 6:2.

If the gospel is not the voice of the free eagle it is not the gospel.

Paul's Gospel

In this pivotal book Paul immediately introduces himself and his intention:

"My mandate and message is to announce the goodness of God to mankind. This message is what the Scriptures are all about. It remains the central prophetic theme and content of inspired writing." Rom 1:1,2

Scripture could never again be interpreted in any other way! The gospel of the success of the cross alone gives content and context to the Bible.

There is nothing to be ashamed about; this message unveils how God got it right to rescue man from the effect of what Adam did wrong! Rom 1:16,17.

The dynamic of the gospel is the revelation of God's faith as the only valid basis of our belief. (*From faith to faith*) Paul quotes Habakkuk who prophetically introduced a new era when he realized that righteousness will be founded in

what God believes and not in man's clumsy ability to obey the law. From now on righteousness by faith defines life! Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Rom 3:27.

Instead of reading the curse when disaster strikes, Habakkuk realizes that the Promise outdates performance as the basis to man's acquittal! Deut 28 would no longer be the motivation or the measure of right or wrong behavior! "Though the fig tree do not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread upon my high places. Hab 3:17 - 19

From Romans chapters 1:18 to 3:20 Paul proceeds to give a graphic display of distorted human behavior. Being a Jew, and therefore to know the law, offers no real advantage since it offers no disguise or defense from sin. It is the same ugliness and deserves the same judgment.

His triumphant statement in v 16,17 of chapter 1 and again reinforced in chapter 3:21-24, is set against this backdrop. The good news declares how the same condemned mankind in Adam is now freely acquitted by God's grace through the redemption that is unveiled in Christ Jesus.

He brings the argument of the ineffectiveness of the law to get man to change his behavior, to a final crescendo in Chapter 7. He states in 7 verse 1 that he is writing to those who know the law. They have firsthand experience therefore of the weakness of the rule to consistently govern the conduct of man.

The best that the law could offer was to educate and confirm good intention; but the more powerful law, the law of sin introduced to mankind through one man's transgression, has to be challenged by a greater force than human willpower.

Because sin robbed man of his true identity and awakened in him all kinds of worse-than-animal-like conduct, a set of rules couldn't do it. The revelation of God's righteousness has to be far more effective and powerful than man's slavery to sin.

It is evident that because of man's corrupt behavior, mankind deserves nothing less than condemnation. Yet within this context the grace and mercy of God is revealed; not as mere tolerance from God's side to turn a blind eye and to put up with sin, but as God's triumphant act in Christ to cancel man's guilt and to break sin's spell and dominion over man.

For salvation to be relevant it has to offer mankind a basis and reference for his faith to be launched from. It has to offer a conclusion of greater implication than the stalemate condition he finds himself in under the dispensation of the law.

"Even though my inner man agrees that the law is good and desires to obey its requirements, my best intentions leave me powerless against the demands of sin in my body! Oh, wretched man that I am!"

Woe be unto us, but for the revelation of God's righteous intervention! The man Christ Jesus is the mediator of humanity. The judgment man rightfully deserved fell on him; he was made to be sin who knew no sin. "He was handed over because of our transgressions, and triumphantly raised because of our acquittal." Rom 4:25

Paul is convinced that whatever happened to the human race because of Adam's

fall is far superseded in every possible proportion by the revelation of mankind's inclusion in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He places the fall of Adam and every act of unrighteousness that followed against the one act of righteousness that God performed in Christ as proof of man's acquittal.

The revelation of righteousness by faith unveils how God in Christ represented and redeemed mankind. The etymological essence of the word, 'righteousness' in its root form, diké, implies the idea of two parties finding likeness in each other; with no interference of any sense of blame, guilt or inferiority. The Hebrew word for righteousness is the word tzadok which refers to the wooden beam in a scale of balances. When Adam lost the glory of God (*Hebrew, kabod, weight; the consciousness of God's likeness and image*) the law proved that no amount of good works could balance the scale again. Grace reveals how God redeemed his image and likeness again in human form; now the scale is perfectly balanced! No wonder Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished!"

This is the message that Paul says he owes to the whole world!

"I proclaim Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was concealed in silence in the sequence of timeless ages, but now is made publicly known, mirrored in prophetic scripture." (*"Surely he was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we were healed" Isaiah 53:4,5*). And now the God of the ages has issued his mandate to make the mystery known in such a way that all the nations of the earth will discover the lifestyle that the hearing of faith ignites" Romans 16:25,26 Paul gives new definition to obedience when he calls it 'the obedience of faith' Rom 1:5.

"The conclusion is clear: it took just one offence to condemn mankind; one act of righteousness declares the same mankind innocent. The disobedience of the one man exhibits humanity as sinners, the obedience of another man exhibits humanity as righteous. Romans 5:18,19

Just as all men became exceedingly sinful through one man's disobedience but did not know it until the law revealed it, so all men became exceedingly righteous through one act of righteousness but they do not know it until the gospel reveals it.

The principle of faith is to see what God sees. God calls things which seem not to be as though they were. Romans 4:17 "While we look not at the things that the senses observe, but we look at the revelation of the unseen as it is unveiled in our understanding through the mirror revelation of the Gospel of Christ. 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor.4:18

Romans 4:17 finds its context in Rom 1:17 and 10:17, "It is clear then that faith's source is found in the content of the message heard; the message is Christ. (*We are God's audience; Jesus is God's language!*)"

He is the voice of the free eagle!

-----www.mirrorword.net-----

CHAPTER 1

1:1 Paul, passionately engaged by Jesus Christ, identified in him to represent him. My mandate and message is to announce the goodness of God to mankind. (*Mandate, the scope or horizon of my message, **horitso**, marked out; **apostelo**, an extension from him, a representative; **doulos**, slave from **deo**, to be bound or knitted together like a husband and wife; **kletos** from **kaleo**, called, to identify by name, to surname; **eu + angellion** well done announcement, good news, the official announcement of God's goodness.)*

1:2 This message is what the Scriptures are all about. It remains the central prophetic theme and content of inspired writing.

1:3 The son of God has his natural lineage from the seed of David; (*See Math 22:41-45, "When some Pharisees gathered together, Jesus asked them, 'what do you think about the Messiah? Whose descendant is he?' 'He is David's descendant,' they answered. 'Why, then,' Jesus asked, 'did the Spirit inspire David to call him Lord?' David said, 'the Lord said to my Lord: sit here at my right side until I put your enemies under your feet.' 'If David called him Lord, how can the Messiah be David's descendant?' Math 23:9, "You must not call anyone here on earth Father, because you have only the one Father in heaven." 1Cor.8:6, "Yet there is for us only one God, the Father, who is the Creator of all things and for whom we live; and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created and through whom we live." Eph.3:14,15, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name." Eph.4:6,7, "there is one God and Father of all people, who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all.")*

1:4 however, his powerful resurrection from the dead by the Holy Spirit, locates and confirms his being and sonship in God. (*Greek, **apo + horizo**, to mark out beforehand, to define or locate, lit. horizon, same word translated 'mandate' in v 1. In Acts 13:32,33, Paul preaches the resurrection and quotes Ps 2, "Today I have begotten you". Jesus locates us and confirms that we have our genesis in God! See 1Pet.1:3, Peter understands that we were born anew in the resurrection of Christ. The relevance of the resurrection is the revelation of mankind's inclusion in Christ. Hos.6:2 is the only scripture that prophesies the third day resurrection, and here in this single dramatic prophesy, we are co-included in his resurrection! "After two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up!" This is the crux of the mystery of the gospel! "Will the earth be brought forth in one day? Can a nation be born in a moment? Isa.66:8,9.)*

1:5 The grace and commission we received from him, is to bring about a faith-inspired lifestyle in all the nations. His name is his claim on the human race. *(Paul immediately sets out to give new definition to the term, 'obedience', no longer by law, but of faith. Obedience, **upo + akoo** lit. under the influence of what is heard, accurate hearing, hearing from above. Every family in heaven and on earth, is identified in him. Eph 3:15.)*

1:6 In Jesus Christ you individually discover who you are. *(Greek, **kaleo**, to call by name, to surname.)*

1:7 In addressing you, I address all in Rome. I am convinced of God's love for you; he restored you to the harmony of your original design; you were made holy in Christ Jesus; no wonder then that you are surnamed Saints. His grace gift in Christ secures your total wellbeing. The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is ours also; he is our God. *(Gal.1:15,16 "He separated me from my mother's womb when he revealed his son in me, in order that I may declare him in the nations; immediately I did not consult with flesh and blood." 2Co 5:16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ after the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.)*

1:8 My greatest joy is to realise that your faith is announced throughout the entire world. The total cosmos is our audience.

1:9 I am totally engaged in my spirit in the gospel of God's son; constantly including you in my prayers; God is my witness.

1:10 Since I already feel so connected to you I long to also see you face to face. *(To beseech, **deomai**, from **deo** to tie together, to be knitted together.)*

1:11 I really look forward to finally meet you in person, knowing that my spiritual gift will benefit you greatly; it will cement and establish you in your faith. *(Greek, **metadidomi**, the kind of giving where the giver is not distanced from the gift but wrapped up in it! The apostles, prophets, preachers, pastors and teachers are gifts to the **ekklesia** to establish them in their faith and to present everyone in the full and mature stature of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-16. There is such a vast difference between a gift and a reward! We are God's gifts to one another. (What God now has in us is gift wrapped to the world) What we are in our individual expression is a gift and not a reward for personal diligence or achievement. These gifts were never meant to establish one above the other, or to become mere formal titles, but rather to identify specific and dynamic functions with one defined purpose, to bring everyone into the realisation of the fullness of the measure of Christ in them!)*

1:12 And so we will be mutually refreshed in the participation and reflection of our common faith. *(Gr. **sumparakaleo**, from **sum**, together, **para**, a preposition indicating close*

*proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection, and **kaleo**, to identify by name, to surname. Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit in the same capacity, **parakletos**, (John 14:16))*

1:13 Until now I have been prevented from coming to you, even though I have frequently desired to reap some harvest in you as much as I anticipate the full fruit of this gospel in all the nations.

1:14 I am so convinced of everyone's inclusion; I am indebted both to the Greeks as well as those many foreigners whose languages we do not even understand. I owe this message to everyone, it is not a matter of how literate and educated people are; the illiterate are equally included in the benefit of the good news. *(To be indebted obliges one to return something to someone that belongs to them in the first place.)*

1:15 Because of this compelling urgency I am so keen to preach to you Romans also.

1:16 I have no shame about sharing the good news of Christ with anyone; the powerful rescuing act of God persuades both Jew and Greek alike.

1:17 Herein lies the secret of the power of the gospel; there is no good news in it until the righteousness of God is revealed! *(The good news is the fact that the cross of Christ was a success. God rescued the life of our design, he redeemed our innocence. Man would never again be judged righteous or unrighteous by his own ability to obey moral laws! It is not about what man must or must not do but about what Jesus has done!)* God now persuades everyone to believe what he knows to be true about them. *(It is from faith to faith)* The prophets wrote in advance about the fact that God believes that righteousness defines the life that he always had in mind for us. "Righteousness by his (God's) faith gives meaning to life." *(And not man's good or bad behaviour or circumstances interpreted as a blessing or a curse. Hab.2:4, 3:17-19. In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith. "Look away (from the law of works) to Jesus; he is the Author and finisher of faith." Heb.12:1. The gospel is the revelation of the righteousness of God; it declares how God succeeded to put mankind right with him. It is about what God did right, not what Adam did wrong. The word righteousness comes from the Anglo Saxon word, **rightwiseness**, wise in that which is right. In Greek the root word for righteousness, is the word **dike**, which means two parties finding likeness in each other. The Hebrew word for righteousness is the word **tzadok**, which refers to the beam in a scale of balances. Colossians 2:9 It is in Christ that God finds an accurate and complete expression of himself, in a human body! 2:10 He mirrors our completeness and is the ultimate authority of our true identity.)*

1:18 *(The law)* revealed God's grievance from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness because mankind foolishly suppressed and concealed the truth in their unrighteousness,

1:19 even though God is not a stranger to anyone, for what can be known of God is already manifest in them. *(The law reveals how guilty and sinful man is, while the gospel reveals how forgiven and restored to his original blueprint man is.)*

1:20 God is on display in creation; the very fabric of visible cosmos appeals to reason. It clearly bears witness to the ever present sustaining power and intelligence of the invisible God, leaving man without any valid excuse to ignore him. *(Ps.19:1 God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon. :2 Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each evening. :3 Their words aren't heard, their voices aren't recorded, :4 But their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere. Msg)*

1:21 Yet man only knew him in a philosophical religious way, from a distance, and failed to give him credit as God. Their taking him for granted and lack of gratitude veiled him from them; they became absorbed in useless debates and discussions which further darkened their understanding about themselves.

1:22 Their wise conclusions only proved folly.

1:23 Their losing sight of God, made them lose sight of who they really were. In their calculation the image and likeness of God became reduced to a corrupted and distorted pattern of themselves. Suddenly man has more in common with the creepy crawlies than with his original blue-print.

1:24 It seemed like God abandoned mankind to be swept along by the lusts of their own hearts to abuse and defile themselves. *(Their most personal possession, their own bodies, became worthless public property.)*

1:25 Instead of embracing their Maker as their true identity they preferred the deception of a warped identity, religiously giving it their affection and devotion.

1:26 By being confused about their Maker they became confused about themselves; women became snared in a passion for one another.

1:27 Likewise the men became inflamed with an unnatural attraction to men; even their personalities changed in consequence to their sexual perversity.

1:28 And since they no longer honoured or acknowledged God in their thoughts, they failed to see anything wrong with what they were doing.

1:29 Sin snowballs! It spreads like cancer, exhibiting its ugly symptoms in

every possible form, from perverse sexual obsession, to every kind of atrocity. The problem with sin is that it never satisfies, leaving the victim miserably unfulfilled and constantly craving for more of the same deception: vileness, jealous anger, obsessed only with self. Life is cheap, murder doesn't matter; they are steeped in constant quarrelling and wickedness, their conversation has become reduced to slanderous gossip.

1:30 No one is safe in their company; they think that by insulting people they can voice their hatred for God; proudly bragging about their latest inventions of filth. Sadly this all began at home where parents lost faith.

1:31 Parents abandoned their own conscience (*oneness of mind*) and divorce became an easy cop-out of their covenant agreement. Instead of cherishing one another with affection, they made their children the victims of the merciless dilemma of divorce. (*These verses clearly point to where the rot starts, in broken homes where parents abandoned faith and preferred divorce.*)

1:32 It just doesn't make any sense, they started off knowing the righteousness of God, yet by their deeds they clearly prefer death; it is almost as if sin has become a fashionable contest.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 A presumed knowledge of that which is right or wrong does not qualify you to judge anyone. Especially if you do exactly the same stuff you notice other people do wrong. You effectively condemn yourself. No man is another man's judge.

2:2 God must judge all transgression, but your judging others does not make them any guiltier.

2:3 God is totally impartial in his judgement; you are not scoring any points or disguising your own sins by telling on others.

2:4 No-one can afford to get the wrong idea about God's goodness; he hates sin but loves man! The wealth of his benevolence and his resolute refusal to let go of us in his patient passion is to shepherd everyone into a radical change of mind. (*It is the revelation of the goodness of God that leads us to repentance! Paul often has to remind his readers that his emphasis on the goodness of God is not a cheap excuse for them to continue in sin. See 6:1 [chrestotetos](#) from [chraomai](#), to receive a loan, life is on loan to us as it were. Life is God's property. [anoches](#) from [ana](#), showing intensity and [echo](#), to hold, or embrace, as in echo. [makrothumias](#) to be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others. Literary, passion that goes a long way; from the root word [thuo](#), to slay a sacrifice. [ago](#), to lead as a shepherd leads his sheep. [metanoia](#), from [meta](#)*

together with, and *nous*, mind, together with God's mind. Traditionally translated, repentance, suggests a radical mindshift; to return to one's right mind.)

2:5 A calloused heart that resists change accumulates cause to self-destruction while God's righteous judgement (that fell on Christ) is revealed in broad daylight.

2:6 By resisting him you are on your own; your own deeds will judge you. (*Rejecting his goodness (v 4) keeps you snared in the illusion of a sin-consciousness and condemnation*)

2:7 Mankind's quest is to be constant in that which is good, glorious and honourable and of imperishable value. He is eager to pursue the original blueprint-life of the Ages. (*The life of the ages is the most attractive life man could wish to live, it is the life of our design, yet it remains elusive outside the redemption that Christ achieved on man's behalf. Not even the most sincere decision to live a blameless life under the law or any philosophy could measure up to the heart hunger of man.*)

2:8 Yet there are those who ignore the truth through unbelief. (*The truth about their original identity as sons*) They continue to exist as mere hirelings, motivated by a monthly wage (*rather than sonship*). They believe in their failure and unrighteousness and are consumed by outbursts of anger and displeasure. (*Greek, *eithea* from *erithos*, working as a hireling for wages; often translated, self-willed or contentious. Greek, *apeitheo*, to be unpersuaded, without faith, often translated to be disobedient.*)

2:9 Pressures from every side, like an overcrowded room, (*or a cramped foot in an undersized shoe,*) is the experience of the soul of everyone who does what is worthless. The fact that the Jews are Jewish does not make their experience of evil any different from that of the Greeks. (*Symptoms of disease are the same in anyone; they are not a respecter of persons.*)

2:10 In sharp contrast to this, bliss, self-worth and total tranquillity is witnessed by everyone, both Jew and Greek, who finds expression in that which is good. We are tailor-made for good.

2:11 God does not judge people on face value.

2:12 Ruin and self-destruction are the inevitable results of sin, whether someone knows the law or not.

2:13 Righteousness is not a hear-say-thing, it is law defined in practical living.

2:14 For even a pagan's natural instinct will confirm the law to be present in

his conscience even though he has never even heard about Jewish laws. Thus he proves to be a law unto himself.

2:15 The law is so much more than a mere written code, its presence in human conscience even in the absence of the written instruction is obvious, condemning or commending personal conduct.

2:16 Every hidden, conflicting thought will be disclosed in the daylight of God's scrutiny, based on the good news of Jesus Christ that I proclaim. *(The ineffectiveness of good intentions and self discipline to produce lasting change will be exposed as worthless in contrast to the impact of the message of Christ's death and resurrection as representing mankind's death and new birth as our ultimate reference to our redeemed identity and innocence.)*

2:17 Your Jewish identity does not make God your exclusive property,

2:18 even though you boast in the fact that you have the documented desire of God published like an instruction manual in the law. (*dokimatso, document, decree, approve; diaphero to carry through, to publish (Acts 13:49), to discern the difference.*)

2:19 You promote yourself confidently as a guide for the blind, and a light bearer for those groping about in darkness.

2:20 You feel yourself so superior to the rest of the world that you promote yourself as the 'kindergarten' teacher to the mindless, an instructor of infants, because you believe that in the law you have knowledge and truth all wrapped up in a nutshell.

2:21 However, the real question is not whether you are a good teacher; how good a student are you? What's the good of teaching against stealing when you yourself have a tendency to steal?

2:22 You speak against adultery while you cannot get your own mind off sexual sins. It just doesn't make sense does it? You say idolatry stinks yet you steal stuff from pagan shrines.

2:23 Your proud association with the law is ruined every time you dishonour God by dodging the doing bit.

2:24 This has been going on for hundreds of years, it is all recorded in scripture. No wonder the Gentiles think that your God is no better than any of their philosophies when it comes to living the life the law promotes.

2:25 The real value of circumcision is tested by your ability to keep the law. If you break the law you might as well not be circumcised.

2:26 The fact that you are circumcised does not distinguish you from the rest of the world; it does not give you super-human power to keep the commandments.

2:27 If it is not about who is circumcised or not, but rather who keeps the law or not, then in that case even uncircumcised people can judge the ones who claim to know it all and have it all! On the one hand you have those who feel naturally inclined to do what is right, yet none of them are circumcised, then you have the circumcised who know the letter of the law but fail to keep it.

2:28 So it is not about who you appear to be on the outside that makes you a real Jew, but who you really are on the inside.

2:29 For you to know who you are in your heart is the secret of your spirit identity; this is your true circumcision, it is not the literal outward appearance that distinguishes you. After all it is God's approval and not man's impression that matters most. Man sees skin-deep, God knows the heart.

CHAPTER 3

3:1 Having said all that, you might ask whether there is still any advantage in being Jewish? Is there any significance in circumcision?

3:2 Everything only finds its relevance and value in the original intention of God realised by faith.

3:3 The question is, how does someone's failure to believe God affect what God believes? Could their unbelief cancel God's faith? *(What we believe about God does not define him; God's faith defines us.)*

3:3 The question is, how does someone's failure to believe God affect what God believes? Could their unbelief cancel God's faith? *(What we believe about God does not define him; God's faith defines us.)*

3:4 God's Word is not under threat! In fact if all of humanity fails, truth remains intact. Truth is rooted in God; it is neither challenged nor vindicated by man's experience. *(Truth doesn't become true by popular vote.)* Contradiction does not intimidate or diminish the faith of God. *(What God believes about man, does not change through man's unfaithfulness. God remains convinced about us.)* Scripture records that God stands justified in his own word; it confirms that God's promise and purpose are not compromised through man's failure; neither is God's reputation threatened by man's behavior. *(Something doesn't become more true because man believes it; it's already as true as it gets because God believes it; otherwise there is nothing for man to believe, if it wasn't true in the*

first place; it is from faith to faith says Paul Rom 1:17, there is no gospel in it until the righteousness of God is revealed!; See 2 Cor 13:5 and 8, "...we can do nothing against the truth!" David's sin did not cancel God's promise 2 Sam 7:15 But my mercy I will not take from him, 2Sam 7:16 and his house shall be made sure, and his kingdom for ever before me, and his throne shall be set up forever.")

3:5 We could argue then that God doesn't have a right to judge us, if our unrighteousness only emphasises his righteousness?

3:6 That would make God an unfair judge of the world.

3:7 This almost sounds like I am saying that it is not really wrong to sin, if our cheating only serves to further contrast the truth of God.

3:8 Because of my emphasis on God's grace, some people slanderously make the assumption and accuse me that my teaching would give people a licence to sin. "Let us do evil that good may come!" I strongly condemn such foolish talk! *Philips translation: But if our wickedness advertises the goodness of God, do we feel that God is being unfair to punish us in return? (I'm using a human tit-for-tat argument.) Not a bit of it! What sort of a person would God be then to judge the world? It is like saying that if my lying throws into sharp relief the truth of God and, so to speak, enhances his reputation, then why should he repay me by judging me a sinner? Similarly, why not do evil that good may be, by contrast all the more conspicuous and valuable? (As a matter of fact, I am reported as urging this very thing, by some slanderously and others quite seriously! But, of course, such an argument is quite properly condemned.)*

3:9 It is common knowledge that sin holds the sway over both Jew and Greek alike. *(Just like disease would show the same symptoms regardless of someone's nationality.)*

3:10 Scripture records that within the context of the law, no-one succeeds to live a blameless life. *(Psalm 14:1 To the choirmaster, of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none that does good. :2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any that act wisely, that seek after God. :3 They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none that does good, no, not one. In Gen.18, Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah, "If there perhaps are 50 righteous people, will you save the city on their behalf?" He continues to negotiate with God, until he's down to, "perhaps ten?"..."there was none righteous, no not one..." This argument is building up to the triumphant conclusion of the fact that there is indeed no distinction, the same people who fell short of the glory of God are now justified through God's work of grace in Christ, See Rom.3:21-24. If mankind was 100% represented in Adam, then they are equally 100% represented in Christ!)*

3:11 Because there seems to be no sincere craving and desire to know God there is no spiritual insight. *(While man remains casual and indifferent about God, his heart remains calloused. Greek, **sunemi**, a joint-seeing, spiritual insight.)*

3:12 Their distraction has bankrupted their lives; that goes for the mass of mankind, without any exception.

3:13 When they open their mouth to speak they bury one another with destructive words. They snake each other with lies and corruption.

3:14 With sharp tongues they cut one another to pieces, cursing and cheating; their every word is inspired by the wearisome effort to survive in a dog-eat-dog world.

*(Taken direct from the Hebrew text in Ps 10:7 Hebrew, **tok tok** from **tavek**, to cut to pieces. Hebrew, **amal** and **aven**, to exert oneself in wearisome effort.)*

3:15 Murder has become a regular ritual; without any regard for another's life.

3:16 Their path is littered with broken lives.

3:17 They have lost the art of friendship.

3:18 They have completely lost sight of God."

(3:13-18 are quotations from Ps 10 and Ps 14.)

3:19 The fact that all these quotations are from Jewish writings, confirm that their law of moral conduct did not free them from the very same sins the rest of the world was trapped in. Universal mankind stands condemned before God.

3:20 The law therefore reveals how sinful man is, but has no power to present man blameless before God.

3:21 *(This brings me back to the theme of my ministry, chapter 1:1, 2, 5,16,17.)* Right now the righteousness of God *(the fact that God succeeded to vindicate sinful mankind in Christ)* is boldly declared and defined in vivid contrast to the inability of man to do it himself *(to be righteous by keeping the law.)* This restored standing of man is what both the law and all the prophetic writings anticipate and confirm. *(God's dealing with man is based on the fact that man's conscience continues to bear witness to his original design. Rom.7:22)*

3:22 Jesus is the embodiment of God's faith in man. The righteousness of God is now on display in such a way that all may believe, regardless of who they are, there is no distinction.

3:23 The same mass of mankind that was once reduced to an inferior identity through their sin,

3:24 is now gifted with acquittal on the basis of the ransom paid by Jesus Christ for their liberation.

3:25 Jesus exhibits God's mercy. His blood propitiation persuades mankind that God has dealt with the historic record of their sin. What he did vindicates God's righteousness. All along God refused to let go of man.

3:26 At this very moment God's act of righteousness is pointing mankind to the evidence of their innocence, with Jesus as the source of their faith. *(In both these verses Paul uses the word, **endeixis**, where we get the word indicate from. It is also part of the root for the word translated as righteousness, **dikaiosune**. To point out, to show, to convince with proof.)*

3:27 The law of faith cancels the law of works; which means there is suddenly nothing left for man to boast in. No one is superior to another. *(Bragging only makes sense if there is someone to compete with or impress.)* "While we compete with one another and compare ourselves with one another we are without understanding." 2Cor.10:12. See 2Pet.1:1 "Through the righteousness of God we have received a faith of equal standing."

3:28 This leaves us with only one logical conclusion, mankind is justified by faith and not by their ability to keep the law.

3:29 Which means that God is not the private property of the Jews but belongs equally to all the nations. (While the law excludes the non-Jewish nations, faith includes us all on level terms.)

3:30 There is only one God, he deals with everyone, circumcised or uncircumcised exclusively on the basis of faith.

3:31 No, faith does not re-write the rules; instead it confirms that the original life-quality meant for mankind as documented in the law, is again realised.

CHAPTER 4

4:1 If we look at our father Abraham as an example and scrutinise his life, would you say that he discovered any reason for placing confidence in the flesh through personal contribution? *(What qualified Abraham to be the father of the multitudes of nations? The only part he played was his unwavering belief in God's faith in him.)*

4:2 If he felt that his friendship with God was a reward for good behaviour, then surely he would have reason to recommend the recipe; yet it is plain to see that it was all God's initiative from start to finish!

4:3 Scripture is clear, "Abraham believed what God believed about him and that concluded his righteousness."

4:4 There is a large difference between a reward and a gift: if you have earned something through hard work; what you receive in return is your due and certainly not a gift.

4:5 It is clear then that someone who believes that God justified the ungodly understands that it is faith and not our toil that accounts for righteousness. *(Greek, **dikaiousanta**, aorist tense, passive voice, accusative case. The aorist tense presents an occurrence in summary, viewed as a whole from the outside. It may be helpful to think of the aorist as taking a snapshot of the action while the imperfect (like the present) takes a motion picture, portraying the action as it unfolds. Passive voice indicates that the subject is the recipient of the action. God is not in the process of justifying the ungodly; he accomplished this through a single sacrifice once and for all)*

4:6 David confirms this principle when he speaks of the blessedness of the one who discovers God's approval without any reference to something specific that he had done to qualify himself.

4:7 Oh what happy progress one makes with the weight of sin and guilt removed and one's slate wiped clean! *(Ps 32:1 The Hebrew word **ashar**, blessed, means to advance, to make progress.)*

4:8 "How blessed is the man who receives a receipt instead of an invoice for his sins." *(Greek, **logitzomai**, to make a calculation to which there can only be one logical conclusion, to take an inventory.)*

4:9 Is this blessing restricted exclusively to the circumcised or extended also to the uncircumcised? Remember we are looking at Abraham as an example; his righteousness was founded on faith.

4:10 Did circumcision play any role in Abraham's standing before God? Certainly not, it is clear that God already calculated his faith as righteousness before he was circumcised.
(Righteousness is not a reward for good behaviour.)

4:11 Circumcision was introduced as a *(prophetic)* external seal to confirm the fact that Abraham's faith already resulted in righteousness. This qualifies him to be the father of all uncircumcised people who would believe as he did in the impartation of acquittal. *(The seal was not meant to be a distraction but rather a*

prophetic confirmation to righteousness by faith. Just like a receipt is only a reference to, and not the actual transaction.)

4:12 At the same time he also represents as father all those for whom circumcision is not merely a skin deep religious ritual, but who walk in the footprints of his faith.

4:13 Righteousness by faith prompted the promise when God announced to Abraham that he would father those who would inherit the world. It is again a matter of embracing a gift rather than receiving a reward for keeping the law.

4:14 Faith would be emptied of its substance and the principle of promise would be meaningless if the law was still in play to qualify the heirs. *(Faith is not in competition with the law. The life quality that faith reveals is consistent with man's original design and confirmed by the law.)*

4:15 The law system is bound to bring about disappointment, regret and anger; if there is no law there is nothing to break; no contract, no breach.

4:16 Therefore since faith sponsors the gift of grace, the promise is equally secured for all the children. The law has no exclusive claim on anyone *(the reward system cannot match the gift principle)* Faith is our source, and that makes Abraham our father.

4:17 When God changed Abram's name to Abraham, he made a public statement that he would be the father of all nations. *(Genesis 17:5)* Here we see Abraham faced with God's faith; the kind of faith that resurrects the dead and calls things which are not *(visible yet)* as though they were. *(ab-rab-hamon, "the father of the multitude of nations." Abraham's identity, his name, was the echo of God's faith and his bold confession in the absence of Isaac. The name change, similar to that of Simon to Rock, reminds man to realize his original identity as son of God, hewn out of the Rock, Deut.32:18, Is.51:1,2.)*

4:18 Faith gave substance to hope when everything seemed hopeless; the words, "so shall your seed be" conceived in him the faith of fatherhood. *(Abraham's case here pictures the hopelessness of fallen man, having lost their identity, and faced with the impossibility to redeem themselves.)*

4:19 Abraham's faith would have been nullified if he were to take his own age and the deadness of Sarah's womb into account. His hundred year old body and Sarah's barren womb did not distract him in the least! He finally knew that no contribution from their side could possibly assist God in fulfilling his promise!

4:20 While he had every reason to doubt the promise, he did not hesitate for a moment but instead empowered by faith confidence, he continued to communicate God's opinion. *(His name was his confession: in the Hebrew*

language, 'Abraham' was not a mere familiar sounding name, but a meaningful sentence, a confession of faith authority, against the odds. He did not become embarrassed about his name; he did not change his name to "Abe" for short when there seemed to be no change in his circumstances. Every time he introduced himself or someone called him by his name, it was a bold declaration and repetition of God's promise, calling things that were not as though they were. I would imagine that Sarah spoke his name the most! In fact, every time they addressed one another they spoke the promise, "Mother of nations, kings of peoples shall come from you!" Gen.17:5,16. Abraham, "the father of the multitudes.")

4:21 Abraham's confidence was his dress-code; he knew beyond doubt that the power of God to perform was equal to his promise. (*plerophoreo*, from *plero* to be completely covered in every part, + *phoreo*, to wear garments or armour; traditionally translated to be totally persuaded. His faith was his visible identity and armour; he wore his persuasion like he would his daily garments.)

4:22 No wonder then that his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. There was no other logical conclusion possible.

4:23 Here is the good news: the recorded words, "It was reckoned to him..." were not written for his sake alone.

4:24 Scripture was written with us in mind! The same conclusion is now relevant to our faith. Faith confirms our righteousness, not our ability to keep the law. (*Isaac 's birth from Sarah's barren womb prophetically declared the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb! The resurrection is the ultimate proof and trophy of righteousness by faith. See Rom.6:11 "Consider yourself dead indeed," compare 4:19, "Abraham considered his own body dead." We can only study scripture in the context of Christ as representing the human race; God had us in mind all along. John 5:39*)

4:25 Our sins resulted in his death; our righteousness resulted in his resurrection. (*His resurrection is the receipt to our acquittal. This is one of the most important statements in the entire Bible. Why was Jesus handed over to die? Because of *dia* our sins. Why was he raised from the dead? Because *dia* we were justified! His resurrection reveals our righteousness! His cross=our sins; his resurrection=our innocence! If man was still guilty after Jesus died, his resurrection would neither be possible nor relevant! This explains Acts 10:28 and 2Cor.5:14 and 16. See also Acts 17:31, "because God had fixed a day on which he would judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead."*)

CHAPTER 5

5:1 Righteousness by faith realized means unlimited friendship with God; this is the ultimate conclusion of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is the legal authority (*Lord*) of our testimony. *(In one sentence Paul sums up the previous four chapters. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." KJV Peace is a place of unhindered enjoyment of friendship beyond guilt, suspicion, blame or inferiority. The Sabbath rest celebrates God's unhindered enjoyment of man and our unhindered enjoyment of him!)*

5:2 He has welcomed us with open arms and reinforced the fact that our access into this grace-gift is guaranteed by faith. We stand fully established in grace while we boldly rejoice in all that God's opinion communicates and anticipates for us. *(Our conviction is sponsored by his initiative. Hope, **elpis** from **elpo**, which is a primary word which means, to anticipate, usually with pleasure. (Strong's))*

5:3 Our joyful boasting in him remains uninterrupted in times of trouble; we know that pressure reveals patience. Tribulation doesn't have what it takes to nullify what hope knows we've got!

5:4 Patience proves legal tender; which buys more positive expectation. *(dokimos, proof. Thayer Definition: scrutinised and accepted, particularly of coins and money.)*

5:5 This kind of hope does not disappoint; the love of God has become an artesian well within us because of the gift of the Holy Spirit. *(If God is not embarrassed about us, there is no reason why we should hang our heads in shame!)*

5:6 God's timing was absolutely perfect; humanity was at their weakest when Christ died their death. (We were bankrupt in our efforts to save ourselves.)

5:7 It is most unlikely that someone will die for another man, even if he is righteous; yet it is remotely possible that someone can brave such devotion that he would actually lay down his own life in an effort to save the life of an extraordinary good person.

5:8 Herein is the extremity of God's love gift: mankind was rotten to the core when Christ died their death.

5:9 If God could love us that much when we were ungodly and guilty, how much more are we free to realise his love now that we are declared innocent by his blood? *((Rom 4:25) God does not love us more now that we are reconciled to him; we are now free to realise how much he loved us all along!)*

5:10 Our hostility towards God did not reduce his love for us; he saw equal

value in us when he exchanged the life of his son for ours. Now that the act of reconciliation is complete, his life in us saves us from the guttermost to the uttermost. *(Reconciliation, katalasso, a mutual exchange of equal value. Thayer Definition: to exchange, as coins for others of equivalent value. "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." RSV)*

5:11 Thus, our joyful boasting in God continues; Jesus Christ has made reconciliation a reality.

5:12 One man opened the door to sin, sin introduced (spiritual) death; both sin and (spiritual) death had a global impact, no one escaped its tyranny.

5:13 The law did not introduce sin; sin was just not pointed out yet.

5:14 In the mean time (spiritual) death dominated from Adam to Moses, (2500 years before the law was introduced) no one was excluded; even those whose transgression was different from Adam's. The fact is that Adam's offence set sin into motion, and its mark was globally transmitted and stained the whole human race.

5:15 The only similarity in the comparison between the offence and the gift, is that both Adam and Christ represent the masses; their single action therefore bears global consequence. Spiritual death introduced by one man's transgression is by far superseded by the grace gift lavished upon mankind in the one man Jesus Christ. *(But God's free gift immeasurably outweighs the transgression. For if through the transgression of the one individual the mass of mankind have died, infinitely greater is the generosity with which God's grace, and the gift given in his grace which found expression in the one man Jesus Christ, have been bestowed on the mass of mankind. Weymouth 1912)*

5:16 The difference between the two men is further emphasised in that judgement and condemnation followed a single offence, whereas the free gift of acquittal and righteousness follows innumerable sins.

5:17 If *(spiritual)* death saw the gap in one sin, and grabbed the opportunity to dominate mankind because of one man, how much more may we now seize the advantage to reign in righteousness in this life through that one act of Christ, who declared us innocent by his grace. Grace is out of all proportion in superiority to the transgression.

5:18 The conclusion is clear: it took just one offence to condemn mankind; one act of righteousness declares the same mankind innocent. *(Phillips Translation "We see then, that as one act of sin exposed the whole race of men to condemnation, so one act of perfect righteousness presents all men freely acquitted in the sight of God!")*

5:19 The disobedience of the one man exhibits humanity as sinners, the obedience of another man exhibits humanity as righteous. (*kathistemi, to cause to be, to set up, to exhibit. We were not made sinners by our own disobedience; neither were we made righteous by our own obedience.*)

5:20 The presence of the law made no difference, instead it merely highlighted the offence; but where sin increased, grace superseded it.

5:21 (Spiritual) death provided sin its platform and power to reign from, now grace has taken over sovereignty through righteousness to introduce unthreatened life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ over us.

CHAPTER 6

6:1 It is not possible to interpret grace as a cheap excuse to continue in sin. It sounds to some that we are saying, "Let's carry on sinning then so that grace may abound." (*In the previous chapter Paul expounds the heart of the gospel by giving us a glimpse of the far reaching faith of God; even at the risk of being misunderstood by the legalistic mind he does not compromise the message.*)

6:2 How ridiculous is that! How can we be dead and alive to sin at the same time?

6:3 What are we saying then in water baptism, if we are not declaring that we understand our union with Christ in his death?

6:4 Baptism pictures how we were co-buried together with Christ in his death; then it powerfully illustrates how in God's mind we were co-raised with Christ into a new lifestyle. (*Hosea 6:2*)

6:5 We were like seeds planted together in the same soil, to be raised up to life together. If we were included in his death we are equally included in his resurrection. (*2 Cor 5:14,17*)

6:6 We perceive that our old lifestyle was co-crucified together with him; this concludes that the vehicle that accommodated sin in us, was scrapped and rendered entirely useless. Our slavery to sin has come to an end.

6:7 If nothing else stops you from doing something wrong, death certainly does.

6:8 Faith sees us joined in his death and alive with him in his resurrection.

6:9 It is plain for all to see that death lost its dominion over Christ in his

resurrection; he need not ever die again to prove a further point.

6:10 His appointment with death was once-off. As far as sin is concerned, he is dead. The reason for his death was to take away the sin of the world; his life now exclusively reveals our union with the life of God. *(The Lamb of God took away the sin of the world; **efapax**, once and for all, a final testimony, used of what is so done to be of perpetual validity and never needs repetition. This is the final testimony of the fact that sin's power over us is destroyed. See Heb 9:26 But Jesus did not have to suffer again and again since the fall (or since the foundation) of the world; the single sacrifice of himself in the fulfillment of history now reveals how he has brought sin to naught. Heb 9:28 Christ died once, and faced our judgment! His second appearance (in his resurrection) has nothing to do with sin, but to reveal salvation unto all who eagerly embrace him.)*

6:11 This reasoning is equally relevant to you. Calculate the cross; there can only be one logical conclusion: he died your death; that means you died unto sin, and are now alive unto God. Sin-consciousness can never again feature in your future! You are in Christ Jesus; his Lordship is the authority of this union. *(We are not being presumptuous to reason that we are in Christ! See Eph 1:4 and 1 Cor 1:30. "Reckon yourselves therefore dead unto sin" logitsomai, logical reasoning.*

The Message Translation says, "From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did.")

6:12 You are under no obligation to sin; it has no further rights to dominate your dead declared body. Therefore let it not entice you to obey its lusts. *(Col 3:3 Your union with his death broke the association with sin.)*

6:13 Do not let the members of your body lie around loose and unguarded in the vicinity of unrighteousness, where sin can seize it and use it as a destructive weapon against you; rather place yourself in readiness unto God, like someone resurrected from the dead, present your whole person as a weapon of righteousness, *(enforcing God's grace claim on mankind in Christ; **paristemi**, to place in readiness in the vicinity of).*

6:14 Sin was your master while the law was your measure; now grace rules. *(The law revealed your slavery to sin, now grace reveals your freedom from it.)*

6:15 Being under grace and not under the law most certainly does not mean that you now have a license to sin.

6:16 As much as you once gave permission to sin to trap you in its spiral of spiritual death and enslave you to its dictates, the obedience that faith ignites

now, introduces a new rule, rightness with God; to this we willingly yield ourselves. (Righteousness represents everything that God restored us to, in Christ.)

6:17 The content of teaching that your heart embraced has set a new standard to become the pattern of your life; the grace of God ended sin's dominance. *(The Dodrich translation says, "the model of doctrine instructs you as in a mould.")*

6:18 Sin once called the shots; now righteousness rules.

6:19 I want to say it as plainly as possible: you willingly offered your faculties to obey sin, you stained your body with unclean acts and allowed lawlessness to gain supremacy in all of your conduct; in exactly the same way, I now encourage you to present your faculties and person to the supremacy of righteousness to find unrestricted expression in your lifestyle.

6:20 You were sins' slaves without any obligation to righteousness.

6:21 I know you are embarrassed now about the things you used to do with your body; I mean was it worth it? What reward or return did you get but spiritual death? Sin is a cul-de-sac. *(Sin is the worst thing you can ever do with your life!)*

6:22 Consider your life now; there are no outstanding debts; you owe sin nothing! A life bonded to God yields the sacred expression of his character, and completes in your experience what life was always meant to be. *(Lit. The life of the ages, traditionally translated, "and the end, eternal life".)*

6:23 The bottom line is this: sin employs you like a soldier for its cause and rewards you with death; God gifts you with the highest quality of life all wrapped up in Christ Jesus our Leader. *(A soldier puts his life on the line and all he gets in the meantime is a meager ration of dried fish (bokkoms) for his effort! **opsonion**, a soldier's wage, from **opsarion**, a piece of dried fish.)*

CHAPTER 7

7:1 I write to you in the context of your acquaintance with the law; you would agree with me that laws are only relevant in this life.

7:2 A wife is only bound by law to her husband while he lives; any further legal claim he has on her ends with his death.

7:3 The law would call her an adulteress should she give herself to another man while the first husband is still alive. Yet, once he's dead, she is free to be

another's wife.

7:4 The very same finality in principle is applicable to you my brothers, in the (*crucified*) body of Christ you died to the system of the law; your inclusion in his resurrection brought about a new union. Out of this marriage, (*faith*) now bears children unto God. (*The first marriage produced sin; righteousness is the child of the new union. In the previous chapter Paul deals with the fact that our inclusion in Christ in his death broke the association with sin; now he reveals that it also broke the association with the system of the law of works as a reference to righteousness.*)

7:5 At the time when the flesh ruled our lives, the subtle influences of sins which were ignited by the law, conceived actions within us that were consistent in character with their parent and produced spiritual death.

7:6 But now we are fully released from any further association with a life directed by the rule of the law, we are dead to that which once held us captive, free to be slaves to the newness of spirit-spontaneity rather than age old religious rituals, imitating the mere face value of the written code. (*The moment you exchange spontaneity with rules, you've lost the edge of romance.*)

7:7 The law in itself is not sinful; I am not suggesting that at all. Yet in pointing sin out, the law was in a sense the catalyst for sinful actions to manifest. Had the law not said, "Thou shalt not covet" I would not have had a problem with lust.

7:8 But the commandment triggered sin into action, suddenly an array of sinful appetites were awakened in me. The law broke sin's dormancy.

7:9 Without the law I was alive, the law was introduced, sin revived and I died.

7:10 Instead of being my guide to life, the commandment proved to be a death sentence.

7:11 Sin took advantage of the law, and employed the commandment to seduce and murder me.

7:12 I stress again that the law as principle is holy and so is every individual commandment it contains; it consistently promotes that which is just and good.

7:13 How then could I accuse something that is that good to have killed me? I say again, it was not the law, but sin that caused my spiritual death. The purpose of the law was to expose sin as the culprit. The individual commandment ultimately serves to show the exceeding extent of sin's effect on humanity.

7:14 We agree that the law is spiritual, but because I am sold like a slave to sin, I am reduced to a mere carnal life. *(Spiritual death) (Greek, **piprasko** from **perao**, meaning to transport into a distant land in order to sell as a slave. Sin is a foreign land.)*

7:15 This is how the sell-out to sin affects my life: I find myself doing things my conscience does not allow. My dilemma is that even though I sincerely desire to do that which is good, I don't, and the things I despise, I do.

7:16 It is obvious that my conscience sides with the law;

7:17 which confirms then that it is not really I who do these things but sin manifesting its symptoms in me. (Sin is similar to a dormant virus that suddenly broke out in very visible symptoms) It has taken my body hostage.

7:18 The total extent and ugliness of sin that inhabits me, reduced my life to good intentions that cannot be followed through.

7:19 Willpower has failed me; this is how embarrassing it is, the most diligent decision that I make to do good, disappoints; the very evil I try to avoid, is what I do. *(If mere quality decisions could rescue man, the law would have been enough. Good intentions cannot save man. The revelation of what happened to us in Christ's death is what brings faith into motion to liberate from within. Faith is not a decision we make to give God a chance, faith is realising our inclusion in what happened on the cross and in the resurrection of Christ!)*

7:20 If I do the things I do not want to do, then it is clear that I am not evil, but that I host sin in my body against my will.

7:21 It has become a predictable principle; I desire to do well, but my mere desire cannot escape the evil presence that dictates my actions.

7:22 The real person that I am on the inside delights in the law of God *(the law proves to be consistent with my inner make-up)*.

7:23 There is another law though, (foreign to my design) the law of sin, activating and enrolling the members of my body as weapons of war against the law of my mind. I am held captive like a prisoner of war in my own body.

7:24 The situation is absolutely desperate for humankind; is there anyone who can deliver me from this death trap?

7:25 Thank God, this is exactly what he has done through Jesus Christ our Leader; he has come to our rescue! I am finally freed from this conflict between the law of my mind and the law of sin in my body. *(If I was left to myself, the best I could do was to try and serve the law of God with my mind, but at the*

same time continue to be enslaved to the law of sin in my body. Compromise could never suffice.)

CHAPTER 8

8:1 Now the decisive conclusion is this: in Christ, every bit of condemning evidence against us is cancelled. (*"Who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit" This sentence was not in the original text, but later copied from verse 4. The person who added this most probably felt that the fact of Paul's declaration of mankind's innocence had to be made subject again to man's conduct. Religion under the law felt more comfortable with the condition of personal contribution rather than the conclusion of what faith reveals. The "in Christ" revelation is key to God's dealing with man. It is the PIN-code of the Bible. See 1Cor.1:30 and Eph. 1:4.*)

8:2 The law of the Spirit is the liberating force of life in Christ. This leaves me with no further obligation to the law of sin and death. Spirit has superseded the sin enslaved senses as the principle law of our lives. (*The law of the spirit is righteousness by faith vs the law of personal effort and self righteousness which produces condemnation and spiritual death which is the fruit of the DIY tree.*)

8:3 The law failed to be anything more than an instruction manual; it had no power to deliver man from the strong influence of sin holding us hostage in our own bodies. God disguised himself in his son in this very domain where sin ruled man, the human body. The flesh body he lived and conquered in was no different to ours. Thus sin's authority in the human body was condemned. (*Heb.4:15 As High Priest he fully identifies with us in the context of our frail human life. Having subjected it to close scrutiny, he proved that the human frame was master over sin. His sympathy with us is not to be seen as excusing weaknesses that are the result of a faulty design, but rather as a trophy to humanity. He is not an example for us but of us.*)

8:4 The righteousness promoted by the law is now realised in us. Our practical day-to-day-life bears witness to spirit inspiration and not flesh domination.

8:5 Sin's symptoms are sponsored by the senses, a mind dominated by the sensual. Thoughts betray source; spirit life attracts spirit thoughts.

8:6 Thinking patterns are formed by reference, either the sensual appetites of the flesh and spiritual death, or zoe-life and total tranquillity flowing from a mind addicted to spirit (*faith*) realities.

8:7 A mind focused on flesh (*the sensual domain where sin held me captive*) is distracted from God with no inclination to his life-laws. Flesh (*self-righteousness*) and spirit (*faith righteousness*) are opposing forces. (*Flesh no*

longer defines you; faith does)

8:8 It is impossible for those immersed in flesh to at the same time accommodate themselves to the opinion, desire and interest of God.

8:9 But you are not flesh-conscious, you are spirit-conscious; God's Spirit is at home in you. Anyone who does not see himself fully clothed and identified in the Spirit of Christ, cannot be himself. *(If anyone does not embrace the Spirit of Christ, he is not himself. Greek, **echo** to have in hand, to hold, in the sense of wearing like a garment, to possess in mind, to be closely joined to a person. Greek, **hautō** from **heauto**, reflexive relation, himself, herself, themselves. See James 1:24, "for he goes away from what the mirror reveals, and immediately forgets what manner of man he is." Also Rom.1:23 "Losing sight of God, made them lose sight of who they really were. In their calculation the image and likeness of God became reduced to a corrupted and distorted pattern of themselves." See also Luke 15:17, "The prodigal son came to himself..." same word used here, **heauto**)*

8:10 The revelation of Christ in you declares that your body is as good as dead to sin's demands; sin cannot find any expression in a corpse. You co-died together with him. Yet your spirit is alive because of what righteousness reveals. *(The word traditionally translated, "if" as in "if Christ is in you..." can either be a condition or a conclusion, which makes a vast difference. If God be for us, (v31) is most certainly a conclusion of the revelation of the Gospel, all of God's action in Christ confirms the fact that he is for us and not against us. Thus, "because God is for us..." In the same context this verse reveals that Christ is in us. See Gal.1:16, "it pleased the Father to reveal his Son in me, in order that I might proclaim him in the nations." See Rom 10:6-8, "Righteousness by faith says...")*

8:11 Our union with Christ further reveals that if the same Spirit that awakened the body of Jesus from the dead inhabits us then we equally participate in his resurrection. In the same act of authority whereby God raised Jesus from the dead, he co-restores your body *(reckoned dead in Christ's death)* to life by his indwelling Spirit. *(Your body need never again be an excuse for an inferior expression of the Christ life.)*

8:12 We owe flesh nothing.

8:13 To now, in the light of all this, continue to live under the sinful influences of the senses is to reinstate the dominion of spiritual death. Instead, we are indebted to now exhibit the highest expression of life inspired by the Spirit. This life demonstrates zero tolerance to the habits and sinful patterns of the flesh.

8:14 The original life of the Father revealed in his son is the life the Spirit now conducts within us.

*(Gr. **agoo**, to conduct or to lead as a shepherd leads his sheep.)*

8:15 Slavery is such a poor substitute for sonship! They are opposites; the one leads forcefully through fear; sonship responds fondly to Abba Father.

8:16 His Spirit resonates within our spirit to confirm the fact that we originate in God.

8:17 Because we are his offspring, we qualify to be heirs; God himself is our portion, we co-inherit with Christ. Since we were represented and included in his suffering we equally participate in the glory of his resurrection.

8:18 He has taken the sting out of our suffering; what seemed burdensome in this life becomes insignificant in comparison to the glory he reveals in us.

8:19 Our lives now represent the one event every creature anticipates with held breath, standing on tip-toe as it were to witness the unveiling of the sons of God. Can you hear the drum-roll?

8:20 Every creature suffered abuse through Adam's fall; they were discarded like a squeezed-out orange. Creation did not volunteer to fall prey to the effect of the fall. Yet within this stark setting, hope prevails.

8:21 All creation knows that the glorious liberty of the sons of God sets the stage for their own release from decay.

8:22 We sense the universal agony and pain recorded in history until this very moment.

8:23 We ourselves feel the grief echo of their groaning within us while we are ready to embrace the original blueprint also of our physical stature to the full consequence of sonship. What we already now participate in as first fruits of the spirit will bloom into a full gathering of the harvest. *(The glorified physical body Math.17. Also the full realization of everything reconciled in Christ. James 1:18 It was his delightful resolve to give birth to us; we were conceived by the unveiled logic of God. (The Word of truth.) We lead the exhibition of his handiwork, like first fruits introducing the rest of the harvest he anticipates.)*

8:24 For what we already experience of salvation confirms our hope and continues to fuel our expectation for what we still cannot see. *(In terms of realising the full gathering of the harvest.)* In the final visible completeness of the harvest, hope has fulfilled its function.

8:25 In the mean time our expectation takes us beyond visual confirmation into a place of patient contentment.

8:26 The Spirit also sighs within us with words too deep for articulation,

assisting us in our prayers when we struggle to know how to pray properly. When we feel restricted in our flesh, he supersedes our clumsy efforts and hits bulls-eye every time. *(He continues to call things which seem non-existent as though they were! See Rom.4:17 He is never distracted, he only sees and celebrates perfection.)*

8:27 He who scrutinises the heart understands the intention of the spirit. His intercession for the saints is consistent with the blue-print purpose of God. *("I knew you even before I fashioned you in your mother's womb" Jer.1:5. "Then you will know, even as you have always been known." 1Cor.13:12. He knows us so much better than what we know ourselves)*

8:28 Meanwhile we know that the love of God causes everything to mutually contribute to our advantage. His Master Plan is announced in our original identity. *(Called according to his purpose, **kaleo**, to surname, to identify by name.)*

8:29 He pre-designed and engineered us from the start to be jointly fashioned in the same mould and image of his son according to the exact blueprint of his thought. We see the original and intended pattern of our lives preserved in his Son. He is the firstborn from the same womb that reveals our genesis. He confirms that we are the invention of God. *(We were born anew when he was raised from the dead! 1 Pet 1:3. His resurrection co-reveals our common genesis. No wonder then that he is not ashamed to call us his brethren! We indeed share the same origin. Heb.2:11.)*

8:30 Jesus reveals that man pre-existed in God; he defines us. He justified us and also glorified us. He redeemed our innocence and restored the glory we lost in Adam. *(Rom 3:23,24; **prooritso**, pre defined, like when an architect draws up a detailed plan; **kaleo**, to surname, identify by name)*

8:31 All these things point to one conclusion, God is for us! Who can prevail against us?

8:32 Without hesitation God abandoned his Son to death for the redemption of mankind; this grace gift is all inclusive. This leaves us without any excuse to feel neglected or in lack. *(Everything we lost in Adam is again restored to us in Christ. Sin left man with an enormous shortfall; grace restores man to excellence! Rom.3:21-24, 1Cor.2:7. God had our glory in mind all along.)*

8:33 God has identified us, who can disqualify us? No-one can point a finger; he has justified us. *(He has placed us beyond the reach of blame and shame, guilt and gossip!)*

8:34 What further ground can there possibly be to condemn man? In his death he faced our judgement; in his resurrection he declares our innocence; the

implications cannot be undone! He now occupies the highest seat of authority as the executive of our redemption in the throne room of God. *(See verse 1, also Rom 4:25)*

8:35 What will it take to distance us from the love of Christ? You name any potential calamity: intense pressure of the worst possible kind, cluster-phobia, persecution, destitution, loneliness, extreme exposure, life-threatening danger, or war?

8:36 Let me quote scripture to remind you, "Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." *(Psa. 44:22)*

8:37 On the contrary, in the thick of these things our triumph remains beyond dispute. His love has placed us above the reach of any onslaught.

8:38 This is my conviction, no threat whether it be in death or life; be it angelic beings, demon powers or political principalities, nothing known to us at this time, or even in the unknown future;

8:39 no dimension of any calculation in time or space, nor any device yet to be invented, has what it takes to separate us from the love of God demonstrated in Christ. Jesus is our ultimate authority.

CHAPTER 9

9:1 I speak of our inclusion in Christ is my honest passion; I cannot deceive my own conscience, confirmed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit in me.

9:2 I experience such grief, like a person in constant mourning for a deceased loved one.

9:3 If it could in any way profit my blood relatives, the Jews; I would prefer myself to rather be excluded from the blessing of Christ. If my exclusion could possibly help them understand their inclusion, I would gladly offer my body as a sacrifice.

9:4 Sonship is the natural heritage of Israel; they historically witnessed the glory and covenants and the dramatic endorsement of the Law; the prophetic rituals of worship and the Messianic promises belong to them.

9:5 They are the physical family of the Christ. He supersedes all our definitions; he is God, the blessed Good Word of all ages. Amen! *(eulogetos, blessed, from eulogeo, good word, good news, or 'well done' announcement, normally translated, blessing. The Word of God reaches far beyond the boundaries of Israel, it includes every nation.)*

9:6 Yet it is not as though their unbelief neutralised the Word of God in its effect. Israel is no longer restricted to a physical family and geographic location.

9:7 It is not the natural seed of Abraham that gives them their identity, but Isaac, the faith-child. God said, "Your children's identity is revealed in Isaac." (*Gen.21:12.*) (*kaleo, to surname, or to identify by name. Man's original identity was not preserved in the flesh, but in the Promise.*)

9:8 By this God clearly indicates that man's true spirit identity is revealed in faith and not in flesh. The Promise is the fuel of faith. (*The promise ignites faith. Faith gives substance to what hope sees.*)

9:9 Remember God's pledge, "In 9 months time, Sarah shall have a son." (*Gen.18:10, "according to the time of life, thus 9 months; Gal.4:4; Jesus is the fullness of time in terms of the promise*)

9:10 Rebecca and Isaac also conceived consistent with the promise, to further prove the point of faith versus performance.

9:11 God spoke to Rebecca while the twins were still in the womb. Nothing distinguished them in terms of good looks or performance, (except the fact that the one would be born minutes before the other, which would give him preference according to human tradition.) It was recorded to emphasise the principle of faith-identity as the ultimate value above any preference according to the flesh. (Faith nullifies any ground the flesh has to boast in.)

9:12 She was told, "the elder shall serve the younger."

9:13 We would say that Esau had the raw deal; he was disliked while Jacob was favored. (*Gen.25:23 And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other; the elder shall serve the younger." The two come out of the same mould; yet they represent two types of people: one who understands his true identity by faith and one who seeks to identify himself after the flesh. Again the law of performance vs the law of faith is emphasised in order to prepare the ground for the promise-principle. Mankind's salvation would be by promise and not by performance; ie. It would not be a reward for good behavior. By the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, no man will be justified.*)

9:14 To say that God is unfair, is to miss the point.

9:15 Moses saw the glory of God's goodness; he saw God's mercy and the kindness of his compassion. (*Gen.33:18,19. Even when Israel deserved his absence he promised them his presence. Moses saw the glory and goodness of God, while he hid in the cleft of the rock. Throughout scripture the Rock*

represents the blueprint of man's original identity. Isa.51:1, Deut.32:18, Math 16:15-18)

9:16 God's mercy is not a reward for good behaviour; it is not a wreath given to the fastest athlete.

9:17 God employed Pharaoh as a prophetic figure to demonstrate the drama of mankind's salvation from their slavery to an inferior identity. Scripture records God's conversation with Pharaoh, Ex.9:16 "But to show you my power working in you, I raised you up so that my Name (*revealing man's authentic and original identity*) might be declared throughout all the earth." (*Man's identity is not in Pharaoh's claim or some political leader's influence, but in God.*)

9:18 The same act of mercy that he willingly bestows on everyone, may bless the one and harden the heart of the other.

9:19 This just doesn't sound reasonable at all! What gives God the right then to still blame anyone? Who can resist his will?

9:20 How can any man dispute with God? The mould dictates the shape. (*There is only one true mould of man's design: the image and likeness of God.*)

9:21 The Potter sets the pace; same Potter, same clay, one vessel understands its value and another not; one realises that it is priceless, the other seems worthless to itself.

9:22 Their sense of worthlessness has labelled them for destruction, yet God's power and passion prevails in patient endurance. (*God is not schizophrenic, having to balance out a seemingly unstable character by creating a nice guy and a bad guy: one for blessing and one for wrath! He cannot be both the Author of light and darkness; there is in him no shadow of compromise or change; no inconsistency or distortion whatsoever! James 1:17, 18. Man deceives himself when his knowledge of his true identity becomes blurred by the flesh. "He goes away and immediately forgets what manner of man he is". Paul's noble birth carried no further significance when he discovered his spirit identity revealed in Christ. The recorded history of Israel prepares the prophetic stage of God's dealing with universal mankind. Faith and not flesh would be the medium of God's dealing with man. Flesh reduces man to the senses and the soul realm, while faith's substance reveals man's true spirit identity. Truth ignites faith. His patience is shown in Pharaoh: "So get your livestock under roof, everything exposed in the open fields, people and animals, will die when the hail comes down. All of Pharaoh's servants who had respect for GOD's word got their workers and animals under cover as fast as they could, but those who didn't take GOD's word seriously left their workers and animals out in the field. Ex.9:19-21. Heb.4:2 "For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with*

faith in the hearers.”)

9:23 He has set the stage to exhibit the wealth of his mercy upon the vessels of value. He desires to confirm in them his original intent. (*His glory, doxa opinion, intent*)

9:24 Being Jewish or Gentile no longer define us; God's faith defines us. (*He 'called' us; kaleo. To identify by name, to surname*)

9:25 Hosea voiced the heart of God when he said, “I will call a people without identity, my people, and her who was unloved, my Darling.” (*Even Esau whom you said that I hated. See verse 13. It was common among the Hebrews to use the terms “love” and “hatred” in this comparative sense, where the former implied strong positive attachment, and the latter, not positive hatred, but merely a less love, or the withholding of the expressions of affection; compare Gen 29:30-31; Luk 14:26*)

9:26 He prophesies that the very same people who were told that they are not God’s people, will be told that they are indeed the children of the living God.

9:27 Isaiah weeps for Israel: "You might feel lost in the crowd, because your numbers equal the grains of the sand of the sea, but God does not abandon the individual." Numbers do not distract God’s attention from the value of the one. (*“Isaiah maintained this same emphasis: If each grain of sand on the seashore were numbered and the sum labelled “chosen of God,” They'd be numbers still, not names; salvation comes by individual realisation. God doesn't just count us; he calls us by name. Arithmetic is not his focus.” MSG*)

9:28 For his word will perfect his righteousness without delay; his word is poetry upon the earth. (*John1:1,14, Rom.1:16,17*)

9:29 The Lord of the multitudes preserved for us a Seed, to rescue us from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (*From Hebrew, tzaba, (tsabaoth) a mass of people. See note on Rom.3:10, In Gen.18, Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah, “If there perhaps are 50 righteous people, will you save the city on their behalf?” He continues to negotiate with God, until he’s down to, “perhaps ten?”...“there was none righteous, no not one...” The remnant represents the one Seed that would rescue the mass of humanity! Rom.5, “one man’s obedience and act of righteousness, surpasses the effect of a multitude of sins!” 5:17 If (spiritual) death saw the gap in one sin, and grabbed the opportunity to dominate mankind in Adam, how much more may we now seize the advantage to reign in righteousness in this life through that one act of Christ, who declared us innocent by his grace. Grace is superior in authority to the transgression! The single grain of wheat did not abide alone! John 12:24. 5:18 The conclusion is clear: it took just one offence to condemn mankind; one act of righteousness declares the same mankind innocent! 5:19 The*

disobedience of the one man exhibits humanity as sinners, the obedience of another man exhibits humanity as righteous!)

9:30 This means that the nations that stood outside and excluded, the very Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness through religious discipline of any kind, have stumbled upon this treasure of faith.

9:31 Yet Israel who sought to achieve righteousness through keeping the law; based upon their own discipline and willpower, have failed to do so.

9:32 How did they fail? Faith seemed just too good to be true. They were more familiar and felt more comfortable with their own futile efforts than what they did with faith. Their faith identity (*reflected in Christ*) was a stone of offence.

9:33 The conclusion of the prophetic reference pointed towards the rock as the spirit identity of man. God placed his testimony of man's identity in front of their eyes, in Zion, the centre of their religious focus, yet, blinded by their own efforts to justify themselves, they tripped over him. But those who recognised him by faith, as the Rock from which they were hewn are freed from the shame of their sense of failure and inferiority. (*See Deut 32:18, "you have forgotten the Rock that birthed you..." Is.51:1, "Look to the Rock from which you were hewn" It is only in him that man will discover what he is looking for. "Who is the son of man?" His physical identity is surpassed by his spiritual origin, the image and likeness of God, "I say you are petros, you are rock. Math.16:13-19. Mankind's origin and true identity is preserved and revealed again in the Rock of ages. The term, 'rock' in those days represented what we call 'the hard drive' in technology; the place where data is securely preserved for a long time. Rock fossils carry the oldest data and evidence of life.)*

CHAPTER 10

10:1 God knows how my heart aches with deep and prayerful longing for Israel to realise their salvation.

10:2 I have been there myself, I know their zeal and devotion; their problem is not their passion, but their ignorance.

10:3 They are tirelessly busy with their own efforts to justify themselves while blatantly ignoring the fact that God already justified them in Christ.

10:4 Christ is the conclusion of the law, everything the law required of man was fulfilled in him; he thus represents the righteousness of the human race, based upon faith (*and not personal performance*).

10:5 Moses is the voice of the law; he says that a man's life is only justified in

his doing what the law requires.

10:6 But faith finds its voice in something much closer to man than his most disciplined effort to obey the law; faith understands that Christ is no longer a distant promise neither is he reduced to a mere historic hero. He is mankind's righteousness now! Christ is no longer hidden somewhere in the realm of heaven as a future hope. For the Jews to continue to ask God to send the Messiah is a waste of time! That is not the language of faith.

10:7 Faith knows that the Messiah is not roaming somewhere in the region of the dead; *(Faith announces a righteousness that reveals that man has been co-raised together with Christ.)* "Who will descend down into the abyss to bring Christ back from the dead?" *(Only those who deny the resurrection of Christ will say such nonsense. They would argue that if someone was able to go and check if Jesus is perhaps still in the region of the dead then it would be proof that he was not the Messiah.)*

10:8 Faith-righteousness announces that every definition of distance in time, space or hostility has been cancelled. Faith says, "The Word is near you, it is as close to you as your voice and the conviction of your heart." We publicly announce this message *(because we are convinced that it belongs to every man.)*

10:9 Now your salvation is realised! Your own words echo God's voice. The masterful act of Jesus forms the words in your mouth, inspired by the conviction in your heart that God indeed raised him from the dead. *(I his resurrection God co-raised us Hos 6:2. His resurrection declares our innocence, Rom 4:25. Salvation is not reduced to a recipe, or "sinners prayer" formula, it is the spontaneous inevitable conversation of a persuaded heart! To confess, **homologeo, homo**, the same thing + **logeo**, to say)*

10:10 Heart-faith confirms the fact of man's righteousness, and ignites the kind of conversation consistent with salvation. *(He restored us to blameless innocence! It is impossible not to boldly announce news of such global consequence. Isa 40:9)*

10:11 Scripture declares that whosoever believes in Christ *(to be the fulfilment of the promise of God to redeem man)* will not be ashamed *(hesitant)* to announce it. *(Isa 28:16; **cush**, to make haste; Isa 49:23 **bush**, to be ashamed; these 2 Hebrew words look very similar and were obviously confused in some translations, The Greek from Hebrew translation, the Septuagint was the Scriptures Paul was familiar with and there the word was translated from the word **bush**).*

10:12 Nothing distinguishes the Jew from the Greek when it comes to the generosity of God. He responds with equal benevolence to everyone who sees

themselves identified in him (*they realize that God defines them and not their cultural identity.*)

10:13 Salvation is to understand that every man's true identity is revealed in Christ.

10:14 How is it possible to convince people of their identity in him while they do not believe that he represents them? How will they believe if they remain ignorant about who they really are? How will they understand if the Good News of their inclusion is not announced? (*Greek, epikaleomai, traditionally translated, to call upon, from kaleo, which literary means to surname, or to identify by name. This is also the root word in ekklesia, with the word ek, being a preposition that denotes origin, and kaleo. In the context of Math 16 where Jesus introduces this word he reveals that the son of man is indeed the son of God, "I say to you Simon, son of Jonah, you are petros (Rock) and upon this petra I will build my ekklesia!" See note on Rom.9:33.*)

10:15 What gives someone the urgency to declare these things? It is recorded in prophetic scripture, "How lovely on the mountains (*where the watchmen were stationed to witness the outcome of the war*) are the feet of them leaping with the exciting news of victory. Because of their eyewitness encounter they are qualified to run with the Gospel of peace and announce the consequent glad tidings of good things that will benefit everyone."

10:16 It is hard to imagine that there can yet be a people who struggle to hear and understand the good news. Isaiah says, "Lord who has believed our report?"

10:17 It is clear then that faith's source is found in the content of the message heard; the message is Christ. (*We are God's audience; Jesus is God's language! Greek, ek, a preposition that denotes source or origin, thus faith comes out of the word that reveals Christ. The word of "Christ" appears in the best manuscripts.*)

10:18 Has God not given man a fair chance to hear? Psalm 19 says, "His voice goes thru the whole world like the rays of the sun; nothing is hid from its heat; yes, truly their resonance sounded in all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the earth."

10:19 I cannot understand how Israel could be so blind as to miss the Messiah in their midst. First it was Moses who predicted that God would provoke them to jealousy with a mass of people who are the nobodies in their estimation; a seemingly senseless bunch of people will steal the show to the disgust of Israel. (*Deut.32:21They have stirred me to jealousy with what is no god; they have provoked me with their idols. So I will stir them to jealousy with those who are no people; I will provoke them with a foolish nation.*)

10:20 Then Isaiah in no uncertain terms hears God say, "I was stumbled upon by them who did not even bother to seek me, I became obvious to a people who did not pursue me."

10:21 "Yet My hands were continually hovering over Israel in broad daylight beckoning them, while their unbelief and negative and contradictory conversation caused them to blatantly ignore me." (*Greek, [apetheo](#), (apathy) refusal to believe; [antilego](#) contradictory conversation. See Isaiah 65:1,2.*)

CHAPTER 11

11:1 I want to make it clear that I am not saying that God rejected Israel, my own life bears witness to that; and I am as Jewish as you can get; you can trace me back to Benjamin and Abraham.

11:2 God did not push his people aside; his reference is his knowledge of them before they rejected him. Scripture accounts occasions where God had abundant reason to abandon Israel. Elijah hits out against them and lists their sins to persuade God to utterly cast them off. (*Greek, [proginosko](#), to know in advance.*)

11:3 "Lord, they butchered your prophets, and undermined your provision through the sacrificial altar; I am the only one left and scared to death." (*1 Kings 19:14*)

11:4 Yet God answers him in a complete different tone, "You are counting wrong, you are not alone; I have seven times a thousand on reserve who have not bowed the knee to Baal." (*Who have not exchanged me for a foreign owner. Seven times a thousand refers to an innumerable amount and not to exactly 7000 people. The Hebrew word Baal means owner or husband or master. 1 Kings 19:18*)

11:5 Thus even in today's context, God's original word of grace has preserved a remnant of much larger proportion than what we can number. (*Greek, [ekloge](#), [ek](#), preposition denoting source or origin, + [logos](#), word, logic, thus referring to the original word. Traditionally translated, election.*)

11:6 Grace cannot suggest debt or obligation at the same time; the word grace can only mean what it says. The same argument goes for works, if salvation or any advantage for that matter is to be obtained according to prescribed regulations of conduct, then that's it, no amount of grace can change the rules! Grace means grace, work means work.

11:7 The very thing Israel sought to obtain through their diligent labour they failed to get; yet those who embraced grace as God's original intent hit bull's eye every time, leaving the rest groping around in the dark like blindfolded

archers. (Gr. *eklego* the original reasoning, logic, word)

11:8 Isaiah said that God has given them a spirit of slumber, causing their eyes and ears not to function. This drowsiness seems to prevail even to this day. (*Unbelief and religious ritual are blindfolds. "And the Lord said, this people draw near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips but remove their hearts and minds far from me, and their fear and reverence for me are a commandment of men that is learned by repetition..." Is.29:10,13*)

11:9 David sees how the very table of blessing has become a stumbling block to them through their ignorance. The table of the Lord is the prophetic celebration of the sacrificed Lamb, where God himself provides redemption according to the promise; yet therein they were trapped and snared and they stumbled by their own unbelief. Now their only reward is the table they set for themselves. (*Quote from Ps.69. Commentary by John Gill, "By their "table" may be meant, the altar; see Mal.1:7, ("You put unclean bread on my altar. And you say, How have we made it unclean? By your saying, The table of the Lord is of no value) and the sacrifices offered up upon it, their meat offerings and drink offerings, and all others; likewise the laws concerning the difference of meats, and indeed the whole ceremonial law may be intended, which lay in meats and drinks, and such like things: now the Jews placing their justifying righteousness before God, in the observance of these rites and ceremonies, and imagining that by these sacrifices their sins were really expiated and atoned for, they neglected and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ, but went about to establish their own; so that that which should have led them to Christ, became an handwriting of ordinances against them, and rendered Christ of no effect to them: moreover, the sacred writings, which are full of spiritual food and divine refreshment, the prophecies of the Old Testament, which clearly pointed out Christ, not being understood, but misapplied by them, proved a trap, a snare, and a stumbling block to them."*)

11:10 This is the penalty of their disbelief, eyes that constantly fail to focus on the fact that Christ took their burdens and now their backs are still bending to the point of breaking under the strain of their own burdens.

11:11 Does this mean that the Jews are beyond redemption? Is their stumbling permanent? No! May it never be too late for them. Their failure emphasised the inclusion of the Gentile nations. May it only prove to be their wake-up call.

11:12 If their stumbling enriched the rest of the world and their lack empowered the Gentiles, how much more significant will their realising their completeness be?

11:13 In my capacity as a representative of the Good news to the Gentiles, I will speak in such a way that the clarity of my conclusion

11:14 will provoke my own flesh and blood family to jealousy. I know that my words will rescue many of them.

11:15 The Gentile nations realised their inclusion in Christ in a sense at the expense of the Jews; to now also embrace the Jews in the welcome of God is to raise them from the dead.

11:16 The seed sets the pace, it sanctifies what sprouts from it. Seed produces after its kind. If the invisible root is holy, so are the visible branches.

11:17 And if some of the original branches were broken off, and you Gentiles like a wild olive were grafted in to partake of the same nourishing fatness of the roots,

11:18 then there is no cause for boasting against the ignorance of the Jews because you are now suddenly better off than they are. Remember, the roots sustain the branches, and not the other way round!

11:19 There is no point in thinking that in order to accommodate you, God had to first break off the Jewish branches.

11:20 Their unbelief was their loss; your faith is your gain.

11:21 God could do them no favours just because they were the natural branches; neither does God now owe you any special privileges.

11:22 Both God's goodness as well as his decisiveness are based on his integrity; unbelief is not tolerated, not in them neither will it be tolerated in you. His favor is not to be taken for granted; instead, continue to embrace and appreciate his goodness with gratitude.

11:23 The moment Israel turns from their unbelief, God is ready to immediately graft them back into the tree.

11:24 You were cut out of the unfruitful olive tree and were grafted into the stock of the original tree; how much more will these natural branches be grafted in again into their original identity.

11:25 Do not be ignorant then of the mystery of their temporal exclusion; their blindness opened your eyes to the fullness of God's plan for the whole world.

11:26 Once the nations realise the full extent of their inclusion, then all Israel shall also be saved. Just as it is written prophetically, "There shall come a Deliverer out of Zion; he shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob.

11:27 For this is my covenant unto them that I shall take away their sins.”
(Isa.59:20 "And as a Saviour he will come to Zion, turning away sin from Jacob, says the Lord. Isa.59:21 And as for me, this is my agreement with them, says the Lord: my spirit which is on you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your children, or from the mouth of your children's children, says the Lord, from now and for the ages to come.")

11:28 In your estimation they appear to be enemies of the gospel, but their Father's love for them has not changed. He knows their original worth.

11:29 For God's grace gifts and conviction of man's design are irrevocable.

11:30 In days gone by, you did not believe God; yet in a sense Israel's unbelief opened the door for you to realise God's mercy;

11:31 Now you are returning the favour as it were; your testimony of his mercy extends an opportunity to them to turn from their unbelief and embrace mercy.

11:32 In God's calculation the mass of humanity is trapped in unbelief; this qualifies all mankind for his mercy.

11:33 I am overwhelmed by the limitless extent of the wealth of God's wisdom and the perfection of his knowledge. How we have failed to explore or fathom the conclusion of his resolve! In our clumsy efforts to find him, we have completely lost track of God.

11:34 Who inspired his thought? Who sat in council with him?

11:35 Is God indebted to anyone?

11:36 Everything originates in him; finds both its authentic expression and ultimate conclusion in him. His opinion rules the ages. We cannot but agree with our yes and awe. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

12:1 Live consistent with who you really are, inspired by the loving kindness of God. My brothers, the most practical expression of worship is to make your bodies available to him as a living sacrifice; this pleases him more than any religious routine. He desires to find visible individual expression in your person.
*(Gr. **parakaleo**, from **para**, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the*

*point from which an action originates, intimate connection, and **kaleo**, to identify by name, to surname. Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit in the same capacity, **parakletos**, (John 14:16) Gr.**adelphos**, from **a**, as a connective particle and **delphos**, womb. Commonly translated as brother. (See Heb.2:11) Gr.**paristemi**, to exhibit, to present. In the context of the New Testament the sacrificial system no longer involves dead animals, but living people. "You died in his death and are now alive unto God" (Rom.6:11))*

12:2 Do not allow current religious tradition to mould you into its pattern of reasoning. Like an inspired artist, give attention to the detail of God's desire to find expression in you. Become acquainted with perfection. To accommodate yourself to the delight and good pleasure of him will transform your thoughts afresh from within. (Gr. **aion**, traditionally translated, 'do not be conformed to this world,' actually the word, **aion** points to a period of time of specific influence, in the context of this writing Paul refers to the religious traditional influence of his day. Gr. **euarestos**, **eu**, praiseworthy, well done + **arestos**, to accommodate one's self to the opinions desires and interests of others)

12:3 His grace gift inspires me to say to you that your thinking must be consistent with everything that is within you according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned to every individual. Let the revelation of redemption shape your thoughts.

12:4 The parallel is clear, there are many different members in one body, yet not one competes with the other in function. Instead every individual member co-compliments the other.

12:5 In Christ the many individuals are all part of the same body and members of one another.

12:6 Our gifts may differ in function, but his grace is the same. If it is your turn to prophesy, let faith and not a title be your inspiration.

12:7 The same goes for every aspect of ministry; whether it be serving or to give instruction,

12:8 or to just be there alongside someone to remind them of their true identity; always let faith set the pace. You are intertwined with your gift, wrapped up in the same parcel. Lead with passion; minister mercy cheerfully. (*metadidomi*, see note on Rom.1:11, and *haplous* fom *ha*, a particle of union and *pleko*, to plait, braid or weave together. You cannot distance yourself from your giving! Eph.4:11 What God now has in us is gift wrapped to the world.)

12:9 Love without any hidden agenda. Utterly detest evil, be glued to good.

12:10 Take tender care of one another with fondness and affection; esteem

one another's unique value.

12:11 Do not allow any hesitation to interrupt the rhythm of your zeal; capture the moment; maintain the boiling-point intensity of spirit devotion to the Lord.

12:12 Delight yourself in the pleasure of expectation; prayer prevails victoriously under pressure. (*elpis, to anticipate, usually with pleasure.*)

12:13 Purpose with resolve to treat strangers as saints; pursue and embrace them with fondness as friends, on equal terms of fellowship. Make yourself useful in the most practical way possible.

12:14 Continue to speak well even if someone wants to take advantage of you; bless and do not blame when you feel exploited.

12:15 Do not merely act the role in someone else's gladness or grief; feel with them in genuine joy and compassion.

12:16 Esteem everyone with the same respect; no one is more important than the other. Associate yourself rather with the lowly than with the lofty. Do not distance yourself from others in your own mind. (*JB Phillips, "Take a real interest in ordinary people"*)

12:17 Two wrongs do not make a right. Never retaliate, instead cultivate the attitude to anticipate only beauty and value in every person you encounter. (*pronoew, to know in advance.*)

12:18 You have within you what it takes to be everyone's friend, regardless of how they treat you. (*See Rom.1:16,17. Also Math.5:44,45.*)

12:19 Do not bother yourselves to get even dear ones. Do not let anger or irritation distract you; that which we have in common with one another (*righteousness*) must set the pace. Scripture confirms that the Lord himself is the revealer of righteousness. (*Gr.ekdikeo, from ek, a preposition denoting origin and dikeo, two parties finding likeness in one another. That which originates in righteousness must set the pace in every relationship.*)

12:20 "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink." These acts of kindness will certainly rid your enemy of the dross in his mind and win him as a friend. (*Proverbs 25:21,22 A refiner would melt metal in a crucible and intensify the process by heaping coals of fire on it. This is good strategy, be sensitive to the needs of your enemies. God sees gold in every person; hostility cannot hide our true value. He won us while we were hostile towards him. (See also Rom.5:8,10) His kindness led us to repentance. (Rom.2:4)*)

12:21 Do not let evil be an excuse for you to feel defeated, rather seize the opportunity to turn the situation into a victory for good.

CHAPTER 13

13:1 Submit to the authorities with your whole heart. Any authority only has its relevance in God. God is a God of order.

13:2 To rebel against a God ordained structure of authority is a criminal offence.

13:3 Rulers are there to encourage good behaviour and frighten off any evil intention.

13:4 They represent God's desire to protect you and to do you good. The sword they carry is not for decoration, they know how to use it against evil.

13:5 Do not let fear of punishment be your motivation, rather embrace a good conscience.

13:6 The taxes you pay is to show the government that you support what they represent on God's behalf.

13:7 Fulfil all your obligations to the government; whatever the tax is that they require of you. Give them their due honour and respect.

13:8 Remain debt free, the only thing we owe the world is our love. This is the essence of the law.

13:9 Love makes it impossible for you to commit adultery, or to kill someone, or to steal from someone, speak evil of anyone, or to covet anything that belongs to someone else. Your only option is to esteem a fellow human with equal value to yourself.

13:10 Everything love does is to the advantage of another; therefore love is the most complete expression of what the law requires.

13:11 You must understand the urgency and context of time; it is most certainly the hour now to wake up at once out of the hypnotic state of slumber and unbelief. Salvation has come.

13:12 It was night for long enough; the day has arrived. Cease immediately with any action associated with the darkness of ignorance. Clothe yourself in the radiance of light as a soldier would wear his full weaponry. *(The night is far spent, prokopto, as a smith forges a piece of metal until he has hammered it*

into its maximum length.)

13:13 Our lives exhibit the kind of conduct consistent with the day, in contrast to the parade of the night of intoxicated licentiousness and lust, with all the quarrels and jealousy it ignites. (*Gr. komos, a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry.*)

13:14 By being fully immersed into Christ makes it impossible for the flesh to even imagine to find any further expression or fulfilment in lust. Jesus is the supreme authority.

CHAPTER 14

14:1 Welcome those who are young in their faith with warm hospitality. Avoid controversial conversation. (*Gr. proslambano, to take somebody as one's companion.*)

14:2 One may feel free to eat anything, while another believes one should only eat vegetables.

14:3 By having faith to eat anything does not qualify you to judge the one who abstains; God doesn't treat the vegetarian any different.

14:4 You are in no position to criticize the hospitality of God; he invited both to the same table and he is well capable to uphold and establish someone who still stumbles and seems weak in faith.

14:5 One person may see more religious importance in some days while another values every day the same. Let everyone come to the full conclusion of what the day means in their own understanding.

14:6 Whoever esteems the specific importance of a certain day does so unto the Lord, so does he who values every day equally. One eats while another abstains, both honours God in gratitude.

14:7 No one can live or die in isolation; our life and death touch others.

14:8 Neither can our life or death distance us from him; we remain his property.

14:9 The death Jesus died and his resurrection and the conclusion of his life

now in us is the only relevance of life and death.

14:10 What qualifies you to be your brother's judge? On what grounds do you condemn your brother? All of us stand in the footprint of Christ. *(We are equally represented in him)*

14:11 The prophet recorded what he heard God say, "My own life is the guarantee of my conviction, says the Lord, every knee shall freely bow to me in worship, and every tongue shall spontaneously speak from the same God-inspired source." Isa.45:23. *(This echoes what John heard in Revelation 5:13, "And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, in the world below, and in the sea, all living beings in the universe, and they were singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor, glory and might, for ages unto ages!" (Col.1:15-20) "Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed before creation began, for it was through him that everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen. Through him, and for him, also, were created power and dominion, ownership and authority. In fact, every single thing was created through, and for him. He is both the first principle and the upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation. (Phillips)1:20 And God purposed through him to reconcile the universe to himself, making peace through his blood, which was shed upon the Cross, in order to reconcile to himself through him all things on earth and in heaven. Weymouth. (Eph.1:9,10) "For God had allowed us to know the secret of his plan, and it is this: he purposed in his sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfilment in him." Phillips.)*

14:12 Thus the logic of God will find its personal expression in every person.

14:13 There remains no further cause for judging anyone. Rather determine that you will not allow suspicion or prejudice to snare your brother into a trap.

14:14 I am totally persuaded that in the Lord Jesus nothing is unclean in itself, it only seems unclean in someone's own religious reasoning.

14:15 But to walk in love is more important than to feed your appetite with your favourite food. Much rather lose out on a meal than lose a brother for whom Christ died. I mean Jesus sacrificed his life; for you to sacrifice a meal is no big deal.

14:16 Do not let your right to eat bring shame on Christ.

14:17 God's royal dominion is not based on food and drink regulations, but righteousness, (likeness) friendship (peace) and joy in the Holy Spirit.

14:18 This is definitely a win-win situation; God is pleased and people respect

you.

14:19 Pursue whatever promotes peace and mutual encouragement.

14:20 Do not let a diet issue undo the work that God has done in someone's life. All foods are good in essence; it only becomes evil if someone causes or takes offence.

14:21 For your brother's sake, in order not to offend or tempt his weakness, it is better to not eat meat or drink wine in his presence.

14:22 At the end of the day, it is your own belief that matters most before God; do what your heart approves of without allowing guilt to interfere with your joy.

14:23 Don't let doubt dictate what you eat; whatever is not prompted by faith is reduced to flesh, if faith does not inspire you, you miss the point.

CHAPTER 15

15:1 We who are strong in faith are obliged to lift up those who are weak, to seek their advantage and not our own.

15:2 Every one of us are to please our fellowman and consider his good and benefit.

15:3 For Christ was not in it for himself, but for us. It is written about him, that he took the full blow of the reproach and insults directed at us.

15:4 Whatever was written about him includes and represents us. We take instruction and encouragement from his patience, while Scripture is our close companion to remind us of our true spiritual identity. We anticipate the future with delight.

15:5 God's patience and reflection of who we really are, transmits in us like-mindedness toward one another according to the pattern of Christ Jesus.

15:6 The opinion of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, speaks one universal language in us inspired by the same passion.

15:7 This gives us all the more reason to embrace one another in friendship with the same warmth wherewith Christ embraced us into the welcome of God.

15:8 I am convinced that the ministry of Jesus Christ was confirmation to the circumcised Jews of the truth of God's promises unto their fathers.

15:9 So also will the Gentile nations glorify God for his mercy towards them. David prophesied the resonance and echo of praise in the Gentile nations who would discover their true identity in his name. *(see also Ps.22:27)*

15:10 Again scripture reveals in Deut.32:43 that the Gentiles will join in celebration as they too are co-revealed as his people. *(See context of Deut.32)*

15:11 Yet again in Psalm 117:1 the Gentiles are exhorted to give God praise and to join in the universal applause of all the peoples of the earth.

15:12 The prophet Isaiah sees the root of Jesse who shall rise out of the ground where it was cut off, to reign over the Gentiles; he will win their trust. Is.11:1,10.

15:13 God who is the engineer of expectation fills you to the brim with tranquil delight. The dynamic of the Holy Spirit causes faith to exceed any possible hesitation in hope.

15:14 I am totally persuaded about you my brothers that you are able to mutually instruct one another in the full measure of the knowledge of everything that is good in you.

15:15 God's gift of grace is the motivation of my writing to you; I urge you to remember your allotted portion in life. *(Gr. meros, allotted portion, note the word translated, sin, is hameros, which means to be without your allotted portion. Every sin springs thus from man's sense of unfulfilment and lack, due to ignorance concerning those things which rightfully belong to him, his true spiritual identity, his innocence and his partaking of the Divine nature and inheritance in Christ.)*

15:16 It is because of Jesus Christ that I am in the people business. I occupy this priestly office representing the goodness of God to the masses of humanity *(Gentiles,)* persuading them to see how presentable and approved they are to God in the Holy Spirit.

15:17 Because of who I am in Christ Jesus, I have taken a bold stand before God.

15:18 I could entertain you with all the detail of my personal adventures, yet all I desire to communicate is how actively Christ worked through my words to grab the attention of the nations.

15:19 The message was confirmed in every sign and miracle in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus I went full circle from Jerusalem to Illyricum, proclaiming the glad tidings of Christ in its most complete context. *(Taking Jerusalem as a*

center, Paul preached not only in Damascus and Arabia, but in Syria, in Asia Minor, in all Greece, in the Grecian Islands, and in Thessaly and Macedonia. Illyricum was a country of Europe, extending from the Adriatic gulf to Pannonia, it extended from the river Arsia to the river Drinius, thus including Liburnia on the west, and Dalmatia on the east. It now forms part of Croatia, Bosnia, Istria, and Slavonia.)

15:20 I have placed such fond value on the fact that I could pioneer the glad tidings in many of these areas without building on someone else's interpretation of Christ.

15:21 Isaiah prophesied that "Those who have never been told about him, will be startled to see him clearly, even though they have never heard of him, they will understand his message." *(The message of truth speaks a global language. Paul says that the open statement of the truth, which is the Word made flesh in us in the mirror reflection of Christ, appeals to every man's conscience. (2Cor.4:2) "Our lives are letters known and read by all men." (2Cor.3:2))*

15:22 Now you know why it took me so long to finally get to you.

15:23 There seems to be no more room for pioneering work in these regions, after these many years I can finally fulfill my dream.

15:24 I purpose to journey all the way through Italy to Spain, but it is with great delight that I look forward to meeting with you first and enjoy a rich measure of fellowship that will again propel me onward.

15:25 Right now I am on my way to Jerusalem to encourage the saints.

15:26 The believers in Greece, all the way from Macedonia as well as those in Achaia have prepared a gift with great delight to bring relief to their Jewish brothers in Jerusalem who are struggling financially.

15:27 They feel indebted to them since they share freely in their spiritual wealth.

15:28 As soon as I have delivered their harvest officially, I will depart to Spain via you.

15:29 I know that my coming to you will be like a cargo ship filled to the brim with the blessing of everything that the Gospel of Christ communicates. *(Gr. **pleroma** those things with which a ship is filled, freight, merchandise etc.)*

15:30 Being co-identified with you as members of a godly family through our Lord Jesus Christ and feeling the same spiritual love-bond toward one another, we are prayer partners before God joined in urgent passion.

15:31 Strive with me that I will be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and also that my service to the saints in Jerusalem will be favorably received.

15:32 Through the pleasure of God's purpose I will arrive in Rome in joy so that we may be mutually refreshed in one another's company.

15:33 God who sustains us in oneness and peace is with every one of you. Amen. (Gr. *eirene*, peace from *eiro*, to join like the 'swallow tail' joint in carpentry.)

CHAPTER 16

16:1 I would like to introduce Phoebe to you, she is our sister and serves the ecclesia in Corinth located in the port of Cenchreae. *(The names of 37 individual believers are personally honored in this chapter of salutation. Seven home churches are also specifically mentioned, (5 in Rome and 2 in Corinth) Since Paul has never visited Rome before, these people were all acquaintances, converts, fellow prisoners or travel companions of his before they moved to Rome. Since Prisca and Aquilla originally came from Rome, (Acts 18:2, 26, 1Cor.16:19) they possibly purposefully returned there to start or strengthen the ecclesia together with a strong team of believers. Their strategy was to scatter several home-fellowships throughout the city. This is reflected in Paul's letter to the Corinthians where he says, "Our expectation is that as your faith increases, our field amongst you will be greatly enlarged so that we may preach the gospel also in lands beyond you." (2Cor.10:15,16.))*

16:2 Welcome her with appropriate saintly hospitality in the Lord. Support her and her business in every possible way you can. I am one of many who have greatly benefitted from her care and practical help.

16:3 Warmly embrace Prisca and Aquilla, my business partners in the Lord.

16:4 They are respected in all the Gentile churches for their unselfish lives. They have risked their own necks for me.

16:5 Salute the ekklesia in their house. Give my dear friend Epaenetus a warm hug from me. He represents the whole of Asia to me since he was my first convert there.

16:6 Miriam must also be mentioned; I remember how relentlessly she exhausted herself for others.

16:7 Embrace my cousins Andronicus and June who were in prison with me. I hold them in high regard as ambassadors for Christ, they are my seniors in him.

16:8 Hug Amliatus, my lovely friend in the Lord.

16:9 Then there is Urbanos, my co-worker in Christ as well as my dear friend Stachys.

16:10 Acknowledge Apelles, a true veteran in Christ; honour the household of believers in the home of Aristobulus.

16:11 Say a big hello to cousin Herodian; greet the believers in the Narcissus home.

16:12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa whose work in the Lord bears testimony to their diligence; also my dear friend Persis who works so tirelessly.

16:13 I also remember Rufus as an outstanding worker in the Lord, and salute his mother who has become a mother to me.

16:14 I embrace Asyncritus, Phlegon, Herman, Patrobas, Hermes and all the family in fellowship with them.

16:15 Warmly greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, as well as Olympas and all the saints in their fellowship.

16:16 Our friendship is sacred. The ecclesia of Christ here in Corinth salutes you.

16:17 Consistent with who you really are my brothers, be alert to avoid anything that causes disunion or offence, contrary to the teaching that you have become acquainted with.

16:18 For there are those who are not addicted to our Lord Jesus Christ but prompted rather by the hidden agenda of their own fleshly appetites, they use their clever manipulation of words and eloquent speech to deceive the emotionally unstable.

16:19 Your obedience (*faith-focus*) has become known everywhere. I am so happy for you, still I desire for you to be wisely and exclusively acquainted with that which is good and innocent (*unmixed*) of evil. (*Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience prompted by faith. (Rom1:5, 16:26.) Greek, **upoakouo**, translated, obedience or accurate hearing. Greek, **akeraios**, unmixed, innocent.*)

16:20 God who is the author of our peace shall quickly and utterly trample Satan, doing it with your feet. Your victory is realised in the revelation of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and echoed (*personalized*) in your amen. (*We are the body of Christ; God desires to demonstrate his reign of peace in us by*

confirming satan's defeat in our practical day to day experience.)

16:21 Timothy my co-labourer greets you affectionately; also Luke, and Jason and Sosipater who are fellow Jews, salute you kindly.

16:22 I Tertius who wrote this epistle acknowledge you in the Lord.

16:23 My host, Gaius, in whose house the church meets, sends you his greetings. Then there is Erastus, the city chief who greets you, so does Brother Quartus. *(See Acts 19:29, Gaius was a travel companion of Paul; Paul also mentions him in 1 Cor 1:14.)*

16:24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ belongs to you.

16:25 Because of what I am blessed to see in this gospel I am confident in God's ability to make you stand strong and immovable. I proclaim Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was concealed in silence in the sequence of timeless ages, *(This gospel breaks the silence of the ages, and reveals how God succeeded to redeem his image and likeness in man.)*

16:26 but now is made publicly known; mirrored in prophetic scripture, the God of the ages has issued his mandate to make the mystery known in such a way that all the nations of the earth will discover the lifestyle (*obedience*) that the hearing of faith ignites. *("Surely he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we were healed." (Isa.53:4,5) Faith inspires an obedience of spontaneity beyond duty driven obligation.)*

16:27 Jesus Christ is the exclusive opinion of God's wisdom; he is the culmination of time. *(He forever broke the silence of the ages! He is the logos that was from the beginning before time was, the Word that was with God, the Word that is God and became flesh and dwells within us. John 1:1,14 The incarnation (Latin, **in carne**, in the body) is the final trophy of the eternal logos of God. (Col.1:15, 2:9,10))*

1 Corinthians

CHAPTER 1

1:1 My name is Paul, the ministry of Jesus Christ is the mandate of my life according to God's purpose. Brother Sosthenes is my colleague. *(He was formerly the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth. Acts 18:17.)*

1:2 I address this writing to the ekklesia of God in Corinth. You have been restored to the harmony of your original design; made holy in Christ Jesus; no wonder then that you are surnamed Saints. You are in association with all those who have discovered their true identity in Jesus Christ everywhere in every location; he is the head of this union; his name relates us to one another in a global family. *(Eph 3:15 "... from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named". Church, ekklesia, those who have discovered their original identity, from **ek**, source, origin + **kaleo**, to surname, identify by name.)*

1:3 Grace and peace is your portion from God who is our origin and from his executive, Jesus Christ. *(Grace and peace express the sum total of every beneficial purpose of God towards us. Paul brands his gospel with these words in order to distinguish the message of the revelation of the finished work of Christ as the basis to our faith from the law of Moses which restricted man to his own efforts to justify himself. It is a matter of grace vs reward and peace vs striving.)*

1:4 I am always so happy for you when I consider how greatly advantaged you are because of God's grace unveiled in Jesus Christ.

1:5 Your knowledge of Christ is based on so much more than hear-say; every aspect of your life gives eloquent expression to the rich reservoir of your union in him.

1:6 You certainly have the testimony of Christ evidenced in you. *(You possess full knowledge and give full expression because in you the evidence for the truth of Christ has found confirmation. NEB)*

1:7 In your receiving the revelation of Jesus Christ as the principal influence in your life *(his Lordship)* you prove that you lack nothing and that his grace gifts fully compliment you. *(This is in such contrast to those days when under-achievement was the rule; when you felt that you were never good enough and always lagging behind. Note: **apekdechomai**, not eagerly waiting for, but eagerly accepting, to welcome with hospitality; **apokalupsis** the unveiling, disclosure. I don't know why most translations always want to postpone what God has already unveiled!)*

1:8 He establishes you from start to finish; to stand vindicated in your identity in the light of day as evidenced in the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Greek, **anegkletos**, beyond scrutiny, proved innocent in your original identity.*)

1:9 We are surnamed by God, he is our true lineage; our Leader Jesus Christ has welcomed us to fully participate in the same friendship that he and the Father enjoys.

1:10 My dear Brothers, because we are surnamed and identified in the name of our master Jesus Christ, I urge you to speak with one voice, we share the same source as reference; no division or any sense of distance is tolerated, which makes us a perfect match, accurately joined in the same thought pattern and communicating the same resolve. (*Gr. **parakaleo**, from **para**, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection and **kaleo**, to surname.*)

1:11 Some of the believers in Chleo's fellowship told me about the controversy in your ranks; this is most disturbing!

1:12 What I was told is that you are divided into groups, where some side with Paul, others with Apollos, still others with Cephas, and even some who say, "we are the Messianic-group!"

1:13 This is really ridiculous: can Christ be cut up into little relics? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptised into Paul's name?

1:14 Baptism is not my business or emphasis; I am glad that I only baptized Crispus and Gaius amongst you! (*Crispus was his neighbor, and leader of the Synagogue, Acts 18:8. Gaius resided at Corinth; Paul stayed with him when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans; Rom 16:23; he was also a travel companion of Paul, Acts 19:29.*)

1:15 Somehow baptism has become a snare to some who wish to win members to their denomination! I distance myself from such folly!

1:16 O yes! Now I remember that I also baptized the family of Stephanus. (*1Co16:15, the family (young and old) of Stephanus were the first converts in Achaia*)

1:17 My mandate was not about winning members for some 'Christian club' through baptism! I am commissioned to declare the good news without any strings attached; nothing to distract from the powerful effect of the revelation of the cross of Christ. (*The mystery of the cross is the revelation of mankind's inclusion in his death and resurrection. See 1Co 2:7*)

1:18 To their own loss the message of the cross seems foolish to some; but to us who discover our salvation there, it is the dynamic of God.

1:19 Isaiah wrote: I will confuse the wisdom of the 'so-called' wise and prove their experts wrong! Isa.29:14

1:20 God's wisdom (*revealed in the success of the cross*) puts the rest out of business! (*When it comes to real answers to the dilemma of mankind,*) they have all closed shop; the airy-fairies, the philosophers, the academics, the smooth-talkers, the lot!

1:21 By suspicious scrutiny the sense-ruled world surveys the works of God in creation and still do not recognise or acknowledge him; in sharp contrast to this, the foolishness of the message we proclaim brings God's work of redeeming his image in us into faith's focus. (*What we preach cancels every basis for boasting in personal contribution, this seems folly to the DIY systems of this world.*)

1:22 The Jews crave signs (*to confirm their doubts*) while the Greeks revel in philosophical debate! (*Both groups are addicted to the same soul realm.*)

1:23 The crucified Christ is the message we publicly proclaim, to the disgust of the Jews while the Greeks think we are wacky!

1:24 The dynamic of God's wisdom is the fact that both Jew and Greek are equally represented and defined in Christ.

1:25 It seems so foolish that God should die man's death on the cross; it seems so weak of God to suffer such insult; yet man's wisest schemes and most powerful display of genius cannot even begin to comprehend or compete with God in his weakest moment on the cross.

1:26 You might as well admit it my Brothers, it was not your academic qualifications or your good looks or social connections that influenced God to represent you in Christ.

1:27 It is almost as if God deliberately handpicked the wacky of this world to embarrass the wise; the rejects to put to shame the noble.

1:28 The ones with no pedigree of any prominence; the 'nobodies' in society attracted God's initiative to unveil his blueprint opinion in order to redefine man. Thus he rendered any other social standard entirely irrelevant and inappropriate. (*Blueprint opinion, eklegomai, ek, origin, source, legomai from logos, the logic of God; traditionally translated, elect.*)

1:29 Every reason for man's boasting in himself dwindles into insignificance before God.

1:30 Of God's doing are we in Christ. He is both the genesis and genius of our wisdom; a wisdom that reveals how righteous, sanctified and redeemed we already are in him. *(In God's economy, Christ represents us; what man could never achieve through personal discipline and willpower as taught in every religion, God's faith accomplished in Christ.*

Of his design are we in Christ; we are associated in oneness with him. Our wisdom is sourced in this union! Also our righteousness and holiness originate from him. Holiness equals wholeness and harmony of man's spirit, soul and body. Our redemption is sanctioned in him. He redeemed our identity, our sanity, our health, our joy, our peace, our innocence and our complete well-being!

Knox Translation: "It is from him that we take our origin.")

1:31 He is our claim to fame. This is what Jeremiah meant when he wrote: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practice steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight, says the LORD." *(Jer.9:23,24.)*

CHAPTER 2

2:1 My intention in visiting you was not to engage with you in theological debate or to impress you with clever words guessing about the evidence of God.

2:2 The testimony of God is my only persuasion concerning you: Jesus Christ died your death on the cross! I can see you in no other light! *(For I determined to know nothing in you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.)*

2:3 I felt completely inadequate; you know that it was not my eloquent speech that persuaded you; I was so nervous that my whole body was trembling with stage fright!

2:4 My message was not with persuasive arguments based on secular wisdom, since my aim was not to point people to me but rather to the powerful working of the Spirit in them. *(Gr. [apodeiknumi](#), Thayer Definition: to point away from one's self. Previous translations of this word have often given the impression that the great miracle working man of God would steal the show and entertain the crowds! This was so unlike Jesus and Paul! Paul never writes about how many people he had healed and brought to faith etc. His all consuming concern was that the eyes of our understanding would be illuminated with the revelation of Christ in us. Note 2 Cor 10:10 "For they say, "His letters are weighty and*

strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." Also 2 Cor 11:6, "Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not in knowledge.")

2:5 Man's wise schemes of influence could never match the power of God as reference to your faith.

2:6 The words we speak resonate revelation wisdom in those who understand how perfectly redeemed they are in Christ; this wisdom supersedes every secular kind; suddenly what once seemed wise and good advice has become useless information. *(All popular programs towards improved moral behaviour are now outdated. "Of God's doing are we in Christ. He is both the genesis and genius of our wisdom; a wisdom that reveals how righteous, sanctified and redeemed we already are in him. (In God's economy, Christ represents us; what man could never achieve through personal discipline and willpower as taught in every religion, God's faith accomplished in Christ. 1:30))*

2:7 We voice words of wisdom that was hidden in silence for timeless ages; a mystery unfolding God's Masterful plan whereby he would redeem his glory in man.

2:8 Neither the politicians nor the theologians of the day had a clue about this mystery *(of mankind's association in Christ)*; if they did, they would never have crucified the Lord whose death redeemed our glory!

2:9 It is written: "What has been concealed for ages in a realm inaccessible to the senses; what no human eye could catch a glimpse of, nor man's ear could even hear a whisper of, neither could the inquiring mind decipher the code of that mystery which God has already fully arranged and was ready to reveal to those who love him."

*(The exact detail of his plan to rescue his image and likeness in man was in place. How Jesus would represent humanity to die their death was the wisdom of God concealed. In the mind of God we were associated in Christ before the ages; this was according to God's eternal resolve. "The things that God has prepared," **hetoimatzo**, from the oriental custom of sending on before kings on their journeys persons to level the roads and make them passable. What seemed a cul-de-sac for the flesh is a royal highway for faith.*

*The redemption of man was not to be the product of human philosophy or speculation. In Isa 64:4 the Hebrew word **ghaka**, to carve an image; to show by drawing or description, piercing, is the word translated, those who 'wait upon the Lord'.*

Paul writes in Greek when he quotes Isaiah and uses the phrase, "for those who love him." Thus faith opens the horizon of love's mystery; it is a place where thoughts carve an impression; a place not accessible to the scrutiny of a suspicious academic or religious guilt and performance based approach. See 1 Cor 3:20.)

2:10 These profound mysteries of God's eternal resolve are now thoroughly unveiled to us by his Spirit; nothing is hidden from him; he explores the innermost thoughts of God.

2:11 Just as a man's spirit knows his own thoughts beyond the public eye; (*in modern technology it would be impossible to access information from a source that is not compatible with your device*) even so the Spirit of God has exclusive access to the thoughts of God.

2:12 The Spirit proceeding from God unveils the gifts of his generosity; he has graced us with understanding so that we may know what he has always had in mind for us; this is so unlike the secular spirit of the wisdom of the world, where everything has a price tag! (*Christ is the unveiling of the mystery of God's wisdom: now we know how God redeemed our righteousness and our wholeness in Christ. See note on 1:30. In God's economy, Christ represents us; what man could never achieve through personal discipline and willpower as taught in every religion, God's faith accomplished in Christ. Of his design are we in Christ; we are associated in oneness with him. Our wisdom is sourced in this union! Also our righteousness and holiness originate from him. Holiness equals wholeness and harmony of man's spirit, soul and body. Our redemption is sanctioned in him. He redeemed our identity, our sanity, our health, our joy, our peace, our innocence and our complete well-being! Secular religion is the product of the spirit of this world where everything is performance based; only the heroes of the moment are acclaimed; the rest are reduced to spectators and audience.*)

2:13 The impact of our words are not confined to the familiar wisdom of the world taught by human experience and tradition, but communicated by seamless spirit resonance, combining spirit with spirit.

2:14 The soulish man has no capacity to comprehend the language of the Spirit of God; spiritual things seem meaningless to him; he is incapable to discern that which can only be spiritually appreciated. (*A performance based mindset cannot access what grace communicates; it would be as impossible as trying to get airborne with a motor car.*)

2:15 Those who are spiritually awakened are immediately compatible to discern all things from a spiritual perspective, while they themselves are free from any man's critical scrutiny.

2:16 There is no other basis to teach from but to echo the mind of Christ; he is the Master mind personified within us!

CHAPTER 3

3:1 (*Translated books: Dec 2010 John 1, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians,*

Colossians, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter 1, 1Corinthians in process)

3:1 This is ridiculous! Who am I talking to here? Are you mere spiritual infants stuck in the soul-ruled mode of the flesh, reduced to baby-talk? *(Cooing sentimental gibberish about who your favorite preacher is, instead of discovering who you are in Christ!)*

3:2 I fed you with milk and now after all this time it seems that you have no appetite nor capacity for the meat of the gospel. While you remain on the milk diet of the soul-ruled realm of the flesh, *(knowing Christ merely from a human point of view; see 2 Cor 5:16,)* you are unable to digest the meat message of what has been concluded and revealed in your union with Christ! *(There is a huge difference between seeing Christ historically and sentimentally and realizing the revelation of the Gospel. This is the mystery of grace: God reveals us in Christ. He associated us in Christ before time began. Jesus did not die as an individual, he died our death and we were raised together with him.)*

3:3 Your heated debates and divisions prove that you are totally missing the point of the Gospel! You behave like any other spiritually unenlightened person, religiously obsessed with petty party politics while missing the essence of the message.

3:4 Can't you see that its not about Paul or Apollos or any teacher you wish to associate with? We are not here to play the one off against the other, in a desperate attempt to win your vote to join our 'group'.

3:5 Both Apollos and I are on the same assignment: we are here for you, to influence your faith to discover yourself in Christ. Every individual is equally gifted in him. *(See verse 21 and 22)*

3:6 I have planted, by bringing the gospel to you in the first place, then Apollos watered the seed in his ministry to you; but God causes the Christ life to ignite and expand in you.

3:7 If all we succeeded to do was to attach you to us as individuals, then we have failed you; the one who plants is not more important than the one who waters; it is not about us, it is about you realizing God's work within you. *(Our ministry has only one objective: to reveal Christ in you! See Paul's urgency in Phil.2:12, "not only in my presence but much more in my absence, discover the full extent of your own salvation: it is God working in you both to will and to do!" This "working out your own salvation" has nothing in common with the duty driven, willpower-restricted law of works system, it is discovering his working in you; energizing you with both the desire and capacity to give expression to him.)*

3:8 Our individual assignment does not place the one above the other; we

have exactly the same mission; how we succeed or fail in that is to our own account.

3:9 We are co-employed by God; you are God's agricultural field; or in another context, you are his building; he is the architect and engineer of the life of your design.

3:10 His grace is the only reference to my skill; his gift qualifies me; *(I did not earn my certificate as Master Builder at a University as a reward to my excellence!)* The faith foundation that I have laid in your lives gives evidence to that. So let the next man take extra caution to build consistent with what grace communicates. *(Grace alone defines and inspires our ministry.)*

3:11 Jesus Christ is the only foundation; nothing that anyone else can possibly teach you can replace him.

3:12 Imagine the contrast in building materials, one builds with gold, silver and precious stones, while another uses wood, hay and stubble. *(By comparison the teaching of the cross and its glorious effect in the believer's life is like building with gold silver and precious stones, whereas the wisdom of this world system based upon religious good works and not faith is like building with wood, hay and stubble which is fuel for fire!)*

3:13 Everyone's work shall be tested in the scrutiny of real life; it shall be made apparent as in broad daylight; just as gold is tested in fire: what you teach will either burn like stubble or shine like gold. *(The revelation of man's co-crucifixion with Christ is the gold of the gospel.)*

3:14 If what you teach is based on the revelation of the success of the cross it will certainly be confirmed in the heat of the contradiction.

3:15 Obviously to witness the fruit of your labour go up in smoke would be devastating to anyone, even though you escape with your own life!

3:16 Realize that your life is God's building; his sanctuary, designed for his permanent abode; his Spirit inhabits you! *(He designed every cell in your body to accommodate and express him.)*

3:17 Just like fire would burn away the dross, any defilement of God's temple would be destroyed in order to preserve human life as his permanent sanctuary. *(See verse 15)*

3:18 Why fool yourself? What is esteemed as wise according to popular Jewish sentiment is folly; there is no compromise when it comes to wisdom; the only wisdom that matters is what God deems wise, even if it seems foolishness to the reasoning of typical religion. Much rather be ridiculed by religion than

esteemed as wise by them.

(1:24 The dynamic of God's wisdom is the fact that both Jew and Greek are equally represented and defined in Christ.

1:25 It seems so foolish that God should die man's death on the cross; it seems so weak of God to suffer such insult; yet man's wisest schemes and most powerful display of genius cannot even begin to comprehend or compete with God in his weakest moment on the cross.

See also 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2:7,8)

3:19 God's wisdom proves the foolishness of secular wisdom. It is on record in scripture how God outwits the wise of this world. *(Job 5:13 He catches the know-it-alls in their conspiracies-- all that intricate intrigue swept out with the trash! Msg.)*

3:20 The Lord is familiar with the unsuccessful search for meaning in man's empty debates and dialogue. *(dialogismos, man deliberating with himself. Psa 94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man; that they are vanity. Greek, maten, fruitless, unsuccessful search.)*

3:21 Therefore no man has any reason to boast in himself, as if he gained anything that does not already belong to him! For all things you wish to gain already belongs to you! *(1Cor. 4:7 How can there possibly be any ground left for dispute or discrimination if there is nothing in us that we did not freely receive? Now if who you are and what you have is a gift and not a reward for good behaviour, then boasting makes no sense.*

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practice steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the LORD." Jeremiah 9:23,24)

3:22 You are not winning any competition by picking your favourite teacher amongst Paul, Apollos or Kefas; they all belong to you anyway. The world belongs to you! Life and death are yours; in what you now have in this present moment you already possess the future! *(Not even death can threaten what you have in life! Rom.8:38,39)*

3:23 As much as Christ is inseparably God's own, you are the property of Christ. You are one with him. *(Jesus redeemed God's ownership of man. Psalm 24:1, Mathew 13:44, Luke 15.)*

CHAPTER 4

4:1 *(Translated books: Dec 2010 John 1, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter 1, 1Corinthians in process)*

4:1 This is how one should regard us (*so called, Apostles*): we are the under-rowers of Captain Christ; responsible for the engine room as it were! We are entrusted with the administration of the mysteries of God. (*The unveiling of the mystery of the gospel of man's association in Christ is the driving force of the church; **huperetes**, means an under-rower, one who, in the trireme, quadrireme, or quinquereme galleys, rowed in one of the undermost benches; those were the lowest ranked slaves and often the most invisible part of the whole operation. We are not hiding behind fancy titles or impressive CV's to try and win your applause or financial support. We are not here to impress you with us; our mandate is to impress you with how complete you are in Christ because of God's doing. 1 Cor.1:30, 2:6-9.*)

4:2 (*Our title might be unimpressive, but our job is most significant.*) For this reason our ministry is of unquestionable integrity.

4:3 The authority of my ministry is not based upon your scrutiny of my life or even any cross examination by a human court. Neither is it by my own assumption;

4:4 even though I know of nothing against my conscience, I am not thereby acquitted. The point is not how we judge ourselves or one another; the Lord's judgment is the only valid reference to our innocence.

4:5 Any judgment prior to the Lord's coming is out of context. (*The days of performance based judgment are over!*) His coming illuminates all the hidden mysteries (*concerning man's inclusion in Christ. 1 Cor.2:7,8*) and unveils the deepest desire of the heart of man. In his appearing (*through the proclamation of this gospel, see 5:4*) shall every man be commended by God. (*Not contaminated by an inferior judgment; **apo** away from the influence of man's judgment. He is the desire of all nations. Hag 2:7. See also 1 Cor 1:7 and 1 Cor 2:7 We voice words of wisdom that was hidden in silence for timeless ages; a mystery unfolding God's Masterful plan whereby he would redeem his glory in man.*)

4:6 I have deliberately applied this to myself and Apollos to show you the futility of hero-worshipping us; to put us in a contest would be completely out of context of what I have written to you (*3:5 Both Apollos and I are on the same assignment: we are here for you, to influence your faith to discover yourself in Christ. Every individual is equally gifted in him. 3:21 Therefore no man has any reason to boast in himself, as if he gained anything that does not already belong to him! For all things you wish to gain already belongs to you!*)

4:7 How can there possibly be any ground left for dispute or discrimination if there is nothing in us that we did not freely receive? Now if who you are and what you have is a gift and not a reward for good behaviour, then boasting

makes no sense.

4:8 You are already saturated, literally jam-packed to capacity; you cannot get any wealthier than what you are! You are royalty (*because of what happened to you in Christ,*) not because of Apollos or Paul! Oh that you might know this so that we may co-reign together with you! (*We are not ranked any differently because we taught you the good news! So do not try and make heroes of us while you reduce yourselves to mere supporters and spectators. See also 1 Cor.1:30 and 2 Cor.10:12. Paul is re-enforcing the message of how complete we already are in Christ as our only reference and point of departure.*)

4:9 If you really want to know: there is nothing glamorous about being an apostle! It seems to some that God has us on exhibition as it were, as clowns in the circus; the laughing stock of the religious world-system! We are the latest gossip in town. Even the angels frown upon us! And you want to idolize us, think again! We are not handing out autographs! Neither are we your latest brand of Christianity! We have a death-sentence hanging over our heads!

4:10 Because of Christ we are considered fools (*in the eyes of the religious society!*) Our foolishness serves only one purpose though, to prove to you that Christ is your wisdom; our weakness serves to convince you of your source of strength in Christ; our ill repute in the eyes of popular opinion is to persuade you of your honoured standing in Christ! (*Do not allow what we are suffering for you to distract you from realising how wise, and strong and honoured you really are in Christ.*)

4:11 While writing this to you my life would seem such a contradiction! I mean here I am telling you how complete and without shortcoming you already are, and I can hardly remember when last I have had a decent meal! As I am writing this my mouth is dry with thirst, I'm stripped of my clothing; I have been beaten black and blue, and have nowhere to go.

4:12 I feel the fatigue from my physical labour. When people insult us we make sure that we speak well of them. We are harassed but bear with it.

4:13 Hurtful rumours do the rounds but we find refuge and comfort in our true identity (*parakaleo*). We are reckoned as scapegoats, the scum of society. This is what we are faced with on a daily basis. (*The Greeks used to apply the term katharmata, scapegoats to victims sacrificed to make expiation for the people, and even to criminals who were maintained at the public expense, that on the outbreak of a pestilence or other calamity they might be offered as sacrifices to make expiation for the state.*)

4:14 My intention is not to embarrass you. I bring these things to your attention because you are my very dear children.

4:15 While you may have countless mentors supervising your lives, you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

4:16 I therefore summons you urgently to mimic my message.

4:17 This is why I send my beloved son Timothy to you. He is rock-solid in his faith. He shall remind you of me and re-enforce my specific message and emphasis; *(the way I teach the 'in Christ' and 'the Christ in you' and his finished work message)* in every place and every church I visit. *(See Gal 1:7, "There is no other gospel in spite of the many so-called Christian products branded "gospel". If any hint of the law remains, it is not good news but merely religious people's ideas, distracting from the gospel of Christ. Gal 1:16 This is the heart of the gospel that I proclaim; it began with an unveiling of sonship in me, freeing me to announce the same sonship in the masses of non-Jewish people. I felt no immediate urgency to compare notes with those who were familiar with Christ from a mere historic point of view." (The Greek text is quite clear, "It pleased the Father to reveal his son in me in order that I may proclaim him in the nations!" Gr. **en emoi**, in me, and **en ethnos**, in the Gentile nations, or the masses of non Jewish people! Not 'among' the Gentiles as most translations have it. Later when Barnabas is sent to investigate the conversion of the Greeks in Acts 11, instead of reporting his findings to the HQ in Jerusalem, he immediately finds Paul, knowing that Paul's gospel is the revelation of the mystery of Christ in the nations. Col.1:27. No wonder then that those believers were the first to be called Christians, or Christ-like!) See also 2 Cor 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed in you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No; but in him it is always Yes.)*

4:18 I know some of you have the vaunted idea that my message and I will just vanish off the face of the earth! You cannot wish me away!

4:19 In the Lord's purpose I might show up sooner than what you think; then we will know if there is any dynamic in their inflated talk.

4:20 The kingdom of God *(the dominion of the Christ life)* is about an empowered life and not just a matter of quoting your favorite teacher or scripture!

4:21 Would you prefer it if I come to you with a whip in hand approach or with a loving gentle spirit?

CHAPTER 5

5:1 Translated books: *(June 2010)* John 1, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter 1

5:1 The sexual scandal in your ranks has become public news: someone is said to have slept with his stepmother. This kind of behaviour is not even tolerated in society in general, let alone amongst believers!

5:2 And you are engaged in discussing doctrine and organising denominations! *(Chapter 1:10-13)* This is heart breaking! This shameful situation should have been dealt with in the most urgent manner by clearly distancing yourselves from such behaviour and even going as far as disassociating yourselves from this person. *(In the 1st 4 chapters Paul makes it very clear that this gospel is not an excuse to disguise sin but to remove it! Anyone who suggests that grace is a license to sin is building with fuel for fire!)*

5:3 Even though I am not physically with you, my spirit is present in this reading of my letter; and I assure you as solemnly as if actually present in your gathering, that I have already concluded my verdict in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ:

5:4 As you meet together and I meet with you in my spirit by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ present with us,

5:5 such a person is to be released from your midst and handed over to the Accuser (*Satan*); let the accusation consume his flesh until the light of day, the revelation of Jesus Christ rise for him again to rescue his spirit from the deceit of his sin. *(Consider Paul's heart in 2 Cor.2:6, For such a one this punishment by the majority is enough; 2:7 so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 2:8 So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. 2:10 Any one whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, 2:11 to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his designs. See also Eph.4:26 Even if you think you have a valid excuse, do not let anger dominate your day! If you don't deal with it immediately (in the light of the likeness of Christ in you) the sun sets for you and your day becomes one of lost opportunity where darkness employs anger to snare you into sin. 4:27 Any sin that you tolerate is an open invitation to the devil. Do not give him a platform to operate from. Greek *diabolos*, *dia* + *ballo* because of the fall; a fallen mindset.)*

5:6 By ignoring the presence of even a small amount of leaven the whole lump of dough will soon be permeated; thus all ground for boasting in how good things seemed to have been will be lost!

5:7 Because Christ our Paschal Lamb has already been sacrificed once and for all, the old leaven of sin-consciousness which was upheld by the law, has already been thoroughly removed. On that basis alone are you able to now permanently rid yourselves of the old leaven-mindset of tolerating sin, which was our reasoning under the law-system! *(We are talking a brand new*

language: the new covenant is the new lump of dough without a trace of the leaven of the old system that was done away with in Christ. A mindset introduced and sustained by the law! Heb.10:3 "In the very repetition of these ritual sacrifices the awareness of guilt is reinforced rather than removed." See 1 Cor 2:2 The testimony of God is my only persuasion concerning you: Jesus Christ died your death on the cross! I can see you in no other light! "I have determined to know nothing amongst you except Jesus Christ and him crucified!" See also Heb.9:11 But now Christ has made his public appearance as High Priest of a perfect tabernacle. The good things that were predicted have arrived. This new tabernacle does not derive from its shadow type, the previous manmade one. It is the reality. (The restoration of God's original dwelling place in human life is again revealed!) 9:12 As High Priest, his permission to enter the Holy Place was not secured by the blood of beasts. By his own blood he obtained access on behalf of the human race. Only one act was needed for him to enter the most sacred place of grace and there to institute a ransom of perpetual consequence. (The perfection of the redemption he secured needs no further sacrifice. There are no outstanding debts, there is nothing we need do to add weight to what he has accomplished once and for all. The only possible priesthood activity we can now engage in is to continually bring a sacrifice of the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name; no blood, just fruit, even our acts of self-sacrifice, giving of time and money etc are all just the fruit of our constant gratitude!))

5:8 Our daily life is now the extension of the Passover celebration; feasting on sustained innocence! The old sin conscious-system, the leaven-mindset, (*always anticipating and tolerating sin*) is replaced with an understanding of our unleavened innocence, just like when a diamond is scrutinized in the rays of the sun to confirm its flawless integrity.

5:9 When I wrote to you about not associating with fornicators,

5:10 I certainly did not mean that you should distance yourself from the people of the world! If you had to avoid contact with the immoral, the greedy, the thieves and the idol worshippers, (*those worshipping a distorted image of themselves*) then you would have to leave the planet!

5:11 What I am saying is that anyone who acts like a brother while he continues his old typical lifestyle of fornication, greed, idolatry, abusing people, drunkenness, and stealing is obviously not sitting around the same table of fellowship with you!

5:12 It is none of my business to speak about the behaviour of those outside the church, we are giving a responsible opinion regarding the behaviour of those within our ranks.

5:13 We know God's judgment regarding the world (*the cross of Christ*); but in

this case I am saying that you have to deal decisively with the trouble makers in your midst!

(The sinners were attracted to Jesus not because he introduced a compromised set of rules; something like, "it's all right to sin just don't get caught or, try and do it less!" Instead he revealed in his person the mirror-reflection of their true origin, their original identity and the integrity of their innocence! They knew that the lie they lived as their identity had no power against the resonance of their own conscience. Jesus didn't say to the prostitute, "Go and sin less," he said to her "Go and sin no more!" Jesus knew something about the life of our design that we had lost sight of! What he revealed, he also redeemed!)

CHAPTER 6

6:1 Translated books: *(June 2010)* John 1, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter 1

6:1 It alarms me that you even consider to have people decide on disputes within your fellowship, while these, so called 'judges' have no clue of the basis of our righteousness in Christ. *(Now keep Paul's introduction in mind: 1:2 I address this writing to the ekklesia of God in Corinth. You have been restored to the harmony of your original design; made holy in Christ Jesus; no wonder then that you are surnamed Saints. You are in association with all those who have discovered their true identity in Jesus Christ everywhere in every location; he is the head of this union; his name relates us to one another in a global family.)*

6:2 Having discovered how thoroughly God sanctified us in Christ, *(1:30)* we now represent the principle of righteous judgment wherewith the whole world is to be judged; how can we possibly shrink from deciding an trivial matters within our own ranks?

6:3 If the judgment we are entrusted with extends even into the spiritual realm where we are to judge angels, how much more relevant is our judgment now in deciding on day to day matters!

6:4 Since you are fully competent to judge such matters in the light of the gospel of grace, why bother to involve people who judge according to the standards of this world?

6:5 I mean this is most embarrassing! Are you expecting more justice from the world than from your own family? Is there not even one wise man in your midst that is able to settle disputes between brothers!

6:6 Do you see how foolish it would be for brothers to sue one another and reduce justice to a system that is founded in unbelief. *(A system based on the law of works and personal performance and not faith in the finished work of the*

cross.)

6:7 Even if one wins the case it is a defeat for the church! Why not suffer wrong; it is a far greater victory if you rather be cheated than fight for the right to prove your point.

6:8 By allowing the wisdom of this world to be your judge nothing will change; the injustice and fraud will merely continue to spread like cancer in your ranks.

6:9 Do not be distracted into error; the typical lifestyle of unrighteousness has nothing in common with the kingdom of God (*the dominion of the Christ-life, the life of your design is in total contrast!*)

6:10 People who continue to engage in prostitution, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality in any of its forms, stealing, greed, drunkenness, abusiveness and rage while they profess to be believers are deceiving themselves and have distanced themselves from the life of their design.

6:11 What you once were in terms of your lifestyle has radically changed! You have been cleansed, restored to total harmony (*holiness*) and made righteous. The name of the Lord Jesus declares your salvation; the Spirit of our God realises salvation in you! (*1 Cor.1:30, 2:2*)

6:12 I am free to do what I want, but if what I do is not appropriate, I refrain from doing it! I am not snared by sudden notions!

6:13 Your appetite for food and sex does not define you. Your life is tailor-made for God; you fit him like a glove, he fulfills your deepest being! (*Nothing satisfies more and makes your life more attractive and dynamic than the realization of Christ in you.*) (*You know the old saying, "First you eat to live, and then you live to eat"? Well, it may be true that the body is only a temporary thing, but that's no excuse for stuffing your body with food, or indulging it with sex. Since the Master honors you with a body, honor him with your body! The Message.*

But you cannot say that our physical body was made for sexual promiscuity; it was made for God, and God is the answer to our deepest longings. Phillips)

6:14 God reveals in dramatic fashion the value he places on the human body by our joint resurrection with Jesus from the dead. (*Faith sees us joined in his death and alive with him in his resurrection. It is plain for all to see that death lost its dominion over Christ in his resurrection; he need not ever die again to prove a further point. Rom.6:8,9.*)

6:15 This means that your bodies are co-members of his; which makes it absurd to even consider engaging his body in sexual promiscuity!

6:16 Sex involves so much more than two bodies joining together; scripture speaks of a sacred union of two lives becoming one.

How can we reduce this sacred union to harlotry?

(There's more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, "The two become one." The Message)

6:17 In our union with him we are one spirit with the Lord.

6:18 Flee fornication! Every sexual sin is a violation of the sacredness of the human body and scars the conscience of the individual like no other sin does.

(Best way to escape temptation is to remember who you are.)

6:19 Do you not realise that your body by design is the sacred shrine of the spirit of God; he echoes God within you. Your body does not even belong to you in the first place!

6:20 You are bought and paid for, spirit soul and body! All of you are his! Live your life conscious of the enormous price with which God has valued you! Your whole being belongs to him and exhibits him! You are his address; his Real Estate!

CHAPTER 7

7:1 Translated books: *(December 2010)* John 1, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter 1

7:1 In your writing to me you asked questions about marriage.

7:2 *(The fact that I am not married does not mean that I am against marriage.)* Where a man is attached to his wife and she to him they are sexually secure.

7:3 Marriage provides the ideal environment for both husband and wife to mutually esteem one another.

7:4 The wife belongs to her husband and he belongs to her. Their bodies are no longer their own.

7:5 By mutual agreement they may decide to abstain from physical contact for a specific period of time for prayer and fasting; not for prolonged times since this might give occasion for temptation.

7:6 I am not making rules about marriage; this is simply my advice to you in response to your request.

7:7 I could recommend my own life to everyone; yet I am convinced that life is a gift whether you are single or married.

7:8 My advice to the unmarried as well as to those who have lost their partner: it might be to your best interest to remain single even as I am.

7:9 Again, I am not laying down a law; much rather face the challenges of marriage than be consumed with desire!

7:10 Concerning your questions about divorce, I am strongly opposed to the idea; and this is not merely my advice this is the Lord's instruction.

7:11 If the wife leaves her husband she is not to get re-married; her only option would be to be reconciled to her husband. In that case the husband may not resist her.

7:12 The brother who asked about his unbelieving wife: my advice is to remain committed to her as long as she is prepared to remain with you. (*Unbelief: not believing the truth about themselves as revealed in the gospel of the grace of God. 1 Cor.1:30*)

7:13 The same goes for the lady with the unbelieving husband; if he is pleased to be with you then you have no reason to divorce him.

7:14 In principle the unbelieving husband is sanctified by his wife's faith, and the unbelieving wife, by her husband's faith. If that was not true then your children would be contaminated by the unbelieving partner; yet they are pure because of the one parent's faith. The individual's faith blesses the whole family. (*Faith does not exclude, God's faith includes!*)

7:15 Yet if the unbelieving partner desires to divorce, then let it be. Pursue peace rather than forced friendship.

7:16 To fake friendship is not worth it; not even for the sake of possibly winning your partner to the Lord!

7:17 God dealt with each one of us uniquely and individually and connected with us regardless of our circumstances. He defines and completes your life, not your partner or lack of one! I am not just saying this in response to your questions about your specific challenges; I am equally persuaded about this in principle in all the churches.

7:18 Circumcision or the lack of it does not define you! In Christ your Jewish or Gentile heritage is irrelevant and can never again label you. (*kaleo, to identify by name; to surname.*)

7:19 You couldn't keep the commandments anyway, whether you were circumcised or not! *(So if circumcision did not contribute anything while you were seeking to be justified under the law, how can it possibly now advantage you in your understanding of righteousness by faith?)*

7:20 You are not what your career or job-description say you are.

7:21 Even if you were the lowest ranked slave before, it makes no difference to the dignity of your true identity. I am not saying that you should not go for promotion; by all means take it if it comes your way. The point that I am making is that in Christ you are equally free, whether you are a slave or a free man in society, a boss or an employee.

7:22 Society might label you as a slave, but Christ reveals how free you really are. Then again you might be a so called, "free man" in society but in Christ you are a bond slave!

7:23 You are not for sale. The ransom God was prepared to pay for your freedom now binds you to the lordship of his love. The sign over your life says, SOLD!

7:24 We belong to the same household. Every individual originates from God and is surnamed in him; this is our true lineage, abide herein without compromise. *(Brothers, adelphos, from the same womb. kaleo to surname, para, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection.)*

7:25 With regards to your question whether it was proper that the young unmarried people refrain from marriage because of the times we are facing; I have no specific direction from the Lord, but again you can trust my good advice! By the mercy of God I personally have no plans to get married!

7:26 Especially in these stressful times I would say that it is a good thing to remain single and unattached.

7:27 So my advice is, if you already are in a relationship with someone, don't quit; and if you are unattached, don't get involved.

7:28 It is certainly not wrong to get married, all I am saying is that marriage brings extra challenges in already difficult times.

7:29 The urgency of these times might demand mutual sacrifices from those who are married, such as sacrificing their time together for other priorities.

7:30 Even our most personal space for grief or joy is invaded; that leaves you with no time to indulge in your own interests and possessions. If you are in the process of buying something, buy as if you will never own it!

7:31 Do not lean too hard upon the fragile (*economic*) structures of this world; they are here today and gone tomorrow!

7:32 In my opinion the unmarried person lives an uncomplicated life; fully devoted to the Lord without any distractions;

7:33 while the married person is confronted with all the typical domestic challenges absorbing his attention in his commitment is to his wife and her delights and demands.

7:34 The same goes for the ladies; the unmarried woman can give her undivided attention to the Lord without any emotional or physical marital obligations.

7:35 I really have your focused devotion to the Lord at heart and desire for you to live a beautiful life without any distractions that could possibly snare you.

7:36 If a man is engaged to a young girl and feels that he doesn't want to wait till she is older before they marry, let them go ahead and marry, there is nothing wrong with that!

7:37 Yet if he decides to rather wait, he is free to do as he has determined in his heart.

7:38 My personal conviction is to remain single, but I am not at all against marriage.

7:39 As long as the husband is alive, his wife is bound by law to remain with him; if he dies, then obviously she is free to marry another as she is led by the Lord.

7:40 Of course in my opinion she should not marry again.

(Obviously Paul's advice is typical that of a bachelor who has to feel justified in his decision to remain single! Lydia and I are now together for more than 36 years and certainly do not find our commitment to one another a distraction from the Lord at all! On the contrary it is the most recommendable wonderful life! Jan 2011)

CHAPTER 8

8:1 *(Paul addresses the same issues he writes about here in Chapters 7 and 8*

in his letter to Timothy, warning him against those who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; 1 Tim.4:3,4. These issues were obviously controversial at the time.)

You have also asked me questions about whether believers are free to eat food offered to idols. We are free to hold to our own convictions about what to eat and what not to eat; but ultimately it is not about who wins the diet debate, but about sincerely loving people.

8:2 Let love define your convictions and not mere head-knowledge.

8:3 Loving God (*and your fellow man*) is so easy when you understand that he knows you! Let God's knowledge of you inspire your love for him and your fellow man.

8:4 By making a fuss about eating food offered to idols gives idols undue prominence; they are nothing so why make something out of nothing! We know that there is only one God and that he has no competition!

8:5 There is a lot of talk about other gods and demonic powers operating on earth as well as in the heavenly realm; obviously they seem to be empowered by people's belief in them and conversation about them; so there seem to be many gods 'lording' it over people.

8:6 This does not make them competition to God; we know that for us there is only one God who is the source of all things; there is only one authority, the Lord Jesus Christ. All things exist because of him; we owe our very being to him. He alone gives context and reference to our lives.

8:7 However not everyone realizes this; there are some believers who are convinced that idols are real; so for them to hear that we say that it's okay to eat food offered to idols presents a massive problem to their conscience.

8:8 Your diet preference certainly does not improve your standing before God; whether you eat meat or not.

8:9 The point is not about how justified you feel in your freedom to eat what you like, but how considerate you are not to be a stumbling block to someone else.

8:10 If someone who looks up to you as an example sees you eat at a banquet in a temple where the meat has obviously been sacrificed to idols, your liberty might give occasion for this person to be snared into idol worship.

8:11 So your 'superior knowledge' is actually causing the ruin of someone for whom Christ died. *(You are influencing someone to exchange his new found belief in the sacrifice of Christ to become involved again in pagan worship and the sacrifice of animals.)*

8:12 You might think you have a valid argument to justify your position, but in the process you are beating your brother's conscience black and blue without realizing that you are injuring the cause of Christ.

8:13 I will much rather abstain from eating meat all together than run the risk of offending my brother.

CHAPTER 9

9:1 Translated books: *(June 2010)* John 1, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter 1

1-6 There seems to be different criteria whereby our ministries are judged; some apostles seem to have liberties that others don't. In terms of their diets, financial benefits plus the luxury to be accompanied by their wives. Would the brothers of Jesus and Kefas be rated higher than Barnabas and I amongst you? What would you say qualifies my comission to you? The fact that I have had a face to face encounter with our Master Jesus Christ followed by the impact and fruit of my ministry to you can surely not count agianst me?

9:7 Imagine a soldier goes to war at his own expense! I mean how absurd! Yet it is almost taken for granted that Barnabas and I have to earn our own living not to burden the very people we established and daily feed in their faith!

9:8 Anyone who plants a vinyard eats its fruit for free; the shepherd likewise is not expected to pay for a drink of milk!

9:9 Or is this just my own idea? If you insist on scriptural evidence, even the law of Moses says that the ox treading out the grain shall not be muzzled!

9:10 If God so cares for the oxen imagine how much more he cares for you! Moses certainly had more than oxen in mind in writing this; the farmer would be wasting his time plowing his field without participating in the harvest. While the oxen were still treading out the corn the farmer joyfully anticipates the bread.

9:11 Spiritual seed also translates into a material harvest.

9:12 While others enjoy this privilege why would it seem wrong that we share the same? We have not taken any advantage of you; we would rather suffer lack than insisting on our rights and in the process cause you to be distracted

from the gospel of Christ.

3:18 ?And we all, with new understanding, see ourselves in him as in a mirror; thus we are changed from an inferior mindset to the revealed opinion of our true Origin.

4:18 While we look not at the things that the senses observe but we look at the revelation of the unseen as it is unveiled in the mirror reflection of Christ

5:14 The love of Christ resonates within us and leaves us with only one conclusion: Jesus died humanity's death; therefore in God's logic every individual simultaneously died. (*Greek, **sunecho** from **sun**, together with and **echo**, to echo, embrace, to hold, thus translated, to resonate. Only the love of Christ can make a calculation of such enormous proportion! Theology would question the extremity of God's love and perhaps prefer to add a condition or two to a statement like that!*)

5:15 Now if all were included in his death they were equally included in his resurrection. This unveiling of his love redefines human life! Whatever reference man could have of himself outside of his association with Christ is no longer relevant.

5:16 This is radical! No label that could possibly previously define man carries any further significance!

Even our pet doctrines of Christ are redefined. Whatever we knew about him historically or sentimentally is challenged by this conclusion. (*By discovering Christ from God's point of view we discover ourselves and every other human life from God's point of view!*)

5:17 Now whoever you thought you were before, in Christ you are a brand new person! The old ways of seeing yourself and everyone else are over. Look! The resurrection of Jesus has made everything new! (*Just imagine this! Whoever a person was as a Jew, Greek, slave or freeman, Boer, Zulu, Xhosa, British, Indian, Moslem or American, Chinese, Japanese or Congolese; is now dead and gone! They all died when Jesus died! Remember we are not talking the law language here! The 'If' in, "If any man is in Christ" is not a condition, it is the almighty conclusion of the revelation of the gospel! Man is in Christ by God's doing. 1 Cor 1:30, Eph 1:4.*

2 Cor 5:14-16 gives context to verse 17! For so long we studied verse 17 on its own and interpreted the 'if' as a condition! Jesus did not reveal a 'potential' you, he revealed the truth about you so that you may know the truth and be free indeed!)

5:18 To now see everything as new is to simply see what God has always seen in Christ; we are not debating man's experience or opinion; this is 100% God's doing. In Jesus Christ God exchanged equivalent value to redeem us to himself;

this act of reconciliation is the mandate of our ministry. (*katalasso, reconciliation; a mutual exchange of equal value*)

LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

CHAPTER 1

1:1 My name is Paul, my ministry and message are neither accredited to a theological education, nor am I sponsored by a religious institution; I am sanctioned by Jesus the Messiah and God the Father who raised him from the dead. *(Apostle - compelled to go, commissioned, 2 Cor. 5:14,20, Rom. 1:5. Rather than a title apostleship defines the compelling urgency that prompts the spreading of the gospel. The resurrection revelation inspires the commission; Paul saw that mankind was co-raised together with him, Hos.6:2, Eph.2:5,6)*

1:2 I and my team of fellow believers here in Rome address this letter to all the churches in Galatia: you just have to read this!

1:3 We greet you with grace and the peace that comes from knowing God as your Father, and Jesus who heads up the Christ-life.

1:4 Grace and peace have their reference in the fact that Jesus gave himself as the scapegoat for our sins and plucked us out from the evil that encroached on us. This was exactly what the Father had planned in his love for mankind. *(He rescued us from this present religious age).*

1:5 His glorious reputation is ageless; it extends beyond all times and seasons. We salute him with our amen! *(Nothing that religion communicates in any age or context can match him.)*

1:6 I am amazed that you can so easily be fooled into swopping the gospel for a gimmick! The Gospel reveals the integrity of your original identity rescued in Christ; the gimmick is a conglomeration of grace and legalism. A mixture boils down to a do-it-yourself plan of salvation. *(Which is a recipe for disaster.)*

1:7 There is no other gospel in spite of the many so-called Christian products branded "gospel". If any hint of the law remains, it is not good news but merely religious people's ideas, detracting from the gospel of Christ. *(Some seek to unsettle your minds by perverting the gospel to accommodate their own opinion.)*

1:8 I myself or any of my team would stand equally accursed, even if we claim to have had an angelic visitation, if what we preach were to stray ever so slightly from the gospel of the finished work of Christ.

1:9 Let me be blatant and clear about this: any gospel that does not emphasise the success of the cross is a counterfeit and produces nothing but the

curse!

1:10 *(In sharp contrast to the time when I needed letters of authority from the religious institutions of the day, endorsing my mission) God is my complete persuasion; I answer to him alone not man. I'm employed by Christ addicted to his grace. Popular religious opinion will not influence me to compromise my message. (What is the point of an impressive CV, when your Maker is not even asking for it?)*

1:11 I want to make it very clear to you my friends that the message I proclaim is not mere speculation or the product of religious debate.

1:12 This message is not invented by man; my source was not my formal religious education; I received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. *(2 Cor 5:16 Even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him thus no longer.)*

1:13 Everyone knows what a zealous Jew I was when I savagely persecuted God's church.

1:14 And how I progressed in the Jewish faith beyond many of my peers in my excessive eagerness to preserve the traditions of my ancestors.

1:15 God's eternal love dream separated me from my mother's womb; his grace became my identity. *(eudokeo: his beautiful intention. My mother's womb, my natural lineage and identity as son of Benjamin. Gr. kaleo, to surname, to summon by name.)*

1:16 This is the heart of the gospel that I proclaim; it began with an unveiling of sonship in me, freeing me to announce the same sonship in the masses of non-Jewish people. I felt no immediate urgency to compare notes with those who were familiar with Christ from a mere historic point of view. *(The Greek text is quite clear, "It pleased the Father to reveal his son in me in order that I may proclaim him in the nations!" Gr. en emoji, in me, and en ethnos, in the Gentile nations, or the masses of non Jewish people! Not 'among' the Gentiles as most translations have it. Later when Barnabas is sent to investigate the conversion of the Greeks in Acts 11, instead of reporting his findings to the HQ in Jerusalem, he immediately finds Paul, knowing that Paul's gospel is the revelation of the mystery of Christ in the nations. Col.1:27. No wonder then that those believers were the first to be called Christians, or Christ-like! Jesus Christ confirms that the son of man is the son of God. Mat 23:9 "And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven." Paul reminds the Greek philosophers in Acts 17 that we live and move and have our being in God; humankind is indeed the offspring of God. He is quoting from their own writings, Aratus, who lived 300 BC. The incorruptible seed of sonship is as much in every man as the seed is already in all soil, even in the desert, waiting*

for the rain to awaken and ignite its life! "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, so shall my word be that proceeds from my mouth, it shall not disappoint my purpose, it shall saturate the soil and cause it to bring forth and sprout, instead of the thorn the cyprus and instead of the brier the myrtle!" Is 55:8-11,13. In Math. 13:44 Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in an agricultural field! There is more to the field than what meets the eye! In 2 Cor 4:4 and 7 Paul says that we have this treasure in earthen vessels! But the god of this world seeks to blind our minds through unbelief (believing a lie about ourselves, Num13:33) to keep us from seeing the light of the gospel revealing the glory of God in the face of Christ who is the image of God, as in a mirror! When Jesus speaks of the sinner he speaks of him as the lost sheep, coin, or son. Lk.15. The inscription and image did not disappear from the coin when it was lost, how can we praise God and with the same mouth curse a man made in his image? James 3:9, Luke 20:20-26. Mankind forgot what manner of man he is by design; man is the image and likeness bearer of his Maker; this is exactly what Jesus came to reveal and redeem. We may now behold him with unveiled faces as in a mirror and be immediately transformed (in our understanding) into his likeness. From the glory (opinion) of the flesh to the glory (opinion) of God. Legalistic religion kept the veil in place; the proclaiming of the liberating truth of the Good News, removes the veil! The 'ugly duckling' didn't need a facelift or lessons on how to fake the swan life! It only needed to know the truth about itself to be free indeed.)

1:17 This is radical! I deliberately distanced myself from Jerusalem and the disciples of Jesus. I landed up in Arabia before I returned again to Damascus. *(The weight of this revelation left me no choice; instead of finding out more about Christ in history, I desire to discover him more in me! See also 2 Cor.5:16)*

1:18 Then three years later I ventured into Jerusalem, specifically to meet with Kefas; I ended up staying with him for two weeks. *(Aramaic for rock, **kefas**, Greek for rock, **petros**,. Paul here calls him Kefas in order to emphasise the meaning of his name rather than the familiar sound of Peter. Jesus said that the revelation of man's true identity and origin is the rock foundation of the **ekklesia**, lit. original identity from **ek**, preposition denoting origin and **kaleo**, to surname. Mat.16:13- 18. See also Isa.51:1 and Deut. 32:18, 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Kings 6:7.)*

1:19 During this time I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the younger brother of Jesus. *(Saul (Paul), Peter (Kefas) and James shared a vital revelation, all three of them discovered their original identity beyond their natural birth, "Simon son of Jonah, flesh and blood did not reveal to you that I, the son of man am the Christ, the son of God; now that you know who I am, allow me to introduce you to you! I say that you are Rock. Math.16:17,18. During the three years of Jesus' ministry none of his brothers believed in him.*

John 7:5, but in 1 Cor.15:7 Paul specifically mention the fact that Jesus also appeared to James after his resurrection. Suddenly it dawns on James that the Father of lights birthed mankind by the eternal Word of truth, the word that became flesh and died humanity's death and who co-raised humankind into newness of life in his resurrection. If any man hears this word he sees the face of his birth as in a mirror! As Peter later admitted "We were born anew when Jesus was raised from the dead!" 1 Pet 1:3.The word that was before time was is our genesis. James 1:17,18, 23,24.)

1:20 I'm not writing this to trick you into anything; this is really how I started off preaching this gospel.

1:21 After my brief visit to Jerusalem, I travelled the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

1:22 None of the Judean Christian churches knew me face to face.

1:23 They only heard the rumour that the fierce opponent of their cause was now proclaiming the very Gospel he once endeavoured to eradicate.

1:24 Thus they recognised God's approval of my life and acknowledged God in me.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 It was fourteen years since that first visit that I went on a special mission to Jerusalem with Barnabas; we deliberately took Titus with us; *(since he was one of our first fruits in Greece. Remember Barnabas was sent by the HQ in Jerusalem to investigate the rumor of Greek converts; instead of returning to Jerusalem to give feedback to the senior Apostles, he went to fetch Paul, knowing his gift as a teacher and revelation of the mystery of Christ in you, Col.1:26, Acts 11:25,26.)*

2:2 I especially wanted the most senior leadership of the church to hear what I teach in the Gentile nations as my revelation and specific emphasis of the Gospel. We decided to meet in private to avoid any possible public controversy. Thus they could best judge for themselves whether, according to their opinion my ministry had credibility or not.

2:3 Our Greek companion Titus survived the circumcision scrutiny and wasn't forced to go for the cut!

2:4 Some disguised Jewish "brothers" secretly sneaked in on us to spy out whether he was circumcised or not! Our liberty in Christ offended them; these spies had one agenda, to enslave us to their legalistic bondage!

2:5 We want you to know that we are sold out to keep the Gospel undiluted for your sakes; had we compromised the message ever so slightly to accommodate their opinion, the whole Gentile world would have felt cheated! We see such a future for the pure gospel in you.

2:6 The high ranked leaders had nothing to add to my message. I must say that their seniority did not intimidate me in the least, since I do not value anyone from a human point of view; God does not judge people on face value, *(the important ones and the unimportant ones are equally esteemed and loved by him. 2 Cor.5:14,16)*

2:7 From what I shared with them they acknowledged the accuracy of my message and felt that while Peter's ministry was more directed to the Jews, mine is tailor-made for the Gentile world!

2:8 They acknowledged that as much as Peter's ministry was sanctioned by God to preach to the Jews, my assignment was to evangelise the Gentiles.

2:9 The so called pillars of the church, James *(the Lord's brother, Gal.1:19)* Kefas and John acknowledged my gift in the revelation of the message of grace, and extended their blessing on my work by giving us the right hand of fellowship. While they concentrated on converting the Jews I was recognised as the man with a message for the Gentiles.

2:10 Their only request was that we give something to the poor amongst them which we were keen to do since we already came prepared with gifts. *(Acts 11:29,30)*

2:11 But when Kefas in turn visited Antioch I had to take him to task for his hypocrisy.

2:12 His fellowship with the Greek believers seemed so sincere, he even ate with them until James' group arrived from Jerusalem. Then his loyalty to the law showed its true colours! His pretence was an embarrassment!

2:13 Because of his senior position the other Jewish believers were swept along with his hypocrisy; they even seduced Barnabas! What a shame!

2:14 Their interpretation of the gospel was clearly compromised. I confronted Peter publicly about this. "Behind your colleagues' backs you pretend to live just like a Gentile as if your Jewish customs were no longer relevant; now suddenly you're imposing outdated Jewish rules on these Gentile believers, to impress your Jewish friends!"

2:15 Sin is not a respecter of persons! Sin is sin whether you're Jew or Gentile.

2:16 As Jews we should be the first to know that no one will achieve a blameless standing before God through personal performance according to the requirements of the Law. What Jesus Christ believes concerning our innocence matters most; he is persuaded that he did enough to declare man righteous; our best intentions to do good cannot add any weight to our righteousness. Righteousness is not a reward for our good behaviour. As Jewish believers we know this! We have no advantage over any other person. Jew and Gentile alike were equally guilty, now we are equally justified because of Jesus and for no other reason! (*Objective genitive - "faith of" - Heb. 12:2 "He is the author and finisher of faith; he is both the origin and conclusion of faith." Rom. 1:17 "From faith to faith" It is God's persuasion in the merit of his Son's achievement that awakens faith in man.*)

2:17 However, if in our quest to discover righteousness by faith in what Christ did for us, we find that it is still possible to stumble, do not now label yourself a sinner yet again! The fact that you sinned does not cancel the cross of Christ and gives you no reason to abandon justification by faith as if Christ is to be blamed for your distraction! That would be absurd! (*Now all of a sudden you want to keep the law again to further add to your righteousness as if Christ did not achieve enough. Do not let your experience invent a new doctrine called, 'the grace-law-mixture-doctrine'.)*

2:18 Only a con artist will try to be a law-man and a grace-man at the same time!

2:19 My co-crucifixion with Christ is valid! I am not making this up; in his death I died to the old system of trying to please God with my own good behavior! God made me alive together with Christ (*in his resurrection! Hos.6:2, Eph.2:5.*) How can any human effort improve on this!

2:20 The terms, co-crucified and co-alive defines me now. Christ in me and I in him! (*John 14:20*) His sacrificial love is evidence of his persuasion of my righteousness! (*He believes in my innocence; it would be offensive to the cross to continue to seek to be justified by personal effort!*)

2:21 It is a insult to the grace of God to prefer Moses to Jesus! If the law could justify you then Jesus wasted his time dying your death! (*That would reduce salvation to a ludicrous contest between your obedience and the obedience of Christ! Rom.5:19*)

CHAPTER 3

3:1 Galatians, Galatians! Have you completely lost your common sense? Can't you see how the law bewitched you and blurred your vision to distort the

revelation of what the cross of Christ accomplished in you? This was so clearly predicted in scripture. How can you not be persuaded by the truth? *(He did not die as an individual, he died your death! Isa 53:4,5.)*

3:2 Please would you reason with me on this one issue; on what basis did you receive the Holy Spirit? Are we talking gift or reward here? What kind of message ignites faith? What a condemned sinner and failure you are as revealed in the law, or what God believes to be true about you as revealed in the Gospel? Let's not confuse Law with Grace.

3:3 Can you see how stupid it would be to start in the spirit, *(believing in the success of the cross)* and then for some crazy reason to switch modes back to DIY again! As if your own works could add anything to what God has already done in Christ to perfect you. *(DIY - Do It Yourself. It would be suicidal! It's like deliberately jumping out of the boat to try and swim across the ocean! There are two trees, the DIY tree or the Life tree: They represent two laws or systems, the law of works and the law of faith; the one represents what you have to do in order to become. The true tree reveals who you are by your redeemed design. Because of the Calvary-tree we are free to be! Spirit = faith; flesh = works)*

3:4 Remember how you felt when you first encountered faith; are you prepared to exchange that for religious sentiment? All the ground you've gained would be lost. *(The law does not complete faith, it nullifies it.)*

3:5 Would you accredit what you have received from God to something you did or something you have heard? Did God reward you for your high moral standards when he worked extravagant miracles in you and lavished his Spirit upon you; or did it perhaps have anything to do with the content of the revelation of the message of grace that you have heard? Faith is the source of God's action on man's behalf; our hearing is the conduit of what God's faith reveals.

3:6 Abraham had no other claim to righteousness but simply believing what God declared concerning him! Isaac confirmed God's faith, not Abraham's efforts. This is all we have in common with Abraham. *(Righteousness reveals God's faith as responsible for man's salvation in direct contrast to man doing it himself by keeping moral laws!)*

3:7 The conclusion is clear, faith and not flesh relates us to Abraham! *(Grace rather than law is our true lineage. Ishmael represents so much more than the Muslim religion; Ishmael represents the clumsy effort of the flesh to compete with faith; the preaching of a mixed message of law and grace.)*

3:8 Scripture records prophetically that the mass of non- Jewish nations would be justified by faith and not by keeping moral laws. The origin of the gospel is found in this announcement by God over Abraham; he saw all the nations

represented in the same principle of the faith that Abraham pioneered. "In you all the nations of the earth are equally represented in the blessing of faith." Gen 22:17. (*Righteousness by faith is the revelation of the gospel. Rom.1:17, Hab.2:4, "the just shall live by his (God's) faith" Righteousness by faith is your life! Righteousness would have no other reference.*)

3:9 As did Abraham so do we now find our source in the blessing of faith.

3:10 In clear contrast to faith, the law is the source of the curse. As it is written, "Everyone who fails to perform the detailed requirements of the law, even in the least, is condemned." (*Deut.27:26*)

3:11 Habakkuk confirms conclusively that righteousness by faith is the only basis to life; this terminates any possible justification before God based on moral behaviour.

3:12 Law and faith has nothing in common! Law measures man's doing and experience as defining his life. (*Faith measures God's doing in redeeming his design in us, as defining our lives.*)

3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse as consequence of our failure to keep the law. In his cross he concentrated the total curse of the human race upon himself. In his abandoning himself to death, he absorbed and dissolved the horror of the curse in his own person. Scripture declares that anyone hanging on a tree embodies the curse. (*Deut.21:23*)

3:14 This act of Christ released the blessing of Abraham (*righteousness by faith*) upon the Gentiles! (*The mass of non-Jewish nations*) Now we are free to receive the blessing of the Spirit, (*righteousness*) through faith and not as a reward to our behaviour. (*In the obedience of Christ Deuteronomy 28 is outdated! Rom.5:19, Eph.1:3*)

3:15 We are all familiar with the fact that in civil affairs a testament, once endorsed is authoritative and cannot be tampered with at a later stage.

3:16 It is on record that the promise (*of the blessing of righteousness by faith*) was made to Abraham and to his seed, singular, (*thus excluding his effort to produce Ishmael.*) Isaac, the child of promise and not of the flesh mirrors the Messiah.

3:17 This is my argument, God endorsed the covenant of promise in Christ 430 years before the law was given. The law did not later replace the promise! (*God's means of justifying humanity would always be by faith in his promise and never by their moral conduct.*)

3:18 The law and the promise are not compatible; the one system nullifies the

other. God gifts Abraham with heir-ship by promise (*and not by reward to his behaviour.*)

3:19 So what is the use of the law then? It was an intermediary arrangement to make people aware of the extent of their wrong doings and at the same time point them to the promise of a Redeemer, the Messianic seed! It was given by angelic beings to Moses as the middleman.

3:20 With Abraham there was no middleman; it was just God! (*That already places the promise in a different class to the law; the promise is superior to the law.*)

3:21 No, the law does not oppose God's promise; it emphasizes the desperate need for a Redeemer to release righteousness in man as his life; something the law would certainly not be capable of! Had it been possible for man to be justified by the law, the promise would be unnecessary. (*Note The Message Translation, "For if any kind of rule-keeping had power to create life in us, we would certainly have gotten it by this time." See Mirror Translation of Romans 5:6, "God's timing was absolutely perfect; humanity was at their weakest when Christ died their death - we were bankrupt in our efforts to save ourselves."*)

3:22 Scripture concludes that all men without exception are in the same predicament, they are imprisoned to sin; now faith brings the promise of immediate release within everyone's reach! Jesus Christ makes it possible for all to believe what God believes concerning their righteousness and restored innocence. (*See Rom. 3:22 Jesus is the embodiment of God's faith in man. The righteousness of God is now on display in such a way that all may believe, regardless of who they are, there is no distinction. 3:23 The same mass of mankind that was once reduced to an inferior identity through their sin, 3:24 is now gifted with acquittal on the basis of the ransom paid by Jesus Christ for their liberation.*)

3:23 We were confined to the law, kept in custody to its constraining influence until the revelation of faith would come to our rescue!

3:24 The law was acting just like a slave appointed to be the guardian of his master's children, until they would be of age to go to the proper school of Christ to find in faith their righteousness revealed and endorsed.

3:25 Now that we have arrived at our destination, the prophetic road signs and pointers are of no further use. Faith replaced the Custodian. Now that faith has come the law is no longer relevant.

3:26 What Jesus Christ believes to be true about you is the final confirmation of man's redeemed sonship. His faith is the only valid reference to your belief!

3:27 Whoever is immersed in Christ is fully clothed with him! He is your brand new wardrobe confirming your sonship! *(From now on the diaper days are over! "Our own righteousness by doing the law compares to filthy rags!" Isa.64:6.)*

3:28 Nothing resembles your previous identity as Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, Billabong or Gucci, now you are all defined in oneness with Christ! He is your significance and makes you stand out!

3:29 Since Christ is the seed of promise, then it is only in our realizing our union with him *(in the incarnation)* that we are equally related to Abraham and heirs of the promise. Faith and not flesh relates us to Abraham. *(We inherit his righteousness by the same faith!)*

CHAPTER 4

4:1 An infant heir has no more say than a slave, even though he owns everything! *(The best deal the law could possibly broker confirmed man's slavery to sin.)*

4:2 He would remain under domestic supervision and house rules until the date fixed by his father for his official graduation to the status of sonship.

4:3 This is exactly how it was with us; we were kidnapped as it were into infancy and confined to that state through the law. *(An inferior mindset as a result of Adam's fall.)*

4:4 But then the day dawned; the most complete culmination of time! *(Everything predicted was concluded in Christ!)* The son arrived, commissioned by the Father; his legal passport to the planet was his mother's womb. In a human body exactly like ours he lived his life subject to the same scrutiny of the law.

4:5 His mandate was to rescue the human race from the regime of the law of performance in order to become to the revelation of their true sonship in God. *(Now our true state of sonship is again realized! John 1:12. See: John 1:11-14 "It was not as though he arrived on a foreign planet, he came to his own, yet his own did not recognise him Ps.24:1. But to everyone who realises their association in him, convinced that he is their original life, in them he confirms that we are his offspring. These are they who discover their genesis in God beyond their natural conception! Man began in God. We are not the invention of our parents! Suddenly the invisible eternal Word takes on visible form! The Incarnation! In him, in us! The most accurate tangible display of God's eternal thought finds expression in human life! The Word became a human being; we are his address; he resides in us! He captivates our gaze! The glory we see there is not a religious replica; he is the authentic monogenes begotten only of*

*God. In him we recognise our true beginning. The Glory that Adam lost, returns!
In fullness! Only Grace can communicate truth in such complete context!)*

4:6 To seal our sonship God has commissioned the Spirit of sonship to resonate the Abba echo in our hearts; and now, in our innermost being we recognize him as our true and very dear Father. *(Rom. 8:14 The original life of the Father revealed in his son is the life the Spirit now conducts within us. 8:15 Slavery is such a poor substitute for sonship! They are opposites; the one leads forcefully through fear; sonship responds fondly to Abba Father. 8:16 His Spirit resonates within our spirit to confirm the fact that we originate in God. 8:17 Because we are his offspring, we qualify to be his heirs, God himself is our portion, we co-inherit with Christ.)*

4:7 Can you see how foolish it would be for a son to continue to live his life with a slave mentality? Your sonship qualifies you to immediately participate in all the wealth of God's inheritance which is yours because of Christ. *(Legalism contradicts sonship! Sonship is not for sale!)*

4:8 What really amazes me is how gullible you gentile believers are to get yourselves all tangled up again in oppressive Jewish rites! I mean you know all about your BC days of slavery to imaginary gods under your pagan beliefs.

4:9 In the mean time you have come to know the real God, *(quite unlike the god of your imagination)* ; what is most significant however, is to discover that he knew you all along! After all this, how could you possibly feel attracted again to the pathetic principles of religious deception? It does not matter in what disguise legalism comes, whether pagan or Jewish, it brings the same bondage.

4:10 All of a sudden there are special days, months, seasonal and annual festivities that are scrupulously celebrated; this is nothing more than superstitious religious sentiment.

4:11 I am alarmed that all my passion seems wasted on you!

4:12 I urge you to imitate me *(in this conviction I have about the fact that Jewish customs and their shadow-sentiments are out-dated!)* We are exactly in the same boat, it is really not about me, it is about you! *(Our Jewish or Gentile background makes absolutely no difference! I'm not into winning or losing votes for me or my ministry! It's this Gospel that is my concern and urgency!)*

4:13 I have never compromised the Gospel, from the first day I met you, even though I was physically challenged at the time it did not distract from the message.

4:14 Remember how hospitable and sensitive you were towards me in spite of my frail condition! Instead of feeling embarrassed or repelled you treated me

like an angel with the same courtesy you would have shown Christ Jesus.

4:15 At that time you were so overwhelmed with gratitude towards me that you would have gladly given me what is most precious to you, even your own eyes, to give me relief for my discomfort. What tenderness of affection you showed!

4:16 Alas! How is it possible that the same truth that then bonded you to me now turns me into your enemy?

4:17 The people who make me out to be your enemy do that to your disadvantage: they are very eager to isolate you from me, so that your zeal for their Jewish sentiments will boost their religious ego! *(Can you not see it, the Law and its followers do not like you for you; their only desire is for themselves!)*

4:18 If you want to be zealous for the best possible cause, be zealous for grace. You are fooling yourselves to be nice to me when I'm with you but zealous for them behind my back! It is not about me, I am jealous for you! It is the message that matters most, not someone's private agenda!

4:19 My darling little children, my jealousy for you compares to a mother over her newly born! I gave birth to you once through my gospel; now I feel those same labour pains all over again. I travail for the full realization of Christ to be formed within in you! *(morpho, to mould, from meros, portion; note the word translated, sin, hameros, to be without your allotted portion)*

4:20 I long to be with you right now; I want you to hear the urgency in my voice! I wish I could convince you that the law is a cul-de-sac! *(Any effort of your own to add to what God has already perfected in you in Christ is a waste of time! It is like trying to re-invent the wheel)*

4:21 Since you are so intrigued by the law, please understand its prophetic message:

4:22 The law records the fact that Abraham had two sons: one by a slave girl, the other by a free woman.

4:23 The one is produced by the flesh *(the DIY-tree)* , the other by faith *(the promise)* .

4:24 There is a parallel meaning in the story of the two sons: they represent two systems, works and grace.

4:25 Sinai is an Arabian rocky mountain named after Hagar, *(outside the land of promise)* . Its association with the law of Moses mirrors Jerusalem as the

capital of Jewish legalism. Hager is the mother of the law of works.

4:26 But the mother from above, the true mother of mankind is grace, the free Jerusalem; she is the mother of the promise.

4:27 For it is written, "Rejoice o childless one! Erupt in jubilee! For though you have never known travail before, your children will greatly outnumber her who was married (*to the law*) !

4:28 We resemble Isaac: we are begotten of faith, the promise is our parent.

4:29 Just as when the flesh child persecuted the faith child, so now these Jerusalem Jews in their Christian disguise seek to harass you;

4:30 however, scripture is clear: "Expel the slave mother and her son; the slave son cannot inherit with the free son." (*In exactly the same way, rid your minds radically from the slave mother and child mentality.*)

4:31 Realise whose children we are my brothers: we are not sons of the slave-mother, the law, but sons of the free mother; we are sons of grace!

CHAPTER 5

5:1 Christ defines your faith; he is your freedom from anything the law could never free you from! Find your firm footing in this freedom. Do not let religion trip you up again and harness you to a system of rules and obligations! (*In this parallel, Christ represents Sarah, the faith-mother who birthed you in the resurrection. The rock-hewn tomb represents Sarah's dead womb! 1 Pet.1:3*)

5:2 I Paul, am of the opinion, and you can quote me: If you would again consider circumcision as necessary to improve your standing before God, then you make Christ of no relevance to you. Then you might as well delete him out of your life altogether! (*By still holding on to any Jewish sentiment like keeping the Sabbath etc. has the same effect.*)

5:3 I will state it categorically, that if you endorse circumcision, you are immediately obliged to keep the whole law! (*In for a penny, in for a pound!*)

5:4 Law righteousness has nothing in common with grace righteousness; they are opposites. As impossible it is for anyone to travel in two opposite directions at the same time, equally irrelevant does Christ become to anyone who continues to pursue righteousness under the law.

5:5 Our minds are made up, there is absolutely no advantage for anyone to pursue righteousness in the flesh; righteousness is a spirit dimension reality and

can only be grasped by faith. What God believes is our exclusive reference. *(Any other basis for righteousness leaves man falling hopelessly short.)*

5:6 God believes that we are fully represented in Christ which takes circumcision or any contribution of the flesh out of the equation. Love sets faith in motion. *(It is easy for love to believe!)*

5:7 You started off like an athlete on a mission, who distracted you? You seemed so totally persuaded about the truth!

5:8 God is not confused about you. He surnamed you!

5:9 It is impossible to hide the effect of the smallest amount of yeast; the process of fermentation is immediately triggered. *(A little bit of legalism corrupts a person's whole life.)*

5:10 In spite of the interference of those 'law-church' people, I remain convinced about our like-mindedness in the Lord. It does not matter what high profile position any-one may occupy, do not let their title disturb you! The very law they promote will be their judgment! *(The fermentation process is unavoidable when you host a legalistic mindset.)*

5:11 Would I compromise the message of the cross and preach circumcision just to avoid persecution! How insane would that be? *(This whole matter boils down to thinking that justification is the result of something man still has to do, or knowing that it is the result of something that God has already done!)*

5:12 These people who are so keen to cut things off should cut off their legalistic influence in your lives altogether!

5:13 Your redeemed identity defines your freedom, my brothers! But freedom does not mean that you are now free to again employ the law. On the contrary, your freedom finds its most complete expression in a love that serves one another! As free as you are to the law, so enslaved you are now to love! *(You are at last free to live the life of your original design.)*

5:14 Love already completes the law: this is the nitty gritty of the law; to value your fellow human as equal to yourself; *(which was again and again proved to be totally impossible to achieve by employing the DIY tree-principle.)*

5:15 The best efforts under the legalistic mindset sooner or later ended up in strife: back-biting, tearing one another apart, devouring and consuming one another. *(It gets ugly! See how divorce destroyed love dreams; ex-business partners fighting one another in court; consider how worthless life becomes in war!)*

5:16 I conclude: let spirit be the dominant influence in your daily walk and see how it defeats the cravings of flesh. *(Spirit is satisfied by the love law, the revelation of grace; flesh craves to prove and gratify itself by the DIY law. Faith defeats flesh.)*

5:17 While the law of works still features in your mind, it is a catalyst to disaster: you are caught in the middle of a war zone, wanting to do the things that you desire by design; but finding the flesh in strong resistance to what the spirit desires: *(the two trees, the flesh and the spirit represent two opposing forces of influence, two separate mindsets, external to the real person, but whilst hosted, like a virus, its influence becomes unavoidable and very visible.)*

5:18 Those who are led by the spirit *(of faith)* is free from the law *(of personal performance. See 3:3)*

5:19 The influence of the flesh is obvious: wherever a legalistic judgmental attitude prevails, sexual sins are rampant! Anything goes: adultery, filth and outrageous licentiousness.

5:20 *(The DIY lifestyle is driven by self effort and selfishness. A legalistic mindset, the flesh, sponsors typical behavior that expresses itself in very visible symptoms:)* such as idolatry, which is worshipping a distorted image of oneself, drugs, hatred, constant conflict, jealous suspicion, violent outbursts of rage, everyone for himself in a cut-throat competitive world, trampling on others to get to the top, dissension, heresy, manipulating someone's mind with false teaching. *(The flesh is not your "lower nature" it is the mindset of fallen man trying to follow the life of our design, as witnessed in every man's conscience, by sheer willpower, independent of God.)*

5:21 Consumed with envious self pity, murder, drunken stupor, intoxicated licentiousness and lust, with all the quarrels and jealousy it ignites. As I have stated before: those who are practicing this kind of lifestyle has nothing in common with the Kingdom of God. *(The authority of the Christ-life opposes and defeats the dominance of the flesh.)*

5:22 The Spirit finds expression in love, joy, peace, endurance, kindness *(usefulness, obliging)* , goodness, faith, gentleness, self control *(spirit strength)* . *(In total contrast to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life bears fruit effortlessly consistent with the life of our original design!)*

5:23 Legalism can neither match nor contradict this. There is no law against love! *(Law can neither confine nor contain the Christ-life)*

5:24 Those who understand that their righteousness is of Christ and that it does not come as a reward for their ability to keep the law, have discovered that their flesh with its dictates and lusts were co-crucified with Christ. *(Gal. 2:20,*

see also 5:18)

5:25 Because faith defines us and not flesh, we take our lead from the Spirit in our daily conduct, there is an authority in our step, we are marching in rank like soldiers! *(The Christ life is the dominant authority in the universe!)*

5:26 Quit your efforts to try and impress one another. The law of works reduces your life to envious comparison and petty competition, while love only always seeks the advantage of the other! *(This means total freedom from any external law!)*

CHAPTER 6

6:1 Brethren, if it seems that someone continues to anticipate their next failure *(by carrying just too much load)*, from your position in faith, restore such a person in a spirit of courtesy and grace; keeping your own attitude in check; a legalistic approach would want to suspiciously probe into problems. *(Remember you represent grace not law)*

6:2 The law of the Christ-life distinguishes your spirituality; taking the weight off someone's shoulder is fulfilling the law of Christ. *(The message of grace removes all burdens such as guilt, suspicion, inferiority, shame and a sin-consciousness) .*

6:3 Anyone who imagines to be someone they are not, lives a lie. *(The law system sponsors pretense, grace reveals your true identity redeemed in Christ.)*

6:4 Now, without the pressure of pretense, you are free to give expression to your individual self, and not some phony life you're trying to fake. Evaluate your own conduct in such a way that you do not need another's approval to confirm your joy.

6:5 Everyone ultimately lives his own life *(even though we share our lives with one another)*.

6:6 Both student and teacher draw from the same source; they equally participate in every good thing. The word they share echoes its distinct resonance within them.

6:7 Show-business does not deceive God! Do not be led astray and then pull your nose up at God, as if it was God who let you down. The harvest always reveals the seed.

6:8 The flesh cannot compete with the spirit; just like with Adam, the fruit of the DIY tree still produces death, while faith produces the spirit fruit of the life

of the ages, the God-kind of life.

6:9 Every good deed has a predictable harvest. Let's not get discouraged in the in between times. *(Make sure your good deeds are love-driven rather than duty-driven. Faith works by love, duty by willpower)*

6:10 Let us take advantage of every opportunity to be a blessing to everyone we meet, without neglecting our fellow faith family.

6:11 To raise the urgency in my voice, I will write the following in my own hand and in large letters:

6:12 Those who urge you to be circumcised, are only trying to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ. They prefer to be popular with their fellow Jewish colleagues and thus compromise the message of the cross. To them it is only the outward sign in the flesh that matters.

6:13 It is not even so much for the law that they are concerned, they just want to boast in your flesh, as a sign that they successfully recruited you for their cause.

6:14 May my boasting be in nothing but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. The religious-systems and applause of this world have no appeal to me. As far as they are concerned, I am like a dead man.

6:15 The new creation in Christ steals the show; not whether someone is circumcised or not! *(God associated us in Christ; when he died we died, when he was raised we were raised together with him in newness of life)*

6:16 Our union with Christ sets the pace and makes us the true Israel, not whether we are Jew or Gentile, circumcised or not! O what peace we discover in his mercy! This rule is the new law we submit ourselves to as the principle of our daily walk!

6:17 I will not be troubled anymore, I already bear enough scars in my body that brand me as being under the ownership of Jesus. *(Those scars that I carry from being persecuted for this Gospel are more significant to me than the scar of circumcision!)*

6:18 Brothers, may the revelation of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be the rule of your spirit.

Amen

LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

CHAPTER 1

1:1 Paul, employed by the delightful resolve of God and commissioned to represent Jesus Christ to the saints in Ephesus; also to every believer in Christ Jesus.

1:2 I greet you with the grace and peace that proceed from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3 Let's celebrate God! He has lavished every blessing heaven has upon us in Christ!

1:4 He associated us in Christ before the fall of the world! Jesus is God's mind made up about us! He always knew in his love that he would present us again face to face before him in blameless innocence. *(The implications of the fall are completely cancelled out, **katabalo** - "to fall away, to put in a lower place," instead of **themelios** - "foundation" see 2:20 - Thus translated "the fall of the world" instead of "the foundation of the world." God found us in Christ before he lost us in Adam!)*

1:5 He is the architect of our design; his heart dream realized our coming of age in Christ. *(Adoption here is not what it means in our Western society, it is a coming of age, like the typical Jewish Barmitsva. See Gal.4:1-6 "...and to seal our sonship the spirit of his son echoes Abba Father in our hearts.". Greek, **huiiothesia**).*

1:6 His grace-plan is to be celebrated: he greatly endeared us and highly favored us in Christ; his love for his Son is his love for us.

1:7 Since we are *(fully represented)* in him, his blood is the ransom that secures our redemption. His forgiving us our sins measures the wealth of his grace.

1:8 This grace shown towards us communicates a wisdom and discernment of our worth that completely surpasses any definition.

1:9 The secret is out! His cherished love-dream now unfolds in front of our very eyes.

1:10 In the economy (***oikonomia***) of the fullness of time, everything culminates in Christ; all that is in heaven and all that is on earth is reconciled in him. *(Phillips, "All human history shall be consummated in Christ, everything*

that exists in heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in him."
Knox, "All that is in heaven, all that is on earth, summed up in him!")

1:11 This is how we fit into God's picture, Christ is the measure of our portion, we are in him; invented and defined in him. God's blueprint intention is on exhibition in us, everything he accomplishes is inspired by the energy and intent of his affection. *(See Romans 8:29 "He engineered us from the start to fit the mould of sonship and likeness according to the exact blueprint of his design. We see the original and intended shape of our lives preserved in his Son; he is the firstborn from the same womb that reveals our genesis. He confirms that we are the invention of God.")*

1:12 It was our initial privilege *(as Jews)* to cherish the Messianic hope; our lives in Christ were destined to promote the celebration of his glorious plan with man *(doxa, intention, opinion.)*.

1:13 Now you *(Gentiles)* also have discovered yourselves to be equally included in him having witnessed the unveiled logic of God. *(The Word of truth, alethea, from a + lanthano, not hidden)* What exciting news! Your salvation is publicly announced. Consistent with the promise of God, the Holy Spirit gives guarantee to the fact of your faith, like the stamp of a signet ring that certifies a document. You are in him!

1:14 The Holy Spirit is our tangible link *(title deed)* to the inheritance that was ransomed and preserved for us. God's glorious plan for man is the theme of our celebration. *(Guarantee, or earnest, arabon a Hebrew word, to braid, two parties intertwine by giving something as surety and pledge. The pledge represents the full transaction. The legal document or title deed represents the complete value of the transaction. Like a wedding ring represents the marriage.)*

1:15 I am sure you can appreciate how the news of your faith and love greatly inspires me.

1:16 I am so happy for you; my thoughts and prayers are full of you.

1:17 I desire that you will draw directly from the source; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory ignites the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in you in the unveiling of his Master Plan *(his intent, doxa glory.)* I desire that you know by revelation what he has known about you all along!

1:18 I pray that your thoughts will be flooded with light and inspired insight; that you will clearly picture his intent in identifying you in him so that you may know how precious you are to him. The saints are his treasure and the glorious trophy of his portion! *(We are God's assets and the measure of his wealth!)*

1:19 I pray that you will understand beyond all comparison the magnitude of

his mighty power towards us who believe. Faith reveals how enormously advantaged we are in Christ.

1:20 It is the same dynamic energy that he unleashed in Christ when he raised him from the dead and forever established him in the power of his own right hand in the realm of the heavens.

1:21 Infinitely above all the combined forces of rule, authority, dominion or governments; he is ranked superior to any name that could ever be given to anyone of this age or any age still to come in the eternal future.

1:22 I want you to see this: he subjected all these powers under his feet. He towers head and shoulders above everything. He is the head,

1:23 the church (*his redeemed image and likeness in man*) is his body. The completeness of his being that fills all in all resides in us! God cannot make himself more visible or exhibit himself more accurately.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 Picture where God found us, we were in a death trap of an inferior lifestyle, constantly living below the blueprint measure of our lives. (*Sin, hamartia, ha + meros, without our allotted portion*)

2:2 We were all part of a common pattern, swept along under a powerful invisible influence; a spirit- energy that adopted us as sons to its dictate through unbelief.

2:3 Throughout that time everyone of us were warped and corrupted in our conduct snared in a jumble of forbidden lusts; driven by the desires of the senses, totally engaged in an expression of life ruled by mind games; it was as if a twisted passion parented a universal breed of people.

2:4 None of this could distract from the extravagant love of God; he continued to love us with the exact same intensity.

2:5 This is how grace rescued us: sin left us dead towards God, like spiritual corpses; then comes the resurrection of Christ; in that moment, he simultaneously co-quickened us together with Christ. (*Exactly as Hosea prophesied it 800 BC*) While sin proved how dead we then were, grace reveals how alive we now are. Even when we were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive together with him, and raised us up together with him. (*God saw us in Christ in his death and resurrection before we saw ourselves there! Hosea 6:2 declares our co-resurrection with Christ before anyone but God believed it!*)

2:6 *(As much as we were co-included in his death,)* we are co-included in his resurrection. We are also elevated in his ascension to be equally welcome in the throne room of the heavenly realm where we are seated together with him in his executive authority. We are fully represented in Christ Jesus.

2:7 *(In a single triumphant act of righteousness God saved us from the guttermost to the uttermost. Here we are now, revealed in Christ in the highest possible position of bliss! If man's sad history could not distract from the extravagant love of God,)* imagine how God is now able for timeless perpetuity *(the eternal future)* to exhibit the trophy of the wealth of his grace demonstrated in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Grace exhibits excessive evidence of the success of the cross.

2:8 Your salvation is not a reward for good behaviour! It was a grace thing from start to finish; you had no hand in it. Even the gift to believe simply reflects his faith! *(You did not invent faith; it was God's faith to begin with! It is from faith to faith, Rom 1:17 He is both the source and conclusion of faith, Heb 12:2)*

2:9 If this could be accomplished through any action of yours then there would be ground for boasting.

2:10 We are engineered by his design; he moulded and manufactured us in Christ. We are his workmanship, his poetry. *(God finds inspired expression of Christ in us. Greek, **poeima**,)* We are fully fit to do good, equipped to give attractive evidence of his likeness in us in everything we do. *(God has done everything possible to find spontaneous and effortless expression of his character in us in our everyday lifestyle. Greek, **proetoimatso**, God has prepared a highway for us to lead us out like kings, just like it was in Oriental custom, where people would go before a king to level the roads to make it possible for the king to journey with ease and comfort. Isa 40:3-5)*

2:11 Remember where you came from; *(not only were you spiritually dead but)* it wasn't long ago when you were still classified as non-Jewish, judging on the surface you had nothing that linked you to them. They sneered at you because you didn't share their distinguishing mark of circumcision, which was their claim to fame!

2:12 During that time you were distanced from the Messianic hope; you had nothing in common with Israel; you felt foreign to the covenants of prophetic promise, living a life with nothing to look forward to in a world where God seemed absent.

2:13 But now, wow! Everything has changed; you have discovered yourselves to be located in Christ. What once seemed so distant is now so near; his blood reveals your redeemed innocence and authentic value.

2:14 It is in him that we are one and at peace with everyone; he dissolved every definition of division.

2:15 In his incarnation, he rendered the entire Jewish system of ceremonial laws and regulations useless as a measure to justify human life and conduct. In that he died humanity's death all ground for tension and hostility was entirely removed. The peace he proclaims reveals one new human race, created and defined in Christ, instead of two groups of people separated by their ethnic identity and differences.

2:16 Both parties are fully represented and reconciled to God in one human body through the cross. He reinstated the former harmony; all opposing elements were thus utterly defeated.

2:17 On that basis he made his public appearance, proclaiming the good news of peace to universal mankind; both those who felt left out in the cold, *(as far as the promises and covenants were concerned,)* as well as to those who were near all along, *(because of their Jewish identity.)*

2:18 Because of Christ both Jew and Gentile now enjoy equal access to the Father in one Spirit.

2:19 The conclusion is clear, you are no longer frowned upon as a foreigner; you are where you belong and part of an intimate family where no-one is suspicious or inferior.

2:20 Your lives now give visible definition to the spiritual structure, having been built into it by God upon the foundation that the prophets and apostles proclaimed. The first evidence of this building was Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. *(He is the first visible testimony to the restored image and likeness of God in human form.)*

2:21 In him everyone of us are like living Lego blocks fitted together of the same fabric *(conversation)*, giving ever increasing articulation to a mobile sanctuary intertwined in the Lord.

2:22 In him you are co-constructed together as God's permanent spiritual residence. You are God's address!

CHAPTER 3

3:1 My ministry is not measured by the size of my cell, I am confined by his grace; Christ Jesus is the prison keeper; you are why I am here. *(Grace measures my ministry; this cell cannot hide my message from you!)*

3:2 *(I may be hidden away in a prison, but my ministry is not.)* It is common knowledge that I have been entrusted with a message that reveals how included you Gentiles are in the grace gift of God.

3:3 You must have heard how this mystery was revealed to me, in a dramatic disclosure that broke the silence of a long kept secret. I have previously written briefly about this.

3:4 In reading these words you will perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ. *(Insight, understanding, **sunesis**, a joining together like two streams)*

3:5 In no previous generation has there been a more comprehensive and detailed understanding *(of the full consequence of grace)* as it has now been uncovered in the Spirit to his ambassadors who brought the prophetic promise into full view! Mankind *(the sons of men)* may now realise that the prophetic word is fulfilled in them! Everything the prophets saw is now declared! Both the prophets *(who saw this in advance)* and the apostles *(who now proclaim this)* are sanctioned in Christ.

3:6 The essence of what I see reveals the fact that the multitude of humanity are joint participants in the same inheritance *(together with Israel)*, we are all part of one and the same body in Christ. The Good news is that God's promise is equally relevant and applicable to all.

3:7 This Gospel defines my ministry; I am supercharged by the gift of his grace!

3:8 I am the lowest ranked saint by far. *(My claim to fame emphasizes the fact that grace is a gift and certainly not a reward for good behavior.)* His grace alone qualifies me to declare this unexplored treasure of Christ in the nations.

3:9 The mandate of my message is to make all men see. The unveiling of this eternal secret is to bring into public view an association that has always been hidden in God; Jesus Christ is the blueprint of creation.

3:10 Every invisible authority and government in the arena of the heavenlies is now confronted with the display of the wisdom of God. The church acts like a prism that disperses the varied magnitude of God in human form.

3:11 Jesus Christ our Boss and Owner gives definition to God's timeless pre-determined thought (*pro-thesis*).

3:12 His faith in us gives our lives integrity. We echo and articulate the original conversation publicly. *(In him we express ourselves freely and openly)* He is our platform to a global audience.

3:13 You have no reason to feel embarrassed or responsible because of what I am suffering; rather feel honoured!

3:14 Overwhelmed by what grace communicates, I bow my knees in awe before the Father.

3:15 Every family in heaven and on earth originate in him; he remains the authentic and original identity of every nation.

3:16 I desire for you to realise what the Father has given you from his own limitless resources, so that you may be dynamically reinforced in your inner being by the Spirit of God.

3:17 This will impact your faith with capacity to fully grasp the reality of the indwelling Christ. You are rooted and founded in Love. Love is your invisible inner source just like the root system of a tree and the foundation of a building. *(The dimension of your inner person exceeds any other measure that could possibly define you. "The Holy Spirit becomes to me what he was to Jesus, the very life of my personality" - Andrew Murray).*

3:18 This is your reservoir of super human strength which causes you as saints to collectively grasp *(come to terms with, make one's own, empowered to comprehend)* the limitless extent of his love in breadth, in length, in height *(rank)*, and the extremities of its depths. *(See John 1:12)*

3:19 I desire for you to become intimately acquainted with the love of Christ on the deepest possible level; far beyond the reach of a mere academic, intellectual grasp. Within the scope of this equation God finds the ultimate expression of himself in you *(so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God)*.

3:20 We celebrate him who super charges us powerfully from within. Our biggest request or most amazing dream cannot match the extravagant proportion of his thoughts towards us.

3:21 He owns the applause displayed in the church *(his redeemed image and likeness)*, confirmed in Christ Jesus. The encore continues throughout every generation, not only of this age but also of the countless ages to come. Amen!

CHAPTER 4

4:1 So here I am in prison; but much more than that do I realize that I am in Christ! My complete existence is defined and confined in him. *(We are indeed seated together with him in heavenly places! 2:6 no distraction can)* With this in

mind I would urge you to conduct the detail of your day to day life conscious of your true identity and worth as defined in him. *(To walk worthy, **axios**, having the weight of another thing of like value, worth as much. Your calling or vocation, from **kaleo**, to surname, to identify by name)*

4:2 Be mindful of the fact that meekness and tenderness are the fabric of your make-up which enables you to show compassion even in seemingly impossible situations, eagerly bearing with one another in an environment where love rules.

4:3 Being vigilant to guard your oneness of spirit. We are prisoners of peace. We confirm the fact that there is only one body; also that there is only one Spirit.

4:4 We are identified in one expectation (*hope*), there is no plan B. We bear the same surname.

4:5 We are employed by the same Boss; we share the same faith, and our baptism says the same thing *(we are equally included in his death and resurrection.)*

4:6 There is only one God. He remains the ultimate Father of the universe. We are because he is. He is present in all; he is above all, through all and in all. *(He is not far from each one of us; in him we live and move and have our being; we are indeed his offspring. Acts17:24-28).*

4:7 The gift of Christ gives dimension to grace and defines our individual value. *(Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ)*

4:8 Scripture confirms that he led us as trophies in his triumphant procession on high; he repossessed his gift (*likeness*) in man. *(2:6 We are also elevated in his ascension to be equally welcome in the throne room of the heavenly realm where we are now seated together with him in his authority. Quote from the Hebrew text, Ps. 68:18, **lakachta mattanoth baadam**, thou hast taken gifts in man, in Adam. The gifts which Jesus Christ distributes to man he has received in man, in and by virtue of his incarnation. Commentary by Adam Clarke.)*

4:9 The fact that he ascended confirms his victorious descent into the deepest pits of human despair. *(See John 3:13, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, even the son of man." All mankind originate from above; we are **anouthen**, from above, see James 1:17,18.)*

4:10 He now occupies the ultimate rank of authority from the lowest regions, where he stooped down to rescue us from, to the highest authority in the heavens, having executed his mission to the full. *(Fallen man is fully restored to*

the authority of the life of his design.)

4:11 What God now has in us is gift wrapped to the world; some are commissioned to pioneer; others are gifted prophetically; some as announcers of good news; some as shepherds with a real gift to care and nurture, and others have a gift to ignite instruction through revelation knowledge. *(Couriers, communicators, counsellors and coaches. Rob Lacey)*

4:12 Each expression of his gift is to fully equip and enable the saints for the work of the ministry so that they may mutually contribute in their specific function to give definition to the visible body of Christ.

4:13 The purpose of these ministry gifts is to present everyone on par and in oneness of faith; believing exactly what the Son of God believes and knowing accurately what he knows concerning us. Standing face to face in equal stature to the measure of the completeness of Christ. *(A life filled to the brim with Christ, like a freight ship carrying its cargo.)*

4:14 The most dangerous life you can live is an ignorant one. You're left like an infant on a ship out of control in the waves and winds of the storms of life. The fall of the dice dictates while the deceptive teachings of men and their distracting tricks entertain.

4:15 Love *(the revealed value that God sees in every man)* gives truth its voice. The conversation that truth inspires *(as it is mirrored in Christ, v 21)* creates the atmosphere wherein growth is both spontaneous and inevitable. The whole person is addressed in Christ who is the head of the body; he is the conclusion of God's communication with man.

4:16 From him flows the original composition and detail of our design like words intertwined in poetry, *(like a conductor of music, epichoregeo)* they connect layer upon layer to complete the harmony, following the rhythm of his thoughts like footprints. Meanwhile the body thrives and pulsates with the energy of love. Each individual part *(portion)* finds its full measure there. *(Verses 8-16: "Couriers, communicators, counselors and coaches. All with the same brief: to get the crew to work together and to do others good. The church is not dismembered, dysfunctional body, but a fully functional, well balanced, coordinated lover of people." - Rob Lacey)*

4:17 My most urgent appeal to you in the Lord is this: you have nothing in common with the folly of the empty minded masses; the days of conducting your life and affairs in a meaningless way are over! *(Masses of people are walking in the vanity of their minds.)*

4:18 Their understanding is veiled by an interception of light *(an image cast by an object, representing the form of that object)* Therefore the life of God

remains obscure and foreign to them because ignorance blindfolds their hearts. *(They are darkened in their understanding of the truth of their redeemed identity; therefore they appear to be alienated from the life of God.)*

4:19 Having become conditioned to a life distanced from God; they are calloused in spirit, and are lust and greed driven; they have totally abandoned themselves to outrageous shameless living.

4:20 Of what total contrast is Christ!

4:21 It is not possible to study Christ in any other context; he is the incarnation, hear him resonate in you! The truth about you has its ultimate reference in Jesus. *("The truth as it is in Christ." He did not come to introduce a new compromised set of rules; he is not an example for us but of us!)*

4:22 Now you are free to strip off that old identity like a filthy worn-out garment. Lust corrupted you and cheated you into wearing it. *(Just like an actor who wore a cloak for a specific role he had to interpret; the fake identity is no longer appropriate!)*

4:23 *(Pondering the truth about you as it is displayed in Christ)* will cause you to be completely reprogrammed in the way you think about yourself! *(This happens in the spirit of your mind, on a much deeper level than a mere intellectual and academic consent.)*

4:24 Immerse yourself fully into this God-shaped new man from above! You are created in the image and likeness of God. This is what righteousness and true holiness are all about.

4:25 Faking it and lying to one another was part of the old life; now speak always only that which truth inspires to your fellowman. *(Truth as it is in Christ, v 21)* We are related to one another like different parts in the same body, *(cheating him would be cheating yourself!)*

4:26 Even if you think you have a valid excuse, do not let anger dominate your day! If you don't deal with it immediately *(in the light of the likeness of Christ in you)* the sun sets for you and your day becomes one of lost opportunity where darkness employs anger to snare you into sin.

4:27 Any sin that you tolerate is an open invitation to the devil. Do not give him a platform to operate from.

4:28 If you were a thief before, you are one no more. Find an honest job where the fruit of your labor can be a blessing to others!

4:29 Instead of cheap talk, your mouth is now a fountain of grace, giving

encouragement and inspiration to everyone within earshot.

4:30 The Holy Spirit is your signet ring from God to confirm that you are redeemed to live your life in the light of day, any conduct that belongs to the night grieves him.

4:31 Take up the strongest possible position against every form of distorted behaviour in your own life, do not allow yourself to be spiteful; outbursts of violent emotion and rage do not become you. You don't have to shout in order to make your point. People must feel safe in your conversation, therefore slander and hurtful words (*blasphemy*) are out!

4:32 Be inspired by kindness and compassion; your forgiving one another when you might feel irritated and frustrated, demonstrates the way God graciously treated us in Christ.

CHAPTER 5

5:1 Mimic God; you are his offspring.

5:2 This is how: let the love of Christ be your life; remember how he abandoned himself to us. His love is contagious, not reluctant but extravagant. Sacrificial love pleases God like the sweet aroma of worship. (*Resembling the holy anointing oil and the pure fragrant incense of spices, the work of a perfumer, to be burnt on the golden altar of incense in the inner court of the tent of meeting. Ex.37:25-29.*)

5:3 Love has nothing in common with lust, immoral acts or greed. The absence of these motives even in the way you talk sets a standard of excellence.

5:4 Any distorted language (*disfigured, exaggeration*), sarcasm or below the belt jokes are uncalled for; much rather let gratitude grace your conversation.

5:5 The Christ-life gives distinct definition to the kingdom of God. You cannot live a double-standard life. Abusing people through adultery, lust and greed is like worshipping a distorted image of yourself, which is what idolatry is all about.

5:6 Avoid any association with those who employ hollow words to entice you; unbelief only produces a breed of people that distorts the pattern of the harmony of the life of our design as image bearers of God. (*orge, from oregomai, to stretch one's self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something; thus to distort.*)

5:7 Do not allow their unbelief to include you in their company.

5:8 You were there once, trapped in the same darkness, but now you are light; your life confirms that light rules.

5:9 The spiritual harvest of light is evident in all that is excellent, innocent (*righteous*) and of impeccable integrity.

5:10 This gives certain evidence to the life of God's delight.

5:11 Do not tolerate anything in your life that associates you with darkness; there is no profit in it for you. Rather expose it for what it really is.

5:12 By gossiping about shameful acts that people do in secret you are giving those things undue mileage.

5:13 Darkness loses its grip upon that which light manifests. Light displaces darkness.

5:14 This is the message of light, Christ awakens you from your intoxicated slumber and resurrects you out of a death trap (*of thought patterns.*)

5:15 Take accurate stock of your life, cut out foolishness, walk in wisdom.

5:16 Wisdom converts time into opportunity, and frees your day from slog.

5:17 Make his master plan your meditation.

5:18 While wine offers no lasting escape from the evil of the day, the spirit certainly does! Immerse yourselves in fullness of spirit.

5:19 Speak psalms to one another; burst out in spontaneous celebration songs and spirit inspired resonance. In your heart don't let the music stop; continue to touch the Lord with whispers of worship.

5:20 Because you are identified in the Name of Jesus Christ, you can afford to always overflow in gratitude to the Father, (*not for everything that happens to you but*) in spite of everything that happens to you; you are not under circumstances but above circumstances because you are in him!

5:21 Inspired by the selfless consideration you witnessed in Christ, (*the way he abandoned himself to the will of God and to us, verse 2*) show perfect courtesy to one another.

5:22 (*Marriage is a portrait of this mutual yielding to one another*) wives give yourselves fully unto your husbands as you would to the Lord. (*Remember, v2 love is contagious, not reluctant but extravagant. Sacrificial love pleases God*)

like the sweet aroma of worship.)

5:23 In the same way that Christ gives salvation, security and completeness to the church as the head does to the body, the husband is all of that to his wife.

5:24 The church enjoys the full advantage of the complete package of salvation, by yielding themselves fully to Christ; even so the wife enjoys every benefit her husband represents in her abandonment to him.

5:25 The husband loving his wife pictures the parallel of Christ loving the church completely, and his unreserved giving of himself to us. *(This is what marriage is all about; it celebrates love's initiative, whether coming from the husband or the wife; this awakens a different level of commitment beyond the sense of duty or guilt.)*

5:26 Christ gives God's Word a voice; immersed in this language, his love words bathe us and remove from us every stain of sin.

5:27 This intimate language presents the church *(his restored image and likeness)* to himself, to his delightful approval without any distraction or reminder of a blemished past, no wrinkle or scar of sin's abuse remains; she stands before him in immaculate innocence. *(1Kings 6:7)*

5:28 *(A man could go through many disciplines in life to make himself look good financially or even go to great expense to win the applause of others; he could diligently workout in the gym and trim his body to perfection)* but the most valuable thing he can ever do to add value to his own life, is to love his wife; loving your wife equals loving your own body.

5:29 Consider how abnormal it would be for a man to abhor and detest his own body; the opposite is true! You would much rather pamper and fuss over your bodies. *(It's all you've got, you can't trade it in for a new one, so take good care of it, watch what you feed it and how you exercise it, and gently nurse it when it is in pain.)* Get the message, you are the body of Christ; he does not merely tolerate you politely, he delights himself in you!

5:30 We are his flesh and bone body; bearing his image and likeness we give tangible expression of him.

5:31 Marriage reflects this union; a man would separate himself from his own parents to be glued to his wife; thus two separate people are now merged into one new identity. *(In the same way he elevated us from our natural birth as our only identity to an understanding of our origin in him confirmed again in our new birth, his resurrection, and our subsequent restored joint position together with him in heavenly places; thus he brought about a new union of intimate oneness; God and man revealed again in one Person.)*

5:32 The secret of a successful marriage is reflected in this inseparable union between Christ and the church as God's redeemed image and likeness in man. *(This union ultimately defines both marriage and church, any other definition is a distorted man-made deception.)*

5:33 In conclusion then, no one has any excuse to love his wife less than what he loves himself; at the same time every wife is now free and fully empowered to honor her husband in the same context and devotion as the church would respond to the initiative of Christ.

CHAPTER 6

6:1 *(This mutual yielding to one another continues in every social relationship we engage in; and extends the attractive display of the Christ life: beginning at home, cradled in the warm embrace of loving parents,)* the way children respond to their parents give evidence to their righteousness in the Lord. *(In essence the term righteousness speaks of two parties honoring likeness in one another.)*

6:2 The first commandment that includes an immediate and long term incentive is in reference to children honoring their father and mother.

6:3 Both quality and duration of life on earth is impacted by the way children relate to their parents.

6:4 Fathers your role is not to exasperate your children *(by giving them burdens and tasks too heavy to bear,)* you are rather to awaken their minds in an environment conducive to draw on every virtue that is in them in the Lord.

6:5 The next level of relationship equally implicated includes the heart attitude of a slave towards his owner, because of your devotion to Christ, you are now able to give your boss the same undivided, sincere respect and devotion. *(Remember we are talking practical church/Christ-life, celebrating love's initiative in transforming society!)*

6:6 This is not a matter of merely trying to put up a front in order to impress your boss, you are in essence slaves of Christ; addicted to the desire of God to find expression in you; now slave life becomes the Christ life. *(The so called 'low life' becomes a window of the highest life.)*

6:7 However menial the task, put your heart and mind into it as you would unto the Lord, he's your real Boss, not man.

6:8 It is a well known fact that it is impossible for good deeds to go unnoticed;

it makes no difference whether a man be free or a slave; every single good deed equally attract the favorable attention of the Lord.

6:9 If you're the Boss, love's initiative applies to you on exactly the same terms; the way you treat your slaves with respect rather than threats, even when they do stupid things clears the air immediately. Take it from your heavenly Master; he does not judge people or circumstances on face value.

6:10 In conclusion, and with reference to the theme and context of this writing, I encourage you to realize your strength in the Master; your union with him is your limitless resource. *(Remember my prayer for you at the offset of this letter, 1:19 I pray that you will understand beyond all comparison the magnitude of his mighty power towards us who believe. Faith reveals how enormously advantaged we are in Christ. 1:20 It is the same dynamic energy that he unleashed in Christ when he raised him from the dead and forever established him in the power of his own right hand in the realm of the heavens. 1:21 Infinitely above all the combined forces of rule, authority, dominion or governments; he is ranked superior to any name that could ever be given to anyone of this age or any age still to come in the eternal future. 1:22 I want you to see this: he subjected all these powers under his feet. He towers head and shoulders above everything. He is the head, 1:23 the church (his redeemed image and likeness in man) is his body. The completeness of his being that fills all in all resides in us! God cannot make himself more visible or exhibit himself more accurately.)*

6:11 Fully immerse yourself in the detail and significance of every individual part of the armor of God *(acquaint yourself with all that God's victory in Christ represents.)* Just like every aspect in a soldier's armor significantly completes his battle uniform to best equip him to effectively face every method and strategy that the enemy could possibly employ against him.

6:12 People are not the enemy, *(whether they be husbands, wives, children, or parents, slaves or bosses. They might host the enemy in their attitudes and actions through their unbelief or ignorance but)* to target one another is to engage in the wrong combat. We represent the authority of the victory of Christ in the spiritual realm. We are positioned there *(in Christ)* we target the structures of darkness; governing and conditioning human behavior through their evil invisible influence. *(pros, towards, in this context, to advance, forward march, no retreat.)*

6:13 It is most important therefore to acquaint and associate yourself with every aspect of God's armor; now you are fully fit to powerfully defeat any onslaught of evil on the day of confrontation, triumphantly standing your ground.

6:14 Take your position: you have the truth *(of who you are in Christ)*

wrapped around your hips like a soldier's belt, holding the complete body armor together. *(Now your loins are protected so that the enemy can no longer defeat you with lust and sexual sins.)* Righteousness covers your heart like a bullet proof breastplate.

6:15 You wear your eagerness and passion to communicate the good news, like soldier's shoes *(practice your footwork.)* Announce peace, the battle has already been fought and won!

6:16 It is most important to engage your faith as a man-size shield that covers your whole person and empowers you to extinguish the flame in every arrow the enemy shoots at you. The only visible part of you is your faith!

6:17 Pondering redemption realities is your head gear that protects your mind; then give voice to the Word of God, this is your spiritual sword.

6:18 Prevail in persistent prayer; praying in the spirit includes every form of prayer, whether it be a prayer of request or a prayer of thanksgiving and worship or interceding for the saints, don't do all the talking, always be attentive to the voice of the spirit. *(Prayer is so much more than a one way conversation.)*

6:19 My most urgent request is for clarity of utterance every time I open my mouth to speak; that my words will be gifted with inspiration, boldly articulating the mystery of the gospel.

6:20 I am an ambassador in bonds; chained to this task of confidently communicating the revelation of the Gospel with the accuracy it deserves.

6:21 I know this is not much of a newsletter; my urgency is not to talk about myself; but my dear friend and faithful helper, Tychicus will fill you in on the detail. *(He is also the scribe of this letter.)*

6:22 That is really why I sent him to you, that you may be well informed about our affairs and see yourselves fully identified with us.

6:23 My prayer for you is a brotherhood of happy harmony, and love-entwined faith flowing from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:24 Grace greetings to all of you who share our undivided passion for our Master, Jesus Christ. He is echoed in your amen.

LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER 1

1:1 My name is Paul, my colleague Timothy and I are together in this mission ordained by the purpose of God, representing the ministry of Jesus Christ.

1:2 We greet you with grace, the blessing of his favour and friendship, and honour you who are in Colossae as saints and brothers included in Christ. God is our Father and Jesus Christ our Master.

1:3 Every time we pray for you we thank God for you. Together with our Lord Jesus Christ we enjoy a common origin in the Father.

1:4 The reports of your belief in Christ Jesus and your love for every devote follower inspires us.

1:5 Heaven (*the spiritual realm*) is the limitless reservoir of your expectation. The announcement of the goodness of God is not farfetched or too good to be true. The word you heard is absolutely true!

1:6 This word resonates within you and its appeal is prevailing in the whole world. The harvest is evident everywhere and gaining ground; as also witnessed in your own experience from the moment you heard and understood the true implication and the relevance of his grace. (*See Rom 1:8 "My greatest joy is to realise that your faith is announced throughout the entire world. The total cosmos is our audience!" Paul always sees the larger audience when he addresses the individual.*)

1:7 Your experience is consistent with the teaching you received from our dear co-worker Epafra. He is passionate about your well being in Christ.

1:8 He told us how much you love us in the spirit;

1:9 and so we have become inseparably linked to you. Our constant desire for you is that you might be overwhelmed with the knowledge of God's dream for your lives. We pray that the pattern of his wisdom and thoughts will fall into place for you. (*Spiritual understanding, from [sunieimi](#), a joining together as of two streams, a fusion of thought.*)

1:10 Go on a walkabout tour to explore the extent of the land that is yours under his Lordship. Now you can conduct yourselves appropriately towards him; pleasing him in every harvest of good works that you bear. Meanwhile you continue to increase in your intimate acquaintance with that which God knows to

be true about you; this results in the most attractive and fulfilled life possible. *(The knowledge of God, (not our perceptions of him) the faith of God, the peace of God, the lovingkindness of God, the joy of the Lord)*

1:11 You are empowered in the dynamic of God's strength; his mind is made up about you! *(His glorious power, **doxa** from **dokeo**, to recognize for what it really is, true opinion; God's intention; his mind made up.)* He enables you to be strong in endurance and steadfastness with joy.

1:12 We are grateful to the Father who qualified us to participate in the allotted portion of the inheritance of the saints in the light. *(The light of the gospel reveals what God accomplished to transform the sinner into a saint, **hagos**, an awful thing to **hagios**, a consecrated object; "call no man unholy or unclean" Acts 10:28)*

1:13 He rescued us from the claim of darkness and ignorance and transferred us into the kingdom where the love of his son rules. *(A darkened understanding veiled the truth of our redeemed design from us, until the day that we heard and understood the grace of God in truth. See v 6)*

1:14 In God's mind mankind is associated in Christ; in his blood sacrifice we were ransomed; our redemption was secured; our sins were completely done away with. *(The Greek word for sin, **hamartia** is a compound word, **ha**, without, and **martia** from **meros**, our true portion, thus our sins are that which caused us to fail to possess our allotted portion, the life of our design.)*

1:15 In him the invisible God is made visible again; in order that every one may recognize their true origin in him; he is the firstborn of every creature. *(What darkness veiled from us he unveiled. In him we clearly see the mirror reflection of our original image and likeness redeemed. The son of his love gives evidence of his image in human form.)*

1:16 Everything that is begins in him; whether in the heavenly realm or upon the earth, visible or invisible; every order of justice and every level of authority, be it kingdoms or governments, principalities or jurisdictions, all things were created by him and for him.

1:17 He is the initiator of all things therefore everything finds its relevance and its true pattern only in him.

1:18 The ekklesia (*church*) is the visible expression (*body*) of which Jesus is the head. He is the principle rank of authority who leads the triumphant procession of our new birth out of the region of the dead. His pre-eminent rank is beyond threat. *("leading the resurrection parade" - The Message)*

1:19 The full measure of everything God has in mind for man indwells him. (*"So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding." The Message*)

1:20 He initiated the reconciliation of all things to himself. Through the blood of the cross God restored the original harmony. His reign of peace now extends to every visible thing upon the earth as well as those invisible things which are in the heavenly realm. (*"Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe-people and things, animals and atoms-get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death." – The Message. The heavens, Greek, **ouranos**, a place of elevation, from **oros**, a mountain as lifting itself above the plain from **airo**, to lift, to raise, to elevate, to sail away - to lift the anchor.*)

1:21 Your indifferent mindset alienated you from God into a lifestyle of annoyances, hardships and labors. Yet he has now fully reconciled and restored you to your original design. (*"You yourselves are a case study of what he does." The Message. To reconcile: **apokatallasso**, fully restored to the original value. Thayer Definition: to change, exchange, as coins for others of equivalent value.*)

1:22 He accomplished this in dying our death in a human body; he fully represented us in order to fully present us again in blameless innocence face to face with God; with no sense of guilt, suspicion, regret or accusation; all charges against us are officially cancelled.

1:23 Remain under the influence of what your faith knows to be true about you; firmly consolidated in the foundation of your belief, so that nothing can distract you from the expectation of the Gospel. A hope that is consistent with what you have heard; just as I, Paul am in the ministry to proclaim this gospel in all of creation under heaven. (*The dimension of the invisible spiritual realm. "You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted. There is no other Message - just this one. Every creature under heaven gets this same Message. I, Paul, am a messenger of this Message" – The Message.*)

1:24 This is why no form of suffering can interfere with my joy. Every suffering on your behalf is just another opportunity to reinforce that which might still be lacking (*in your understanding*) of the affliction of Christ on behalf of his body which is the church. (*The inconvenience that Paul might be suffering on behalf of the believers is not to add to the sufferings of Christ - as though the sufferings of Christ on our behalf was insufficient but it is to further emphasize and confirm the principle of unselfish love that constrains New Testament ministry.*)

1:25 God entrusted me with the revelation of this mystery as a responsible administrator of his household, so that in my ministry to you I will make the

word known in its full consequence.

1:26 This mystery was concealed for ages and generations but is now fully realised in our restored innocence before him.

1:27 *(God knows the mineral wealth that he deposited in the earth on man's behalf)* in the same way he now eagerly anticipates the unveiling of the riches of the ultimate treasure in all the nations; which is Christ in you! The revelation of his indwelling fulfills his every dream for you. *(Math 13:44, Gal 1:15,16)*

1:28 This is the essence and focus of our message; we awaken every man's mind, instructing every individual by bringing them into full understanding *(flawless clarity)* in order that we may prove *(present)* everyone perfect in Christ. *(vous, + tithemi, to re-align every mind with God's mind; perfect, without shortcoming and fully efficient; in all wisdom, sophos from sophes, clear, clarity.)*

1:29 To accomplish this, I am laboring beyond the point of exhaustion striving with intense resolve with all the energy that he mightily inspires within me.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 Picture this: The stage is set; The game is on! And you are more than a mere spectator. We are standing opposite each other in the arena like two athletes of exactly the same stature: the contest is to display Christ in you to the extent that all of you as well as those in Laodicea may witness what I know face to face and not just by hear-say! *(I want you to see this live and not just on TV! "how great" helikos, Thayers definition, as tall as, as old as, equal comrades. Two contestants weighing the exact same weight as well as being athletes of the exact same age. Contest, agon, Thayers, an assembly met to see games within the arena or stadium).*

2:2 The mission of my ministry is for everyone's heart to be awakened to their true identity; intertwined in love's tapestry. This will launch you into a life of knowing the wealth of every conclusion and joint witness hidden within the mystery of God; who fathered us and co-revealed us in Christ. *(parakaleo, often translated, comfort, from para, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection; and kaleo, to surname, to identify by name, to call by name. "I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God." - The Message).*

2:3 The whole of the original logic of your life is preserved in him. He is the

authentic and intelligent source of every treasure that wisdom and knowledge holds. (*The 'hidden secret,' apokriphos, apo, from, plus krupto, to conceal, to keep secret; thesaurus, treasure, the place in which good and precious things are collected and laid up, from tithemi, to place, from theo, God the ultimate capacity of all things*).

2:4 I want to say it in such a way that no one will be able to lead you to an inferior conclusion by bending your mind with clever words (*that divert you again from the revelation of the mystery of Christ in you*).

2:5 My physical absence does not distance me from you spiritually. I rejoice to witness that your disciplined and practical lifestyle does not distract from the simplicity of your faith and confidence in Christ.

2:6 Your daily walk is no different from that initial embrace when you first understood your divine association in him. (*As you have received Christ, so walk in him.*)

2:7 Just like the roots of a tree draw your sustenance and strength from him. Now you are displayed like a building rising up out of its foundation in the full stature of Christ, firm in your faith posture, standing tall in his shoes. The language of gratitude that overflows from your lips reflects the exact impression of what you were taught.

2:8 Make sure that you become no one's victim through empty philosophical intellectualism and meaningless speculations; moulded in traditions and repetitions according to man's cosmic codes and superstitions and not consistent with Christ.

2:9 It is in Christ that God finds an accurate and complete expression of himself, in a human body!

2:10 He mirrors our completeness and is the ultimate authority of our true identity. He is I am in us. (*exousia, from ek + eimi originating out of 'I am'. "Your own completeness is only realised in him." Phillips Translation.*)

2:11 You are in Christ which means that his death represents your true circumcision. Sin's authority associated with every carnal sin in the human body was stripped off you (*like filthy garments*). (*Substance now supersedes the prophetic shadow of circumcision, sabbaths etc.*)

2:12 In the same parallel (*as circumcision*) your co-burial and joint-resurrection is now demonstrated in baptism; your co-inclusion in Christ is what God's faith knew when he powerfully raised him from the dead.

2:13 You were once spiritually dead, as confirmed in your constant failure,

being bound to a lifestyle ruled by the corrupt desires of the flesh; but now God has made you alive together with him, having forgiven you all your trespasses .
(The uncircumcision of the flesh, Greek: a life controlled by the sexual organs).

2:14 His body nailed to the cross hung there as the documented receipt testifying as proof that he deleted the detailed record of humanity's guilt.

2:15 Suddenly satanic powers and principalities were disarmed; they immediately lost all ground to continue to blackmail the human race. His brilliant victory made a public spectacle of them. *(The horror of the cross is now the eternal reference and trophy of his triumph!)*

2:16 Do not let anyone therefore bring any restriction to your freedom again by reviving religious rules and regulations pertaining to eating and drinking; all Jewish festivals, new moons and sabbaths have come to an end in Christ! *(Their relevance only served to remind of the promise of Christ on an annual, monthly and weekly basis. They served the promise like a placenta would carry the unborn child, but became obsolete as soon as the child was born.)*

2:17 These things were only prophetic shadows; Christ is the substance.

2:18 A religious mentality of voluntary humility and obsession with pious observances of angels will bring you no further reward. So do not let anyone who tries to act as an umpire of your devotion insist on his own opinion; confined to a mind inflated out of proportion by the sensational and spooky, his so called visions are just a puff of hot air. *(In his judgment he fails to correctly interpret the legal implications of the cross. "Don't tolerate people who try to run your life, ordering you to bow and scrape, (in order to improve your standing before God), insisting that you join their obsession with angels and that you seek out visions. They're a lot of hot air, that's all they are." The Message.)*

2:19 Such religious jargon is completely out of rhythm with the head. You are directly connected to Christ who like a choir conductor draws out the music in everyone like a tapestry of art that intertwines in harmony to reveal the full stature of divine inspiration *(which is Christ in you. See 2 Pet.1:11 Thus the great Conductor of music will draw your life into the full volume of the harmony of the ages.)*

2:20 If it is true that you were included in Christ's death, then it is true that you also co-died with him; then the religious systems of this world with its rules and regulations no longer applies to you. What further relevance would there be for you to continue to live under the influence of man's doctrines and ideas?

2:21 Things like: "Do not associate with this one!" or "Do not taste that!" or "Do not even touch this with your finger!"

2:22 These instructions are of no permanent value in any case since they refer to things that perish after it is consumed, thus they leave no lasting impact in your life. So do not let man's menus cause you to major on minors. *(Jesus said it is not what goes into the mouth that matters, but what comes out of the heart!)*

2:23 Religious tradition appears to be very devout and its followers seem to be so humble and holy in their strict observance of rules that seek to control the behavior of the body. The only problem with this is that the flesh is never permanently satisfied. *(Verses 19-23: The Message "They're completely out of touch with the source of life, Christ, who puts us together in one piece, whose very breath and blood flow through us. He is the Head and we are the body. We can grow up healthy in God only as he nourishes us. So, then, if with Christ you've put all that pretentious and infantile religion behind you, why do you let yourselves be bullied by it? 'Don't touch this! Don't taste that! Don't go near this!' Do you think things that are here today and gone tomorrow are worth that kind of attention? Such things sound impressive if said in a deep enough voice. They even give the illusion of being pious and humble and ascetic.)*

CHAPTER 3

3:1 You are raised together with Christ! Now pursue with persuasion the consequence of your co-inclusion in Christ. Relocate yourself mentally! Engage your thoughts with throne room realities; his resurrection co-raised you to the same position of authority, seated in the executive strength of God's right hand.

3:2 Becoming affectionately acquainted with these thoughts will keep you from being distracted again by the earthly *(soul-ruled)* realm.

3:3 Your union with his death broke the association with that world; the secret of your life now is the fact that you are fully embraced with Christ in God. *(Occupy your mind with this new order of life; you have died, your new life is hid in oneness with Christ in God. The secret of your life is your union with Christ in God. "Risen, then, with Christ you must lift your thoughts above where Christ now sits at the right hand of God, you must be heavenly minded; not earthly minded, you have undergone death, and your life is hidden away now with Christ in God. Christ is your life, when he is made manifest you are made manifest in his glory." - Knox Translation)*

3:4 Every time Christ is revealed as our life, we are being co-revealed in the same glory *(likeness and image of God)* being united together with him. As his life reveals you, your life reveals him! *(Whenever - Greek, **otan**, often used of an action that is repeated, Walter Bauer Lexicon. Our glorification - see 1 Cor. 2:7-8, Rom.3:23-24, Rom.8:30, 2 Pet.1:3.)*

3:5 Consider the members of your body as dead and buried towards everything related to the porn industry, sensual uncleanness, longing for forbidden things, lust and greed which are just another form of idol worship. *(Idol worship is worshipping a distorted image of yourself!)*

3:6 These distorted expressions are in total contradiction to God's desire for your life.

3:7 We were all once swept along into a lifestyle of lust and greed.

3:8 But now you can permanently put these things behind you: things such as violent outbursts of rage, depression, all manner of wickedness, slander *(any attempt to belittle someone else and to cause someone to receive a bad reputation, blasphemous)* and every form of irregular conversation. *(The lifelong association with sin is broken; the dominion of the character of God is revealed again in ordinary life.)*

3:9 That life was a lie; foreign to our design! Those garments of disguise are now thoroughly stripped off us in our understanding of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection. We are no longer obliged to live under the rule of the old robes we wore; neither are we cheating anyone through false pretensions. *(The garments an actor would wear define his part in the play but cannot define him.)*

3:10 We stand fully identified in the new creation renewed in knowledge according to the pattern of the exact image of our Creator.

3:11 The revelation of Christ in us gives identity to the individual beyond anything anyone could ever be as a Greek or a Jew, American or African, foreigner or famous, male or female, king or pawn. From now on everyone is defined by Christ; everyone is represented in Christ. *(In seeing him not just recorded in history but revealed in us, we discover the face of our birth as in a mirror! James 1:18.)*

3:12 You are the product of God's love; he restored you to his original thought to belong to him exclusively. It is like changing garments; now that you have gotten rid of the old, clothe yourselves with inner compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. *(Just like you were known by the garments you wore, these qualities now define you.)*

3:13 Upholding one another in positive expectation. If anyone finds fault with another, restore that person to favor, remembering how the Lord's forgiveness has transformed our lives.

3:14 Wear love like a uniform; this is what completes the picture of our

oneness.

3:15 Appoint the peace of Christ as umpire in your hearts; we are all identified in the same person; there is only one body. We are born to be a blessing and exhibit his benevolence.

3:16 Christ is the language of God's logic. Let his message sink into you with unlimited vocabulary; taking wisdom to its most complete conclusion. This makes your fellowship an environment of instruction in an atmosphere of music. Every lesson is a reminder, echoing in every song you sing, whether it be a psalm (*raving about God in praise and worship accompanied by musical instruments*) or a hymn (*a testimony song*) or a song in the spirit (*a new spontaneous prophetic song*). Grace fuels your heart with inspired music to the Lord.

3:17 Your every conversation and the detail of your daily conduct reflect him; his name and lordship define your lives and inspire your deep gratitude to God the father for his grace.

3:18 His peace is the umpire of your every relationship, especially in the family! Wives, place yourselves in the intimate care of your husbands acknowledging the lordship of Christ in them.

3:19 Husbands, love your wives tenderly. Do not exasperate them.

3:20 Children, you display the Christ life in the way you respond to your parents, keep them glowing with joy, they reflect God's delight in you. (*"Parents, don't come down too hard on your children or you'll crush their spirits." The Message.*)

3:21 Parents are responsible for the atmosphere at home; avoid vibes that dampen the child's spirit.

3:22 If you are employed by someone, even having to work like a slave, remember your hearts are intertwined in devotion to God. Don't just look busy when you are being watched, show the same diligence behind your bosses back.

3:23 Whatever you do, picture Christ in the person you are doing it for; it makes such a difference when you put your heart into it.

3:24 God is no man's debtor; you are employed under the Lordship of Christ.

3:25 Unrighteousness carries its own consequence and it is not a respecter of persons.

CHAPTER 4

4:1 If you are the boss, treat those who work for you in the light of their equality in Christ; he treats you like that and he is the big Boss in the spiritual realm. *(This verse concludes the thought in 3:25 and should rather be part of the previous chapter - Paul did not write in chapters and verses.)*

4:2 Persist in prevailing prayer. Be attentive and sensitive *(to the voice of the Spirit; do not be over occupied with prayers for yourself and your own needs)* Grace and gratitude is the language of prayer.

4:3 At the same time remember me in your prayers. Pray that what God has in me would impact many with the revelation of the mystery of Christ far beyond the walls of this prison cell. The confines of this prison does not measure my ministry; the message of the mystery of Christ does. *(Col.1:25-29)*

4:4 My sincere desire is that my message will accurately unveil the mystery of Christ in its most complete context. This is my mission in life!

4:5 Do not spoil your chance to touch others with the word through a lack of wisdom. Even though they may seem 'outside' your attitude towards them will reveal them 'inside'. Redeem the time by making the most of every opportunity. *(Time only finds its relevance in redemption-realities)*

4:6 Season your conversation with the revelation of grace. This remains the most attractive and appropriate option to respond in every situation.

4:7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is my colleague and such a lovely brother whose ministry is distinguished by integrity.

4:8 I commissioned him to come to you in this capacity, to cross-pollinate between us, so that you may also be encouraged and comforted by him.

4:9 Onesimus, who originally comes from your area will join him. He is a beloved and faithful brother. They will represent us with you.

4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner greets you warmly; so does Mark, the son of Barnabas' sister. Remember I told you to give him a special welcome when he comes to you.

4:11 Then there is also Jesus, some call him Justus. These three brethren, originally Jews by faith, are my close companions and co-laborers for the Kingdom of God.

4:12 Epahras who is also fruit of your ministry salutes you. What a diligent worker of Christ he is, always laboring on your behalf with great intensity in his

prayers. His desire for you is to stand strong in the full accomplishment of Christ and to be fully persuaded in God's purpose for your lives.

4:13 I can tell you that he has a real passion for your welfare, as well as for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

4:14 The dear doctor Luke greets you and so does Demas.

4:15 Please extend our greetings to the brethren in Laodicea and also to Nymphas and the church in her house.

4:16 Make sure that the church at Laodicea also gets the opportunity to read this epistle and that you again read the letter I wrote to them.

4:17 Archippus, I want you to be diligent to fulfill the ministry you have received in the Lord.

4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. You must remember my bonds. God's grace is yours.

HEBREWS - Such a great salvation!

Introduction

The Author

The fact that Paul's message (*righteousness by faith*), as witnessed in all his epistles, is evident throughout this magnificent study, overshadows the argument that his signature as probable author is absent.

The Sabbath Rest

In Christ the Sabbath Rest is no longer a shadow prefiguring the real, a token holy day in the week, but the celebration of a perfect redemption in which the exact image and likeness of God is revealed and redeemed in human form. Man's innocence is redeemed. "Having made purification for sins, he sat down..." His throne is established on the fact of our innocence! Sabbath is now a place of God's unhindered enjoyment of man, and man's unhindered enjoyment of God. Through the torn veil of his flesh, he has triumphantly opened a new and living way for mankind into the life of their design in the loving embrace of their Maker.

This letter has a Hebrew audience in mind and is written to exhort the Jewish believer neither to underestimate such a great salvation, nor to clutter the message with redundant Jewish rituals and sentiments.

Under the dispensation of the law of performance, historic Israel failed to access the redemptive Sabbath of God, and remained snared in the futility of their efforts to justify themselves.

Let us therefore be prompt to understand and fully appropriate that rest and not fall again into the same trap that snared Israel in unbelief.

The message that God spoke in Christ becomes a living and powerful influence in us, cutting like a surgeon's scalpel, sharper than a soldier's sword, piercing to the deepest core of human conscience, to the dividing of soul and spirit, ending the dominance of the sense realm and its neutralising effect upon the human spirit. In this way man's spirit is freed to be the ruling influence again in the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The scrutiny of this word detects every possible disease, discerning the body's deepest secrets where joint and bone-marrow meet. (The moment we cease from our own efforts to justify ourselves, by yielding to the integrity of the message that announces the success of the cross, God's word is triggered into action. What God spoke to us in sonship (the incarnation), radiates his image and likeness in our redeemed innocence. He spoke our incarnation and our innocence in Christ. (1:1-3) This word powerfully

penetrates and impacts our whole being, body, soul and spirit.) (Heb 4:11,12)

Righteousness gives context and definition to faith.

Righteousness by faith defines life; reverting to the law of works would be an insult to faith. Heb. 10:38

Faith is so much more than mere positive thinking or even believing God for a miracle.

We have often attempted to decipher life as we do the riddle of the Rubik's cube; or we have reduced our walk of faith to a snakes-and-ladders adventure, where the fall of the dice dictates.

The difference between positive thinking and faith lies in its reference. While positive thinking might motivate you to strive to become and to possess, the faith of God reveals who you already are by design, and what you already have by redemption through Christ.

"God desires to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose." Heb.6:17 (RSV)

There is a vast difference between a display window and a mirror. The one keeps you entertained in window shopping mode, while the other confirms the truth about you as it is revealed in Christ. 2 Cor.3:18, James 1:18, 23.

If Christ is both the author and perfecter of faith, self-assessment by any other reference would be foolish.

He defines for us our original design and our restored innocence. We find our identity and our destiny there; a future of innocence and friendship.

We have obtained unrestricted access.

God has deleted the record of our sins and misdeeds. He no longer recalls them.

Sins were dealt with in such a thorough manner that no further offerings would ever be required. Nothing that we might personally sacrifice could add any virtue to our innocence.

Brethren, this means that, through what the blood of Jesus communicates and represents, we are now welcome to access this ultimate place of sacred encounter with unashamed confidence.

A brand new way of life has been introduced.

Because of his torn flesh on the cross, our own flesh can no longer be made an excuse for veiling our experience of his favour and presence.

We have a High Priest in the house!

We are free to approach him with absolute confidence, fully persuaded in our hearts that nothing can any longer separate us from him. We are invited to draw near now! We are thoroughly cleansed, inside and out, with no trace of sin's stains on our conscience or conduct. Our inner thought patterns are purged by the sprinkled blood; our bodies also are bathed in clean water. (Our behaviour bears witness to this.) Heb.10:17-22.

The Kruger National Park

Lydia and I love the Kruger National Park; it is our favourite place to holiday.

While on a game drive early one morning, I was thinking about faith and realised that, just as my vehicle gives me presence and access to this wildlife sanctuary, so faith in our restored innocence through the successful accomplishment of Christ is the vehicle that gives access to the sanctuary of sanctuaries; the immediate welcome and presence of the Creator. God has obtained our righteousness through the finished work of Christ on the cross.

He secured our right of access to all the blessings imaginable to man. Jesus gives definition to God's eternal love-dream of our unhindered union with him, forever free from the obstructive consciousness of sin.

This is what the theme of the book of Hebrews is all about!

When you visit the Game Reserve you are immediately aware that you are in a very special place. The glossy pictures in the official roadmap promise glimpses of the enormous variety of game on record. The stage is set, everything is in place. You do not bring anything but your own presence to this Reserve. All its magnificent plant, bird, animal, reptile and insect species are already there and fully represented. They give unique context to the place. As you drive or sit quietly at your camp or some remote water hole, the sights, sounds and smells are powerful confirmations, complementing and confirming the attraction of the bush.

Here the roar of the lion belongs to me, the fresh footprint in the sand, the call of the fish eagle, as well as the vastness of the landscape with its magnificent trees. Every sunrise and sunset continues to decorate the canvas of my horizon!

Many visitors would diligently search for the trophy of sighting or capturing the moment on a photograph.

The entry permit gives to every visitor equal access to the Reserve. The fact

that these animals are not caged makes it even more exciting to track them down or be surprised by their sudden appearance on the road.

But to visit the Reserve simply to tick off the next sighting on your list somehow does not do justice to the enormous pleasure of just being there! So often the Reserve becomes reduced to the search for the elusive leopard.

If righteousness is what provides the full context and definition of faith, reducing faith to the experience of another healing or financial breakthrough would rob one of the greater reality. Any lesser definition would become a distraction, whereas every fresh encounter confirms and complements the big picture.

Bush knowledge adds tremendous value to your experience; the untrained eye often misses the obvious; following the clues of the different alarm calls and noticing the intense stares in the direction of possible danger by the impala or giraffe usually leads to a sighting of a predator. The quickest way to learn is to ask others, especially those who live there.

Peter wrote, "You will do well if you pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the morning star rises and the day dawns in your own heart." 2Pet.1:19. Nothing beats a first-hand encounter. An experienced guide can make such a difference to lead you to that point!

"Do you understand what you are reading?" is the vital question when studying scripture. The Ethiopian Chief Treasurer answers Philip, "How can I understand unless someone guides me?" Acts 8:30,31,35. "And beginning with that scripture, Phillip told him the good news about Jesus!" When studying scripture, get to the point! The whole Bible is about Jesus; the good news is that all of Jesus is about you!

An authentic sighting takes the sanctuary event far beyond the most realistic "zoo" experience.

In traditional church-life we have often sought to confine God's Spirit within the narrow scope of predictable programs and routines.

In Christ, God opened a new and exciting way for us to encounter him without hesitation or restriction!

This epistle belongs to every believer.

It is a document of profound beauty, leading the student beyond insubstantial religious rituals and sentiments into the substance of Divine intimacy.

I add a comment on the work of Mersch with reference to its source: (*"...it is the work of a guide to lead us to the top of a mountain and then to move aside*

to let us see the tremendous vistas on every side. What remains is our gratitude to Mersch for bringing us to such a place.

It is as if he has been saying to each of us, "Look within. Don't be afraid to use your mind to the utmost and to seek your deepest center. Far from this attention to the deepest realm of the human spirit walling you up within yourself, it will open out on to the whole mystery of the universe and the human race. It will show You your union with the forests and birds and distant galaxies, and every other human being who ever was or ever will be. And this kind of metaphysical seeing will give you a tiny glimpse of the fiery mystery of existence from which all things have come and by which they are continually sustained and to which they strive to return.

"But as splendid as this mystery is, it is meant to draw you into the mystery of Christ. The Word of God has become flesh, and by taking a human nature in that very act has transformed it and transforms, as well, the universe and the human race. You have a new being in Christ in which you share through him in the very life of the Trinity.") innerexplorations.com

CHAPTER 1

1:1 Throughout ancient times God spoke in many fragments and glimpses of prophetic thought to our fathers.

1:2 Now, the sum total of his conversation with man has finally culminated in a son. He is the official heir of all things. He is, after all, the author of the ages. Jesus is what has been on the tip of the Father's tongue all along! *(The revelation of man's redeemed sonship, as revealed in Jesus, is the crescendo of God's conversation with man. Throughout the ages he has whispered his name in disguise to be revealed in the fulness of time as the greatest surprise. The exact image of God his very likeness, the authentic eternal thought became voice and was made flesh in us.)*

1:3 We have our beginning and our being in him. He is the force of the universe, sustaining everything that exists by his eternal utterance! Jesus is the radiant and flawless expression of the person of God. He makes the glory *(intent)* of God visible and exemplifies the character and every attribute of God in human form. *(Gen.1:26, 27)* This powerful final utterance of God *(the incarnation revealing mankind's sonship)* is the vehicle that carries the weight of the universe. What he communicates is the central theme of everything that exists. The content of his message celebrates the fact that God took it upon himself to successfully cleanse and acquit mankind. Jesus is now his right hand of power, the executive authority seated in the boundless measure of his majesty. He occupies the highest seat of dominion to endorse man's innocence!. *("Having accomplished purification of sins, he sat down...")*

1:4 No angel can compete with him in rank or name. This is his rightful

portion.

1:5 God did not address the angels when he said (*in Psalm 2*), "You are my son, today I have given birth to you! I am to you all that a Father can be to a son, and you are to me all that a son can be to a Father."

1:6 And when he leads his son in triumphant parade, as his firstborn, before the whole inhabited world, he says, "Let all God's angels kiss his hand in adoration."

1:7 He endorses the fact that the angels are his messengers; he made them to be swift like the wind and to move at the speed of lightning.

1:8 But when he addresses the son he says, "Your throne, O God, extends beyond the ages. The scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom" (*Ps.45:6*)

1:9 "You love righteousness and detest evil. Therefore, O God, your God anointed you with the oil of joy to stand head and shoulders above your associates." (*Ps.45:7*)

1:10 "The earth traces its foundation back to you, the heavens also are your invention; they are all handmade by you." (*Ps.102:25*)

1:11 They shall become obsolete but you will remain, they shall show wear like an old garment;

1:12 and you will eventually roll them up as a mantle; they shall be replaced, but you remain "I am", and your years will never cease.

1:13 Neither was it the angels he had in mind when he said, "You are my executive authority (*the extension of my right hand,*) take your position and witness how I make your enemies a place upon which you may rest your feet." (*Math.22:42-45*)

1:14 What role do the angels play in God's strategy? They are all employed by God in the apostolic ministry of the Spirit to help administer the inheritance of salvation that belongs to mankind.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 I have said all this to help you realize the tremendous importance of the message you have heard. Become totally engaged in this ultimate utterance and thus you will never drift away from its influence and appeal.

2:2 The words God spoke through angels and prophets were not to be taken lightly; any violation or disregard of these met with its inevitable consequence.

2:3 No one can afford to underestimate and be blasé about this final message, a salvation of such magnificent proportions! There is no alternative escape. Salvation as it is articulated in Christ is the message which God spoke from the beginning, and it was confirmed again and again by those who heard him.

2:4 The purpose of God in every sign, miracle and gift of the Holy Spirit was *(not to distract but rather)* to complement and confirm this great message of salvation.

2:5 The angels are not in charge of this new world order that we are speaking of. *(The age and dispensation of man's salvation)*

2:6 Somewhere in the scriptures it is written, "What is it about man that God cannot get him out of his thoughts? Why would God bother to benefit the son of man? Why would God make so much of man?"

2:7 He has made man all but equal to himself, he crowned him with his own glory and dignity, and appointed him in a position of authority over all the works of his hands." *(Ps.8:4-6.) (No angel can boast that.)*

2:8 God's intention was that man should rule the planet. He subjected everything without exception to his control. Yet, looking at mankind, it does not seem that way at all.

2:9 But what is apparent is Jesus *(but now God spoke to us in a son...Heb.1:1-3)* Let us then consider him in such a way that we may clearly perceive what God is saying to mankind in him. In the death he suffered he descended for a brief moment below the lowest ranked angel in order to taste the death of the whole human race, and in doing so to fulfil the grace of God and be crowned again *(as a man, representing all mankind)* with glory and highly esteemed honour.

2:10 He now towers in conspicuous prominence far above all things. He is both their author and their conclusion. He now summons every son of his, through a perfected salvation, to his own glory. The extent of the suffering he bore is the measure of the perfection of the salvation over which he presides. *(prepo to tower, see also 7:26)*

2:11 Because both he who carried out the act of rescue and those whom he rescued and restored to innocence originate from the same source; he proudly introduces them as members of his immediate family.

2:12 He says, "I will reveal your name to my brothers as being their own; this

will fuel my praise in the ekklesia, where I will celebrate God in song." (*This strongly recalls Joseph revealing himself to his brothers! Gen.54:1, Ps.22:22, in Hebrew, "I will inscribe (**safar** = enumerate, detail) your name in the core of my kindred"; **tavek** = to cut to the core, sever, bisect, a mathematical term which is the division of a given curve, figure, or interval into two equal parts, the one mirroring the other.)*)

2:13 "I will win his friendship again with trust." He says in another place, "I am surrounded by the children God has given me (*I am one of them*)." (*While we were still hostile he reconciled us to himself.*)

2:14 Being one with the children of God presupposes the fact that he died in a body exactly like theirs; being as fully human as we are, he is qualified to remove the dominion of death that was introduced as a result of Adam's fall. (*Had he done all this in a superhuman body the implications of his life, death and resurrection would be irrelevant.*) **diabolos**, translated devil, literally, **dia + ballo**, through the fall, or as a result of the fall)

2:15 He delivered man from the lifelong dread of death. Death presents no further threat to man.

2:16 His mission was to rescue, not the angels, but the seed of Abraham from their peril. (*Their death sentence.*)

2:17 He was obliged to completely assimilate every detail of his brothers' humanity so that, in his position as Chief Priest, his compassion and integrity would prevail effectively over their sins, to reconcile them with God.

2:18 He experienced humanity's temptation with the same intensity, and under the same scrutiny, and was therefore qualified to represent them with immediate effect. (*To run to their rescue.*)

CHAPTER 3

3:1 Brothers, in the context of our joint inclusion in him, we are blameless; we participate in his heavenly identity. We have become fully acquainted with Christ Jesus as the Ambassador and Chief Priest of our confession. (*We echo his conversation: **homologeō** = to agree in what is spoken, **homo**, the same, and **legō**, to speak, usually translated, confession.*)

3:2 He has complete faith in God's workmanship (*in perfecting our salvation*) ; just as Moses demonstrated his complete belief in God's purpose in his attention to detail regarding the construction of the tabernacle. (*See Heb.8:5*)

3:3 Yet his fame surpasses the glory of Moses, because the one who designs

and constructs the house gets the greater glory.

3:4 Every house is an expression of someone's design; God is the ultimate architect and creator of all things. *(He owns the blueprint.)*

3:5 Moses took responsible charge of the administration of the Tabernacle as a servant of and witness to the prophetic voice.

3:6 But Christ is in charge of his own household not as a servant but as a son. Understand this: we are part of this family; this is our real state now, we are not playing a role or doing the dress rehearsal. We are no longer talking prophetically in figures and analogies. We are bursting with confidence. What good reason we now have for rejoicing! Our expectation, inspired by its foundation in prophecy, has now come to full fruition.

3:7 In Psalm 95:7-11 the Holy Spirit said, "Discern the voice of the shepherd. Grasp the urgency of what God is saying to you today! *(Sonship is the Father's language, 1:1)*

3:8 Therefore, do not be calloused in heart as the people of Israel were: every time they faced any contradiction or temptation in the wilderness, their response immediately revealed their irritation rather than their faith.

3:9 Your fathers continued to scrutinize me suspiciously, examining me as though my intentions with them could not be trusted, even though they were eye-witnesses of my miraculous works for forty years.

3:10 They were a generation of people who grieved me deeply; instead of learning my ways, they habitually went astray in their hearts, intoxicated by their unbelief.

3:11 *(Even to this day they are still trapped in the wilderness of unbelief.)* Hear the echo of God's cry through the ages, "Oh! If only they would enter into my rest."

3:12 Make sure that none of you tolerates the poison of unbelief in your hearts, allowing callousness to distract and distance you from the living God. *(Unbelief, (believing a lie about yourself and your salvation Num 13:33, Josh 2:11) exchanges the living God for a dead god of your own imagination. A calloused heart is a mind dominated by the senses.)*

3:13 Instead, remind one another daily of your true identity; make today count! Do not allow callousness of heart to cheat any of you for even a single day out of your allotted portion. *("To encourage one another daily", from [parakaleo](#), from [para](#), a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of*

*residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection, and **kaleo**, to identify by name, to surname. Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit in the same capacity, **parakletos** - John 14:16)*

3:14 What we have become in our union with Christ must be taken to its ultimate conclusion. Do not cancel out your confident start by making a poor finish. *(Starting in faith then going back to the law of works.)*

3:15 Every day is an extension of God's today; hear his voice, do not harden your heart. The stubborn rebellion of Israel brought them nowhere.

3:16 The same people who experienced God's mighty act of deliverance out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses were the very ones who rebelled.

3:17 They grieved him for forty years in the wilderness until they were reduced to nothing.

3:18 He vowed that their unbelief would preclude them from possessing the place of his promise. *(His rest, based on the perfect restoration of his likeness revealed in man through Christ. Genesis 1:26,31, 2:1,2)*

3:19 The point is this: even though they survived by supernatural means in the wilderness for forty years, they failed to grasp what God had in mind for them. Their own unbelief disqualified them. *(You can experience God's supernatural provision and protection and yet remain outside his rest. The ultimate proof of faith is not experience of the supernatural, but entering into his rest. His rest celebrates his perfect work; it finds its definition and reference in Gen.1:31, 1 Kings 6:7 and Col.2:9,10. He longs for you to discover your own completeness and perfection as seen from his point of view. His rest is sustained in you by what he sees, knows and says about you in reference to the finished work of Christ. Jesus is what God believes about you.)*

CHAPTER 4

4:1 What a foolish thing it would be for us if we should now fail in a similar fashion to enter into the full consequences of our redemption.

4:2 The gospel we have heard today is the same gospel that was preached in the promise. *(Both share the same source, intent and content, although the first was a mere shadow of the second).* God had man's benefit in mind all along, yet, because people lacked the persuasion by which the word could be ignited and brought to life in them, the promise did not profit them at all.

4:3 Faith secures our entrance into God's rest *(into the result of his completed*

work). Hear the echo of God's cry though the ages, "Oh! If only they would enter into my rest." His rest celebrates perfection. The sufficiency of his rest is founded upon the fact that his work is complete; even the fall of humanity did not flaw its perfection. *(His rest was not at risk. "His works were finished from the foundation of the world". "My wrath" orge, passionate desire, any strong outburst of emotion, "Oh! If only they would enter into my rest." First Adam failed to enter into God's finished work, and then Israel failed to enter into the consequence of their complete redemption out of Egypt and as a result of their unbelief perished in the wilderness. Now let us not fail in the same manner to see the completed work of the cross. How God desires for us to see the same perfection; what he saw when he first created man in his image and then again what he saw in the perfect obedience of his Son when he was wounded for our transgressions. Because of the cross he succeeded to perfectly redeem and restore man in his likeness.*

God is not in his rest because he is exhausted, but because he is satisfied with what he sees and knows concerning us! He now invites us with urgent persuasion to enter into what he sees.

"From the foundation of the world." Gr, apo, away from, before, katabalo, cast down, sometimes translated foundation, see notes on Eph. 1:4 "This association goes back to before the fall of the world, his love knew that he would present us again face to face before him, identified in Christ in blameless innocence."

The implications of the fall are completely cancelled out. katabalo - "to fall away, to put in a lower place," instead of themelios - "foundation" see Eph.2:20 - Thus translated "the fall of the world" instead of "the foundation of the world.")

4:4 Scripture records the seventh day to be the prophetic celebration of God's perfect work. What God saw satisfied his scrutiny. *(Behold, it is very good... And God rested from all his work. Gen.1:31, 2:2; God saw more than his perfect image in Adam, he also saw the Lamb and his perfect work of redemption! "The Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world." Rev.13:8. "That which has been is now; that which is to be, already has been;" Ecc 3:15)*

4:5 In Psalm 95 the same seventh day metaphor is reiterated: "O, that they would enter my rest!"

4:6 It is clear then that there is still an opportunity to enter into that rest which Israel failed to access because of their unbelief, even though they were the first to hear the good news of God's intention to restore mankind to the same Sabbath that Adam and Israel had lost. *(Both Adam and Israel believed a lie about themselves. Num 13:33, Josh 2:11.)*

4:7 So, now again many years later, he points specifically to an extended opportunity when he announces in David's prophecy, "Today when hearing my voice, do not do so with a calloused heart. Be faith sensitive."

4:8 If Joshua, who led the new generation of Israel out of the wilderness (*where their parents perished through unbelief*), had succeeded in leading them into the rest that God intended, David would not so many years later have referred to yet another day (*that still remains as an open invitation to mankind to enter into their rest: the living blueprint of their design. This confirms that the history of Israel was a mere shadow and prophetic type of that Promise that was yet to be fulfilled.*)

4:9 The conclusion is clear: the original rest is still in place for God's people. (*The people of this planet are the property of God, Ps.24:1*)

4:10 God's rest celebrates his finished work; whoever enters into God's rest immediately abandons his own efforts to compliment what God has already perfected. (*The language of the law is "do"; the language of grace is "done."*)

4:11 Let us therefore be prompt to understand and fully appropriate that rest and not fall again into the same trap that snared Israel in unbelief.

4:12 The message that God spoke to us in Christ is the most life giving and dynamic influence in us, cutting like a surgeon's scalpel, sharper than a soldier's sword, piercing to the deepest core of human conscience, to the dividing of soul and spirit; ending the dominance of the sense realm and its neutralising effect upon the human spirit. In this way man's spirit is freed to become the ruling influence again in the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The scrutiny of this word detects every possible disease, discerning the body's deepest secrets where joint and bone-marrow meet. (*The moment we cease from our own efforts to justify ourselves, by yielding to the integrity of the message that announces the success of the cross, God's word is triggered into action. What God spoke to us in sonship (the incarnation), radiates his image and likeness in our redeemed innocence. (1:1-3) This word powerfully penetrates and impacts our whole being; body, soul and spirit.*)

4:13 The whole person is thoroughly exposed to his scrutinizing gaze. Every creature's original form is on record in the Word. (*Representing God's desire to display his image and likeness in man.*)

4:14 In the message of the incarnation we have Jesus the Son of God representing humanity in the highest place of spiritual authority. That which God has spoken to us in him is his final word. It is echoed now in the declaration of our confession.

4:15 As High Priest he fully identifies with us in the context of our frail human life. Having subjected it to close scrutiny, he proved that the human frame was master over sin. His sympathy with us is not to be seen as excusing weaknesses that are the result of a faulty design, but rather as a trophy to humanity. (*He is not an example for us but of us.*)

4:16 For this reason we can approach the authoritative throne of grace with bold utterance. We are welcome there in his embrace, and are reinforced with immediate effect in times of trouble. (*Greek, **boetheia**, to be reinforced, specifically a rope or chain for frapping a vessel in a storm.*)

CHAPTER 5

5:1 Traditionally a man would be appointed from among his fellows to fulfill the office of High Priest in presenting gifts and sacrifices before God on behalf of the people, and for their sins. (*The High Priesthood of Christ is in sharp contrast to the system of priesthood the Jews were familiar with.*)

5:2 Every Jew felt reassured by the fact that this man himself was hemmed in by the same sins that snared the people he represented. By virtue of his own limitations and inadequacies he was able to sympathise with their ignorance and waywardness.

5:3 It was accepted practice that he would offer sacrifices for both his own and the people's sins.

5:4 This honourable office was not by self appointment but, as in Aaron's case, the priest was summoned to the work by God.

5:5 Neither did Christ assume the high priestly office by his own presumption, but in fulfilment of the prophetic word (*in Psalm 2*) concerning the Messiah, in which God, speaking through David, said, "You are my son, today I have begotten you."

5:6 Just as he has spoken in other Scriptures concerning this new priestly order: "Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (*by translation, "the King of Righteousness", Genesis 4:18. In these scriptures a new and eternal order of priesthood is introduced. Ps.110:4. Jesus knew that his priesthood was prophesied in scripture, a priesthood neither passed on by natural birth, nor ending with natural death.*)

5:7 When he faced the horror of his imminent death, he presented his urgent plea to God in an outburst of agonising emotion, and with tears. He prayed with urgent intent to be delivered from death, knowing that God was able to save him. He was heard because of his firm grip on the prophetic word (*not because he feared, as some translations have put it, but because he fully grasped that he was the fulfilment of scripture; he knew that he would be raised on the third day; Hos 6:2; eu + lambano*).

5:8 As son, he was in the habit of hearing from above; what he heard

distanced him from the effect of what he had suffered. (*The word often translated obedience, is the word **upoakuo**, under the influence of hearing, hearing from above. 'By' the things he suffered, **apo**, away from, distanced. See 10:7 "Then I said, I read in your book what you wrote about me; so here I am, I have come to fulfill your will."*)

5:9 By his perfect hearing he forever freed mankind to hear what he had heard. (*He now makes it possible for us to hear in such a way that we may participate again in the full release of our original identity; the logos finding voice in the incarnation in us.*)

5:10 The authority of this high priestly order of Melchizedek flows directly from God. (*'Called' of God, **prosagereo**, from **pros**, a preposition of direction, + **ago**, to lead as a shepherd lead his sheep, and + **reo** (4482) to flow, or to run like water. His High Priestly office originates in God.*)

5:11 On this subject there remains so much to be said; but O, how difficult it is to explain something to someone who hears with an indifferent attitude.

5:12 By now you (*Jews*) should have been professors, able to teach the rest of the world, but you are still struggling with the ABC of God's language in Christ. (*Heb.1:1-3*) The difference between the prophetic shadow and the real is like that between milk and meat in your diet. You cannot live on baby food for the rest of your lives!

5:13 The revelation of righteousness is the meat of God's word. (*Babes live on milk (the prophetic shadow of the real which was to come.) So does everyone who is not pierced in the ear of his heart by the revelation of Christ. (God's act of righteousness in Christ restored mankind to blameless innocence, Rom.1:17) Greek **apeiros**, not pierced, tested by piercing.*)

5:14 This is the nourishment of the mature. They are those who have their faculties of perception trained as by gymnastic precision to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant. (*The mature are those who know the difference between the shadow and the substance; between the futility of the law of works and willpower to work righteousness, and righteousness revealed by the faith of God in the finished work of Christ.*)

CHAPTER 6

6:1 Consequently, as difficult as it may seem, you ought to divorce yourselves from sentimental attachment to the prefiguring doctrine of the Messiah, which was designed to carry us like a vessel over the ocean of prophetic dispensation into the completeness of the fulfilled promise. A mind shift from attempts to impress God by your behaviour, to faith-righteousness in Christ, is fundamental.

There is no life left in the old system. It is dead and gone; you have to move on.
(Rom. 3:27)

6:2 All the Jewish teachings about ceremonial washings (*baptisms*), the laying on of hands (*in order to identify with the slain animal as sacrifice*), and all teachings pertaining to a sin consciousness, including the final resurrection of the dead in order to face Judgment, are no longer relevant. (*All of these types and shadows were concluded and fulfilled in Christ, their living substance. His resurrection bears testimony to the judgment that he faced on humanity's behalf and the freedom from an obstructive consciousness of sin that he now proclaims. Rom.4:25, Acts 17:31*)

6:3 So it is with God's prompting that we advance (*from the prophetic types and shadows of Scripture into the substance of what God has now spoken to us in his son, 1:1-3*).

6:4 Now it may be that someone may clearly see the light (*of the prophetic word*) and participate in the Holy Spirit by already having sampled the heavenly gift, (*"The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. 1Pe 1:10,11*)

6:5 and they might even begin to feast on the beauty of the Word; already having experienced the power of the age of the promise that all were waiting for:

6:6 if such a person were to insist on relapsing into the old mindset of legalism, sin consciousness and condemnation, it becomes impossible for him to be restored again and again to repentance (*as was the case under the shadow system of the law where sacrifices were repeatedly slain because no permanent cleansing was possible. See Heb.10:1-4. The principle of repeated repentance, as practiced under the law, would be impossible in the new dispensation, because it would absurdly imply that Christ was being re-crucified and subjected to public shame over and over again.*)

6:7 For when cultivated soil is soaked by frequent showers and produces the useful, life-giving crop expected by the farmer, the harvest brings much celebration.

6:8 What a complete disappointment though, if the same soil produces nothing but thorns and thistles; it is a worthless yield, and fit for burning, a dream that has gone up in smoke.

6:9 Having said all this, my dear friends, I am fully convinced of God's love for you; what God accomplished in salvation on your behalf is beyond comparison

to anything you were familiar with before. Salvation realities echo what the law could only shadow.

6:10 God is not unfair, neither is he unaware of the affectionate way in which you have honoured his Name, and the diligence you have shown in your unrelenting religious service in keeping all the sacred rituals and ceremonies, even to this the present day.

6:11 I urge you to employ that same sincere devotion to now realise the fulfilment of everything that the old system anticipated.

6:12 We do not want you to behave like illegitimate children, unsure of your share in the inheritance. (*nothros* from *nothos*, one born outside of wedlock, of a concubine or female slave. The child of the law and not of the promise. Gal.3:29). Mimic the faith of those who through their patience came to possess the promise of their allotted portion.

6:13 God could give Abraham no greater guarantee than the integrity of his own being; this makes the promise as sure as God is.

6:14 Saying, I will continue to speak well of you. I will confirm my intention always only to bless you, and to multiply you beyond measure. (*In blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.*)

6:15 And so Abraham continued in patience and secured the promise.

6:16 It is common practice in human affairs to evoke a higher authority under oath in order to add weight to any agreement between men, thereby silencing any possibility of quibbling. (*Putting an end to all dispute.*)

6:17 In the same context we are confronted with God's eagerness to go to the last extreme in his dealing with us as heirs of his promise, and to cancel out all possible grounds for doubt or dispute. In order to persuade us of the unalterable character and finality of his resolve, he confined himself to an oath. The promise which already belongs to us by heritage is now also confirmed under oath. (*The Promise is the oath; Jesus is the proof.*)
(RSV: *He desires to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose.*)

6:18 So that we are now dealing with two irreversible facts (*The promise of redemption sustained throughout Scripture and the fulfilment of that promise in Jesus*) which make it impossible for anyone to prove God wrong; thus our persuasion as to our redeemed identity is powerfully reinforced. We have already escaped into that destiny; our expectation has come within our immediate grasp!

6:19 Our hearts and minds are certain; anchored securely within the innermost courts of God's immediate Presence; beyond the (*prophetic*) veil.

6:20 By going there on our behalf, Jesus pioneered a place for us and removed every type of obstruction that could still distance us from the promise. In him we are represented for all time; he became our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. We now enjoy the same privileged access he has. (*He said, "I go to prepare a place for you so that you may be where I am. On that day you will no longer doubt that I and the Father are one; you will know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you!" John.10:30, 14:3 and 20.*)

CHAPTER 7

7:1 This is the same Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Supreme God, who met Abraham after he had defeated the four kings, and blessed him.

7:2 It was to him Abraham gave a tenth part of all the spoils. To begin to appreciate the significance of Melchizedek, we must first appreciate the meaning of his name: King of Righteousness and King of Peace. He is the one who administers God's promise and guarantees his ability to restore us to blameless innocence and wholeness! (*Greek, **dikaiosune**, righteousness, from **dike**, two parties finding likeness in one another, **eirene**, peace, from **eiro**, to join, to be set at one again, in carpentry it is referred to as the swallow-tail joint, to rest. Hebrew, **shalom**, completeness, wholeness, friendship. The Hebrew word for righteousness, **tzadek**, refers to the wooden beam in a scale of balances. The gospel is the revelation of the righteousness of God; it declares how God got it right to put mankind right with him. The English word righteousness comes from the Anglo Saxon word, **rightwiseness**, wise in that which is right.*)

7:3 There exists no record that can link Melchizedek to a natural father or mother, no birth certificate neither any account of his death, nor is there any record of his age. (*This was at a time where detailed records were kept of every genealogy*). He resembles exactly the Son of God: his priesthood abides without beginning or end. (*And he is certainly not related to fallen Adam's seed!*)

7:4 Now carefully consider this; the fact that Abraham the great Patriarch gave him a tenth portion of the spoil just goes to show what a distinguished man Melchizedek must have been in Abraham's estimation, and what an impression he made on him! (*In the Hebrew mind, Abraham was the most important individual standing as a reference to their identity and tradition.*)

7:5 Levi's sons, who were priests by natural descent, were obliged by law to receive tithes from their brethren, even though they were equals and shared a common Father in Abraham.

7:6 However, Melchizedek here receives tithes from everyone associated with Abraham, despite his having no natural link to their lineage. In the blessing that he pronounced over Abraham he recognised Abraham as the holder of God's promises. *(He confirmed the good news of the promise of righteousness represented by Abraham's faith.)*

7:7 In principle, the junior always receives the blessing from the senior person.

7:8 In the case of the Levites, the duration of their priesthood is contemporaneous with their lifespan; but Scripture declares that Melchizedek's life has no end.

7:9 My argument is that even Levi, who would later receive the tithe, had already paid the tithe to Melchizedek in Abraham.

7:10 When Melchizedek and Abraham met, Levi was already present in the loins of his father. *(By the time Levi was born, Melchizedek was still alive; in him time and eternity meet.)*

7:11 The point that I wish to make is this: if the Levitical priesthood linked to the law of Moses was a flawless system, *(by succeeding in presenting man in blameless innocence before God,)* there would surely be no further mention made of another order of priesthood presided over by Melchizedek and not by Aaron. *(Ps 110:4)*

7:12 If there is a new order of priesthood, there must obviously be a new law. *(Melchizedek reveals a new basis for righteousness, related not to man's effort to keep the law by his own willpower, but based upon the perfect work of Christ. This new law is called the law of faith, Rom.3:27, the law of perfect liberty, James 1:25, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Rom.8:2.)*

7:13 The person who is prophetically implicated as being the leader of this new priesthood belongs to a totally different tribe. This implies a complete break with tradition because no one from any tribe other than the Levites ever touched the altar.

7:14 History is clear that the Lord's lineage is from Judah, concerning whom Moses made no mention of a priestly office.

7:15 Of far greater significance and even more apparent is the fact that Jesus is mirrored in Melchizedek in whom the new priestly office arises.

7:16 This new office is not based on the law of precepts constrained by the frailty of the flesh, but by the authority of an indestructible life *(as demonstrated in his resurrection).*

7:17 Thus Scripture confirms his perpetual priesthood exactly according to the pattern of Melchizedek.

7:18 This new order brought about an immediate end to the previous inferior and useless system of laws and commandments.

7:19 In its ability to reunite mankind with God, the law did not succeed even once; that is why it was superseded by the introduction of a far superior hope, a new order in which we are perfectly represented before God.

7:20 The previous priesthood was reduced to a mere tradition and passed on through natural descent from father to son. God had no say in the matter.

7:21 To give irrefutable integrity to the new Messianic priesthood, it was written (*in Psalm 110:4*), 'The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."'

7:22 Melchizedek mirrors Christ in the highest office of priesthood as mediator between God and man. Jesus is now the living proof of God's covenanted pledge to benefit man in a far better way than under any previous arrangement.

7:23 The fact that there were so many priests shows how frequently they died and had to be replaced.

7:24 But there will be no successor to the Priesthood of Jesus because he remains forever.

7:25 Through him man's approach to God is forever secured; he continues to communicate the full accomplishment of their salvation.

7:26 As our High Priest he towers far above every other priestly system in conspicuous prominence, and in holy character. His guileless, flawless life on earth was never compromised by sin, and he himself was exalted above the heavens, where he occupies the highest rank of authority in the eternal realm.

7:27 Unlike the previous high priests whose system of daily sacrifices was a constant reminder of their own failures, he had no need to sacrifice on his own behalf. The sacrifice he offered was himself for all; a sacrifice never to be repeated.

7:28 Under the law men were appointed as high priests regardless of their weaknesses. The word of the oath which succeeded the law appointed the son in perpetual perfection.

CHAPTER 8

8:1 The conclusion of all that has been said points us to an exceptional Person, who towers far above the rest in the highest office of heavenly greatness; he is the executive authority of the majesty of God. *(The right hand of God).*

8:2 The office he now occupies is the one which the Moses-model resembled prophetically. He ministers in the holiest place in God's true tabernacle of worship. Nothing of the old manmade structure can match its perfection.

8:3 The task of bringing gifts and sacrifices was the duty of every High Priest; with Jesus there would be no exception. *(He would bring the perfect sacrifice.)*

8:4 So here on earth, since he had no further offering to sacrifice, *(in terms of the Jewish priesthood)* he would not qualify to be a priest among the Jews, who still have their own priesthood functioning to offer the various gifts presented in accordance with the prescriptions of their law. *(Animal sacrifice was still practiced at the time of writing, this continued until 70 AD when the temple was destroyed by the Romans.)*

8:5 They are maintaining a shadow service to God; one which was originally intended as a prophetic picture of the real, just as Moses followed instructions to erect a tabernacle consistent with the accurate pattern that God had shown him on the mountain.

8:6 Jesus is now the fulfilment of all those promises towards which the old practices were merely pointing; as when an arrow strikes the bulls-eye. The dispensation he now administers is far superior to the old. He is the arbitrator of a more effective covenant; sanctioned by its being an announcement of far greater benefit to mankind.

8:7 If there had been no flaw in the first dispensation, why bother to replace it by a second?

8:8 He had already faulted the first system when he said through Jeremiah, "Behold the days will come when I will make an entirely new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah:

8:9 this time we will be making a new agreement, completely unlike the previous one based on external ritual. I had literally to take your hand and lead you out of slavery from Egypt, yet you refused to spontaneously follow or trust in me; I could never abide your indifference. *(God prophesies a covenant that will not be subject to the same defect of the previous one; one that was spoon fed to Israel and whose obligations they yet failed to meet. God had to take them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt. This time, he promised, I will put my laws into their minds and write them it upon their hearts...)*

8:10 Now, instead of documenting my laws on stone, I will chisel them into your mind and engrave them in your inner consciousness; it will no longer be a one-sided affair. I will be your God and you will be my people, not by compulsion but by mutual desire.

8:11 Knowing me will no longer be a Sunday-school lesson, or something taught by persuasive words of doctrine, neither will you they know me on account of family tradition or door to door evangelism, (*each one telling his neighbour*). Everyone, from the most unlikely to the most prominent people in society, will know me inwardly.

8:12 This knowledge of me will never again be based on a sin-consciousness. My act of mercy, extended in Christ as the new Covenant, has removed every possible definition of sin from my memory!

8:13 He announces the new dispensation to confirm that the old shadow system has been rendered redundant.

CHAPTER 9

9:1 The first system followed a specific pattern of worship which was conducted in a specific and sacred place of worship.

9:2 (*The detail of which spoke in shadows of the new...*) The first tented area was called the Holy Place; the only light here came from the lamp-stand illuminating the table upon which the showbread was presented, (*the lamp-stand was a beautifully crafted golden chandelier portraying budding and blossoming almond branches. Remember that this is also what Jeremiah saw in Jer,1:12, when God said, 'I am awake over my word to perform it.'* The same Hebrew word is used here; the almond was called the 'awake tree', because it blossomed first, while the other trees were still in their winter sleep. The show bread pointed towards the daily sustenance of life in the flesh as the ultimate tabernacle of God, realised in the account of Jesus with the two men from Emmaus; their hearts were burning with resonance and faith while he opened the scriptures to them, and then around the table their eyes were opened to recognise him as the fulfilment of scripture, their true meal incarnated: Luke 24:27-31; Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the authentic thought of God, the Word proceeding from his mouth, the original intent, his image and likeness incarnated, revealed and redeemed in human life.)

9:3 The second veil led to the inner tent known as the Most Holy Place.

9:4 Therein were the golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant The box was completely covered in gold, both inside and out. In it were kept the

golden jar with a sample of the miracle manna from the wilderness, as well as the budding rod of Aaron, as also the two engraved tablets of stone with the ten commandments of Covenant. (*A "fire-pan," was for the purpose of carrying fire, in order to burn incense on the day of Atonement once a year in the ultimate place of worship. (kibotos, the wooden box, the same word used for Noah's ark, the container of man's redemption. Gen. 6:14.) The Manna prophetically pictured the true bread from heaven, not the bread that man's labour produces. John 4:35,38).*

9:5 Hovering above and over the ark of the Covenant were the two cherubim images of glory, intent upon the mercy seat that covered the box, on which the blood was sprinkled once a year by the High Priest to cover the sins of the people. Every detail is significant but cannot be discussed at length in this writing. (*Hebrew, kopher, to cover (specifically with bitumen), figuratively to cover by legal and equal exchange in order to restore a previously disturbed balance. The rule was an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life etc. The ark represented a place of mercy where atonement would be made. Innocence had to be achieved at a cost equal to the replacement value of the peace sought between the different parties. See also Gen 6:14, where the same word denotes the covering of Noah's ark with pitch. The cross cannot be taken out of the equation of atonement. The first animal sacrifice was when God used an animal's skin to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness)*

9:6 In the context of this arrangement the priests performed their daily duties, both morning and evening. (*Duties which included their dress and preparations, baptisms, sacrificial offerings, lighting and trimming, removing the old show bread and replacing it with fresh bread, and sprinkling the blood of the sin offerings before the veil of the sanctuary.*)

9:7 The routine was interrupted only once a year, when the High Priest alone would enter the second tent, the most sacred place of worship, with the blood sacrifice for his own and the people's accumulated errors.

9:8 Already in this arrangement the Holy Spirit indicated that there was a yet more sacred way, beyond the first tent, that was still to be opened. While the first pattern was still being upheld, its fulfillment in truth could not yet commence.

9:9 The tabernacle pattern of that time was an analogy of the hitherto imperfect system in which the gifts and sacrifices presented failed completely to cleanse the conscience of the worshipper.

9:10 All these external rituals pertaining to food and drink, and the various ceremonial baptisms and rules for bodily conduct, were imposed upon them until the anticipated time of restoration, the foretold moment when all that was crooked would be made straight, and restored to its natural and original

condition.

*(Greek, **diothosis**; this is the only place in the NT where this word is used, what was crooked will be made thoroughly straight, restoring to its natural and normal condition something which in some way protrudes or has gotten out of line, as broken or misshapen limbs.)*

9:11 But now Christ has made his public appearance as High Priest of a perfect tabernacle. The good things that were predicted have arrived. This new tabernacle does not derive from its shadow type, the previous manmade one. It is the reality. *(The restoration of God's original dwelling place in human life is again revealed!)*

9:12 As High Priest, his permission to enter the Holy Place was not secured by the blood of beasts. By his own blood he obtained access on behalf of the human race. Only one act was needed for him to enter the most sacred place of grace and there to institute a ransom of perpetual consequence. *(The perfection of the redemption he secured needs no further sacrifice. There are no outstanding debts, there is nothing we need do to add weight to what he has accomplished once and for all. The only possible priesthood activity we can now engage in is to continually bring a sacrifice of the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name; no blood, just fruit, even our acts of self-sacrifice, giving of time and money etc are all just the fruit of our constant gratitude!)*

9:13 The blood of beasts and the ashes of the burnt sacrifice of a heifer could only achieve a very temporal and surface cleansing by being sprinkled on the guilty to symbolize their appeal to God for forgiveness. *(This was the best that the law-system had to offer; no inner purging of conscience was possible, only the sense of temporal relief, whilst knowing that the whole process would have to be repeated again and again!)*

9:14 How much more effective was the blood of Christ when he presented his own flawless life through the eternal Spirit to God in order to purge your conscience from its frustration under the cul-de-sac rituals of the law in your efforts to minister to the living God. *(A dead routine system can never compete with the resurrected Christ now alive in you.)*

9:15 As mediator between God and man Jesus' death brought an end to the old and introduced the New Testament. He thus redeemed man from the transgressions recorded under the first Covenant and identified us as heirs, qualifying us to participate in the full inheritance of all that he obtained on our behalf.

9:16 For a will to take effect the person who made it must be dead.

9:17 Before the testator dies the will is merely a future promise with no immediate benefit to anyone.

9:18 Even the first Covenant required a death for its actualization; the blood of the animal sacrifice represented that death.

9:19 After Moses uttered the detailed requirements of the law in the hearing of all the people, he would take the blood of calves and of goats, mix it with water and, dipping a bunch of hyssop bound with scarlet wool into the blood-basins and would sprinkle the blood on the book and the people.

9:20 While performing this cleansing ritual, Moses would solemnly declare, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has made binding upon you.

9:21 The same blood was then also sprinkled on the tabernacle, and on all the furniture and ministry utensils.

9:22 Thus, according to the law, all purging was by means of blood; forgiveness was always associated only with the shedding of blood.

9:23 If the methods of the law were only a shadow prefiguring the heavenly reality, the fulfillment of these examples surely requires a stronger and more efficacious sacrifice.

9:24 In Christ we have so much more than a type reflected in the tabernacle of holy places set up by human hands. He entered into the heavenly sphere itself, where he personally represents mankind before God.

9:25 Neither was it necessary for him ever to repeat his sacrifice. The High Priests under the old shadow system stood proxy with substitute animal sacrifices that had to be made once a year.

9:26 But Jesus did not have to suffer again and again since the fall (*katabole*) of the world; the single sacrifice of himself in the fulfillment of history now reveals how he has brought sin to naught. (*God's Lamb took away the sins of the world!*)

9:27 The same goes for everyone: man dies only once, and then faces judgment.

9:28 Christ died once, and faced the judgment of the entire human race! His second appearance has nothing to do with sin, but to reveal salvation for all to lay a hold of him. (*See 9:11. He appeared as High Priest before the Throne of Justice once, with his own blood to atone for the sins of the whole world. In his resurrection he appeared as Saviour of the world! Sin is no longer on the agenda for the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world! The same High Priest who atoned for mankind is now also their Advocate! 1 Cor.15:3-5, Rom.4:25; Acts 17:30, 31, 1 John 2:1.*)

Note: *(Even in his first coming, he did not come to condemn the world, the Father judges no one for he has handed over all judgment to the son, who judged the world in righteousness when he took their chastisement in his own body; now in his appearance in us, his body, his mission is to unveil the consequence of redemption through the Holy Spirit.*

*This is not to be confused with the doctrine of his second coming; many scriptures have been translated and interpreted with only a futuristic value and have consequently neutralized many to, like the Jews, diligently wait for the Messiah to still come. The Messiah has come once and for all as Messiah. Jesus appeared again after his resurrection and now his resurrection life in us as his body is the extension of his second appearance, God making his appeal to an already reconciled world, to "be reconciled!" Acts 3:26, 2Cor.5:19,20. The church continued to postpone the reality that God introduced in Christ. We are now already fully represented in his blamelessness! The second coming as doctrine is not in context of these chapters at all! See 1 Pet 1:10-13. The Aramaic word *maranatha*, means, our Lord has come!)*

CHAPTER 10

10:1 For the law presented to us a faint shadow, outlining the promise of the blessings anticipated in the coming of Christ, even detailing its future significance. The mere sketch however, could never be confused with the actual object that it represented. The annual sacrificial rites as shadow of the eventual object would always leave the worshipper feeling inadequate and be a reminder year after year of the sinfulness of man. *(Barnes comment: For the law having a shadow - That is, the whole of the Mosaic economy was a shadow; for so the word "Law" is often used. The word "shadow" here refers to a rough outline of anything, a mere sketch, such as a carpenter draws with a piece of chalk, or such as an artist delineates when he is about to make a picture. He sketches an outline of the object which he designs to draw, which has "some" resemblance to it, but is not the "very image;" for it is not yet complete. The words rendered "the very image" refer to a painting or statue which is finished, where every part is an exact representation of the original. The "good things to come" here refer to the future blessings which would be conferred on man by the gospel. The idea is, that under the ancient sacrifices there was an imperfect representation; a dim outline of the blessings which the gospel would impart to people. They were a typical representation; they were not such that it could be pretended that they would answer the purpose of the things themselves which they were to represent, and would make those who offered them perfect. Such a rude outline; such a mere sketch, or imperfect delineation, could no more answer the purpose of saving the soul than the rough sketch which an architect makes would answer the purpose of a house, or than the first outline which a painter draws would answer the purpose of a perfect and finished portrait. All that could be done by either would be to convey some distant and obscure idea of what the*

house or the picture might be, and this was all that was done by the Law of Moses.)

(The gospel is no longer future, the gospel is now!)

10:2 If it was possible to present the perfect offering that had the power to successfully remove any trace of a sin-consciousness, then the sacrificial system would surely cease to be relevant. *(The measure of success must be such that God's affirmation of our innocence would be reflected. See 10:17)*

10:3 But in the very repetition of these ritual sacrifices the awareness of guilt is reinforced rather than removed.

10:4 The conclusion is clear: animal sacrifices failed to remove both sinfulness and guilt.

10:5 So when Jesus, the Messiah, arrives as the fulfillment of all the types and shadows, he quotes Psalm 40:6,7,8, and says, "Sacrifices and offerings could never satisfy your justice; but you have pierced my ear, and prepared my body for the altar." *(See 5:8)*

10:6 All the prescribed offerings and sacrifices failed to satisfy justice.

10:7 "Then I said, I read in your book what you wrote about me; so here I am, I have come to fulfill your will." *(Ps.40:7, Luke 4:17, Luke 24:27,44.)*

10:8 Having said this that all the prescribed offerings and sacrifices failed to please God, he condemned the whole of the sacrificial system upheld by the law. *(Since they only served to sustain a sin-consciousness and was of no further benefit to man.)*

10:9 By saying "I am commissioned to fulfill your will," he announces the final closure of the first dispensation in order to introduce the second. *(Grace replaces the law; innocence supersedes sin-consciousness.)*

10:10 By his resolution he sees us immediately sanctified through one sacrifice, the slain body of Jesus Christ.

10:11 Every priest continually repeats the same daily rituals and sacrifices, knowing that they have always proved incapable of removing sins.

10:12 But now we have an exception. In complete contrast to the previous priesthood, this priest offered a single sacrifice of perpetual efficacy for sins. To celebrate the perfection of what was attained through his single sacrifice, he sat down as the executive authority of God. *(God's right hand; See 1:3 He occupies the highest seat of dominion to endorse man's innocence! "Having accomplished purification of sins, he sat down.")*

10:13 His seat of authority is established on the sure expectation that all his enemies will be subdued. He will stand in triumph, his feet on the neck of his enemy.

10:14 By that one perfect sacrifice he has perfectly sanctified sinful man forever. (*Greek, 'sanctified', **hagiazomenous**, the present participle describes an action thought of as simultaneous with the action of the main verb, 'perfectly', **teteleioken**, the Perfect Tense denotes an action which is completed in the past, but the effects of which are regarded as continuing into the present. See 2:11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin.*)

10:15 This is exactly what the Holy Spirit now endorses in us having already foretold it in scripture. (*Jer.31:33,34.*)

10:16 This is my covenant that I will make with you during those days, says the Lord; I will greatly advantage you by giving my laws in your hearts and engrave them in your inmost thoughts. (***didomi** to give someone something to their advantage.*)

10:17 This is final: I have deleted the record of your sins and misdeeds. I no longer recall them. (*Nothing in God's reference of man, reminds him of sin.*)

10:18 Sins were dealt with in such a thorough manner that no further offerings would ever again be required. Nothing that we can personally sacrifice could add further virtue to our innocence.

10:19 Brethren, this means that, through what the blood of Jesus communicates and represents, we are now welcome to access this ultimate place of sacred encounter with unashamed confidence.

10:20 A brand new way of life has been introduced. Because of his flesh torn on the cross, (*our own flesh can no longer be a valid excuse to interrupt the expression of the life of our design*).

10:21 We have a High Priest in the house!

10:22 We are free to approach him with absolute confidence, fully persuaded in our hearts that nothing can any longer separate us from him. We are invited to draw near now! We are thoroughly cleansed, inside and out, with no trace of sin's stains on our conscience or conduct. Our inner thought-patterns are purged by the sprinkled blood; our bodies also are bathed in clean water. (*Our behaviour bears witness to this.*)

10:23 Our conversation echoes his persuasion; his faithfulness backs his promises; (*his integrity inspires our confession.*)

10:24 Let us also think of creative ways by which we can influence one another to find inspired expression in doing things that benefit others. Good actions give voice and volume to the love of God.

10:25 In the light of our free access to the Father, let us extend that embrace to one another. Our gatherings are no longer a repetition of tradition but an essential fellowship where we remind one another of our true identity. Let us do so with greater urgency now the day has dawned in our understanding. *(The prophetic shadow has been replaced by the light of day.)*

10:26 To know the truth, as we now do, and still persist in deliberate sinning is to openly discard God's provision in Christ. But unlike the old sacrificial system, no further sacrifice can be offered in the new.

10:27 To despise and reject his gift inevitably brings judgement that devours all opposition like stubble in a fire. *(To know that Jesus bore your judgement and still prefer to carry it yourself by remaining under the law is absurd! What do you expect if you insult and oppose God's gift?)*

10:28 There was no mercy under Moses' law; two or three witnesses could sentence a suspect to death. *(See also 6:6-17.)*

10:29 With how much closer scrutiny do you suppose someone will be viewed who has trampled the Son of God underfoot and scorned the blood of the Covenant by publicly insulting the Spirit of grace. *(Preferring the law above the revelation of grace brings you back under judgement of the law without the possibility of further sacrifice. There is no alternative mercy outside of God's grace gift in Christ.)*

10:30 As Jews we are familiar with scripture, which says that God is the revealer of righteousness, jealous to restore the order of peace. He is the umpire of his people. *(Deut. 32:35,36)*

10:31 It is indeed a fearful thought to deliberately shun the hands that bled for your salvation.

10:32 Remember how strongly you stood against painful contradictions in those early days when you first saw the light.

10:33 As if on a theatre stage, you were publicly ridiculed and afflicted for your faith, both personally and in your association with others that were similarly abused.

10:34 I remind you of the sincere sympathy you felt for me then, during my imprisonment; how you also cheerfully accepted the plundering of your personal

property. You were convinced that the treasure you have within you is of far greater and more permanent value, secured as it is in the heavenly dimension.

10:35 I urge you not to relinquish your confident conversation. There is an enormous confirmation of grace. Our reward is revealed in our being fully persuaded *(by his finished work and not by in our own efforts.)*

10:36 Employ patience as you continue to echo the completion of God's desire for you to repossess the promise *(promise - favourable announcement. Lit. make poetry of the promise.)*

10:37 Time becomes insignificant once his promise had been realised. Remember how the promise of his imminent appearance was recorded in scripture. *(The arrival of Jesus is the fulfilment of the promise and the realising of righteousness by faith, as Habakkuk prophesied. Hab.2:2,3,4. He is the fullness of time. Gal.4:4)*

10:38 Righteousness by faith defines life; reverting to the law of works would be an insult to faith.

10:39 But we are not of the quitting kind; we possess a persuasion of soul that believes against all the odds.

CHAPTER 11

11:1 Persuasion confirms confident expectation and proves the unseen world to be more real than the seen. Faith celebrates as certain what hope still visualizes as future. *(The shadow can no longer substitute the substance of faith. Jesus is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of everything the prophets foretold.)*

11:2 People of previous generations received the testimony of their hope in faith. It was faith that made their hope tangible. *(Only the Messiah can give substance to the Messianic hope. No substitute will suffice!)*

11:3 Faith alone explains what is not apparent to the natural eye; how the ages were perfectly framed by the Word of God. Now we understand that everything visible has its origin in the invisible.

11:4 It was faith that made the difference between the sacrifices of Abel and Cain, and confirmed Abel's righteousness. God bore witness to righteousness as a gift rather than a reward! Even though he was murdered, his faith still has a voice today. *(It was not in what they brought, but in Abel's faith that righteousness was revealed.)*

11:5 Enoch enjoyed God's favour by faith, in spite of Adam's fall; he proved that faith defeats death. *(His absent body prophesied the resurrection of Christ.)*

11:6 There is no substitute reward for faith. Faith's return exceeds any other sense of achievement; faith knows that God is; those who desire to respond to his invitation to draw near realize by faith that he is life's most perfect gift. *(If he is the desired one then no substitute will suffice. Jesus Christ defines God's faith; he is Emmanuel; he is the substance and evidence of all that God believed concerning man as his image and likeness bearer. The word translated 'reward' is the word **misthapodotes** This word is only used once in the Bible and is an interesting combination of two words, **misthoo**, a wage and **apodidomi** to give away; righteousness is revealed by faith as a gift and not as a reward for keeping the law; faith pleases God, not good or bad behavior.)*

11:7 Noah received Divine instruction to save his household from judgement; faith prompted him to construct the Ark immediately, long before the rains were evident. His faith demonstrated the difference between judgement and justification.

11:8 By faith Abraham acknowledged the call of God which gave him his identity and destiny, as evidence of his inheritance as he journeyed into the unknown. *(**kaleo**, to call, to identify by name, to surname.)*

11:9 Nothing but his faith seemed permanent while Abraham camped in tents like a stranger in the land of promise. His sons Isaac and Jacob joined him as sojourners; equally persuaded that they were heirs of the same promise.

11:10 His faith saw a city with permanent foundations, designed and constructed by God.

11:11 Sarah's testimony of faith is just as amazing: she conceived and bore a child when it was humanly impossible; she believed that God would be faithful to his promise, and gave that belief authority over her life. *(Greek, **hegeomai**, strengthened form of ago, to officially appoint in a position of authority).*

11:12 Faith brought into reality an offspring beyond calculation; from one as good as dead children would be born more numerous than the stars and as impossible to count as the grains of sand on every distant sea shore. *(1 Pet.1:3. The uttermost parts of the earth, bordered by the sea shore, will know the blessing of righteousness by faith which is the blessing of Abraham meant for the whole world.)*

11:13 These heroes of faith all died believing. Although they did not witness the promise in their lifetime, they saw its fulfilment in the future and embraced the promise by their persuasion. Convinced of its reality; they declared by their

way of living that they were mere sojourners and pilgrims in a shadow land whose geography could neither confine nor define their true inheritance.

11:14 They clearly declared by faith a hinterland beyond the horizon. *(A place of promise where God and man would be one again).*

11:15 They did not regret the country they had left behind. Their faith took them beyond the point of no return. *(Do not allow the contradictions in your past or present to become your reference once again. James says that the person who goes back into an old mindset immediately forgets what manner of man he is, as revealed in the mirror word, the law of perfect liberty, Jam.1:24,25. The revelation concerning who man is in Christ declares that the old things have passed away (in his death). Behold, everything has become new! In his resurrection we were born anew. 2 Cor.5:14-17, 1 Pet.1:3)*

11:16 Their faith saw a greater reality in the spiritual realm than that which they experienced in their present situation; they reached for their true native city designed by God, where he himself is proud to be their permanent address. *(The fulfilment of the promise is Christ. He is both our native land and our eternal city!)*

11:17 Faith became a more tangible evidence of the promise than even Isaac could ever be to Abraham. Isaac neither fulfilled nor replaced the promise. Inspired by what faith saw, Abraham was ready to do the ridiculous; to sacrifice his only son, convinced that not even Isaac's death could nullify the promise that God had made to him. *(If Isaac was not the substance of Abraham's faith then who was? Abraham saw beyond Isaac; Jesus said, "Abraham saw my day!" John 8:56-58, "Before Abraham was, I am.")*

11:18 Yet Abraham knew that God had said that his lineage of faith would be traced through Isaac!

11:19 He made a prophetic calculation by faith, to which there could only be only one logical conclusion based on the word he had received: that God would raise the promise from the dead. *(In the context of Abraham's vision, this was an analogy pointing to parable of the death and resurrection of Christ. Calculation, logical conclusion, **logitzomai**, from **logos** – God's faith is God's logic).*

11:20 By the same faith Isaac extended the future of the promise in the blessing he pronounced over his sons, Esau and Jacob.

11:21 In his dying moments Jacob, in worship to the God of Abraham, as the father of the nations, included in the promise the sons of Joseph who were born in Egypt. *(In exalting the two grandsons into the rank and right of Joseph's brothers, he bestowed on them, rather than on Reuben, the double portion of*

the first-born. Again, faith exceeds the natural. Even though they had an Egyptian mother, they would have an equal interest in all the spiritual and temporal blessings of the covenant of promise.)

11:22 At the end of his life, Joseph prophetically reminded his sons of the exodus. He had such a firm belief that they would possess the land of promise that he exacted an oath from them: they were not to leave his bones in Egypt.

11:23 By faith the parents of Moses did not fear the king's decree, but hid him from Pharaoh for three months, because they saw a future in the child.

11:24 It was faith that made Moses realize that he was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

11:25 By faith he preferred to be associated with the affliction of God's people rather than with the fleeting privileges of Pharaoh's house, which did not constitute the true portion of his inheritance. *(Greek, **hamartia** = **ha**, negative, and **meros**, portion, without your portion, to fall short of your portion, often translated, sin.)*

11:26 He was not embarrassed to be associated with the messianic promise at the expense of the treasures of Egypt. He deliberately looked away from those towards the greater riches of his reward in Christ. *(No reward of the flesh can compare with the wealth of faith.)*

11:27 The rage of the King did not scare him when he abandoned Egypt; faith, giving substance to the invisible, made him brave.

11:28 His faith saw the Paschal Lamb and the sprinkled blood on the doorposts as the salvation of the people.

11:29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, but the Egyptians drowned when they followed them.

11:30 By faith the walls of the city of Jericho collapsed when Israel marched around the city for seven days. *(They did not conquer through the strength of their army.)*

11:31 Rahab the prostitute's faith saved her even though her house was built in the wall! While all the other houses collapsed around her, her own remained. She welcomed the spies and acknowledged the God who saved them out of Egypt. *(Josh 2:11)* Her family also was given an equal opportunity to be saved through her faith. *(Imagine their surprise, bearing in mind her life and shameful reputation!)*

11:32 And so the list of faith-heroes continues. There is not enough time to tell

the stories of Gideon and Barak and Sampson and Jephtah, of David, Samuel and the prophets.

11:33 These are they who conquered kingdoms by faith. (*Gideon, like Rahab, was in no position to claim any credit for his achievement; faith nullifies boasting, see Rom.3:27, Judges 6:11-16.*) They accomplished righteousness by that same faith and thus secured the promise (*of righteousness by faith and not by performance.*) (*Deborah told Barak the son of Abinoam that, although he would deliver Israel, he would not get the honor, since a woman would do it for him. See Judges 4:21; in the principle of righteousness by faith, the flesh will take no glory. Barak, means to worship in adoration, and Abinoam means, 'my father's delight' or 'grace',*) By faith they shut the mouths of lions. (*Samson, whose mighty achievements were immediately accredited to the Spirit of the Lord who moved upon him. Again there was no occasion to glory in the flesh.*)

11:34 Their faith extinguished powerful fires; they escaped from fierce battles, were empowered in spite of their frailty; they became heroes in battle and caused hostile armies to flee before them. (*Jephtah whose own brothers disinherited him because his mother was a prostitute became the captain of the army of Israel.*)

11:35 By faith women received their children back from the dead. (*1 Kings 17:18-24, 2 Kings 4:32-34*). Others were severely tortured for their faith and refused to accept release when it was offered them on condition that they would renounce their opinions. To have accepted deliverance then could have saved their lives, but their faith saw a more honourable and glorious resurrection.

11:36 Still others were mocked and ridiculed for their faith: they were beaten up, shackled and imprisoned.

11:37 While some were stoned to death, others (*like Isaiah the prophet*) were sawn asunder with a wood saw. There were yet others who were tempted by the promise of possible release from torture, and then were brutally slaughtered with the sword. Many became wandering refugees with nothing but sheep- and goatskins for clothing. They lost everything and were harassed and tormented.

11:38 The world did not realize their worth. These faith-heroes were often driven from their homes and forced to live in the deserts and mountains, sleeping like animals in caves and holes in the ground.

11:39 Their lives were trophies to their faith, as the substance of what was visualized by their hope, and the evidence of things they never saw.

11:40 God saw the perfect picture in us; we now complete the history of their lives. (*Everything that the shadows prefigured has now found its substance through Christ in us.*)

CHAPTER 12

12:1 So now the stage is set for us: all these faith-heroes cheer us on as it were like a great multitude of spectators in the amphitheatre. This is our moment. As with an athlete who is determined to win, it would be silly to carry any baggage of the old law-system that would weigh you down. Make sure you do not get your feet clogged up with sin-consciousness. Become absolutely streamlined in faith. Run the race of your spiritual life with total persuasion. *(Persuaded in the success of the cross.)*

12:2 Look away from the shadow dispensation of the law and the prophets and fix your eyes upon Jesus. He is the fountainhead and conclusion of faith. He saw the joy *(of mankind's salvation)* when he braved the cross and despised the shame of it. As the executive authority of God *(the right hand of the Throne of God)* he now occupies the highest seat of dominion to endorse man's innocence!. *("Having accomplished purification of sins, he sat down..." Heb 1:3, Isa 53:11)*

12:3 Ponder how he overcame all the odds stacked against him; this will boost your soul-energy when you feel exhausted.

12:4 Would you be willing to die for your faith? *(Are you as persuaded of your faith in the substance of Christ as your predecessors were in their believing a mere shadow?)*

12:5 The word in scripture that confirms your genesis in God addresses you as sons, "My son do not undervalue the loving instruction of the Lord; neither become despondent when you are corrected." *(parakletos, (KJV translated, exhortation, but rather comfort as in John in relation to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter) The word consists of two components, para, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection, and kaleo, to identify by name, to surname.)*

12:6 For every instruction is inspired by his love, even as a father would discipline his sons with affection, though it might seem harsh at the time.

12:7 Embrace correction. His instruction confirms your true sonship, just as a father would take natural responsibility for the education of his children.

12:8 See yourselves as sons, not as illegitimate children *(children of faith, not of the slave woman)*, welcoming your spiritual education together with the rest of the family of faith.

12:9 As we have shown respect to our natural fathers in the process of our education, how much more should we value the instruction of the Father of our spiritual origin who upholds the life of our design.

12:10 In their opinion they gave us the best possible education during the brief time that we were under their roof; God has our ultimate wellbeing in mind.

12:11 The process of education is not immediately appreciated; at the time it seems to be more pain than pleasure, but it certainly yields the harvest of righteousness for the faith athlete.

12:12 Shake off your weariness, loosen your limbs, catch your breath! (*Get back into faith-mode, quit the flesh-mode*)

12:13 Get rid of all obstacles that could possibly cause you to stumble and sprain an ankle! Don't let a recurrent injury force you out of the race. Recover, and carry on running. Don't allow old legalistic mindsets to trip you up again. (*Isa.40:28-31, the KAWA principle, intertwining with God's thoughts concerning you immediately causes you to escape the weariness of the old DIY times and mount up with wings like an eagle, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint!*)

12:14 Pursue peace with all men; true friendship can only be enjoyed in an environment of total forgiveness and innocence. This makes God visible in your life.

12:15 You must understand that this is a grace-race and not a law-race. While we're in compete- and compare-mode we create the opportunity for resentment to flourish and to poison many in the process. (*We are all equally included in the same victory in Christ!*)

12:16 A performance-driven mindset triggers the law system into action and distorts the picture: suddenly the fleeting moment of pleasure seems more attractive than your true portion, (*which is what sin is all about, Greek, **hamartia**, often translated, sin, is made up of two words, **ha**, without, and **meros**, your portion.*) This is exactly what happened to Esau, when he traded his birthright for a morsel of meat.

12:17 Esau's regret could not change Isaac's mind. God's mind is made up about our salvation. (*We are saved by faith in his finished work and not by our own works; his system of faith cannot be challenged or replaced by another law system. Sincerity does not influence God, faith does.*)

12:18 We are not talking of a visible and tangible mountain here, one

spectacularly ablaze in a setting of dark blackness and tempestuous winds. *(Witness the vivid contrast between the giving of the law and the unfolding of grace; the exclusiveness of the one and the all inclusive embrace of the other. The dramatic encounter of Moses on the mountain is by far exceeded by the mountaintop experience to which we are now welcomed and elevated through Christ! Humanity is now co-seated together with Christ in heavenly places! Eph 2:5,6, Hos 6:2)*

12:19 Shrill trumpet sounds and a thunderous voice uttering human language. This filled the people with such terror that they begged for silence!

12:20 Beast and human alike felt threatened and excluded from that terrible mountain!

12:21 Even Moses, the representative of the people, was extremely terrified. He was shivering and shaking. Who could approach God and live? How impossible it seemed to find favour with such a terrifying God!

12:22 By contrast, we have been welcomed to an invisible mount Zion; the city of peace (*Jerusalem*), the residence of the living God, the festive assembly of an innumerable angelic host!

12:23 We are participating in a mass joint-celebration of heavenly and earthly beings; the ekklesia of the firstborn mirror-inscribed in the heavenlies. *(Our original identity, [ekklesia, from ek, a preposition that always denotes origin, and kaleo, to identify by name, to surname], is endorsed by Jesus, patterned in him, the first born from the dead.)*

12:24 Jesus is the spokesman and arbitrator of the New Testament order. His blood signature sanctions mankind's innocence. This is a complete new language compared to the shadow-type message of the blood sacrifice that Abel brought. *(Abel's faith was a prophetic introduction to the sacrificial shadow system of the Old Covenant.)*

12:25 If Jesus is the crescendo of God's final utterance, you cannot afford to politely excuse yourself from this conversation. Consider the prominent place that Moses plays in the history of Israel: if you think that Moses or any of the Prophets who spoke with authority on earth deserve honour, how much more should this word that God declared from heaven concerning our sonship, and our redeemed innocence revealed in the Messiah himself, deserve our undivided attention!

12:26 When he introduced the prophetic shadow of what was to come (*the Law system*), his voice visibly shook the earth. *(Ex.19:18.)* But now the Messiah has come *(he is the desire of the nations, he is what heaven and earth were waiting for; Hag.2:6,7.)* The voice of God *(articulated in Christ's birth, life,*

ministry, death and resurrection) has rocked not only the systems on the earth, but also every unseen principality in the heavens, to their very foundations!

12:27 In the words of the prophet, "Yet once more will I shake every unstable system of man's effort to rule himself" God clearly indicates his plan to remove the old and replace it with the new. Any significance in the first shaking is superseded by the second shaking. Then it was a physical quaking of the earth; now the very foundations of every man-made system was shaken to the core while the heavens were impacted by the announcement of his permanent rule on earth as it is mirrored in heaven.

12:28 We are fully associated in this immovable Kingdom; an authority that cannot be challenged or contradicted. Our participation echoes grace (*and not law-inspired obedience*) as we accommodate ourselves to God's delight, yielding in awe to his firm embrace.

12:29 His jealousy over us burns like fire.

13:0 Some hints on practical kingdom living, including family, friends, fellowship, marriage, money and ministry :).

CHAPTER 13

13:1 Treasure family bonds and friendship. Family fondness remains the essence of this kingdom. (*Relationship is long-term in every sense of the word.*)

13:2 Treat strangers with equal affection; they could be angels in disguise!

13:3 Identify with those who are in prison or suffering abuse for their faith as if you were the one afflicted.

13:4 Honour the sanctity of marriage as the exclusive place of intimacy. God does not approve of casual or illicit sex.

13:5 Don't give money a prominent place in your thoughts; realize that what you already have is priceless! He has said that he will never quit on you or abandon you! (*Joshua 1:5*) That is reason enough for total and continual contentment!

13:6 What he said concerning us gives our confession the edge; we boldly

echo scripture, "The Lord is for me, I cannot be afraid of anything man could possibly do to harm me." (*Ps.118:6*)

13:7 Be mindful of those who guide you in the revelation of God's word; follow their faith, consider the conclusion of their lives. (*Do not follow a counterfeit! One who fakes faith while actually living the law.*)

13:8 Take your lead from Jesus. He is your reference to the most complete life. Yesterday is being confirmed today and today mirrors tomorrow. What God spoke to us in Christ is as relevant now as it was in the prophetic past and will always be in the eternal future! (*Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever; there is a history to our salvation that carries more authority than anything that happened in human history past, present or future to condemn man. The heavens declare his glory, night to night exhibits the giant solar testimony that is mathematically precise...revealing that God knew before time was the exact moment he would enter our history as a man, and the exact moment the Messiah would expire on the cross!*)

13:9 Do not be swayed by distracting speculations. Any influence foreign to what grace communicates, even if it seems very entertaining and carries the Christian label, is to be shunned. Feast on grace; do not dilute your diet with legalism. There is no nourishment left in the law. What's the use of being busy but not blessed? (*Legalism includes any form of self-sacrifice or self effort with the illusion of gaining further favour from God or improving your spiritual standing before God*).

13:10 For us there is only one altar and one sacrifice; we can never again confuse him with the rituals of the old redundant system. It seems that some would like to eat the meat of their own sacrifices and at the same time indulge in the benefits of grace. This is not possible. (*It is like trying to go in opposite directions at the same time.*)

13:11 When it comes to the sin offering, the carcasses of the slain animals were burnt outside the camp (*no one was permitted to eat from them anyway.*)

13:12 According to the prophetic pattern, Jesus, as the final sin sacrifice, was slain outside the city walls.

13:13 There are two opposing systems; you cannot associate with Christ for your convenience while still hanging on to your Jewish sentiment. If you're going to take your stand for Jesus, go all the way; break your ties with the old shadow-system; go outside the city-system; be prepared to share his shame when your fellow Jews mock your commitment to Jesus.

13:14 We are not finding our identity or security in the walled city of legalistic religious opinion. Our interest is captured by a different kind of city, much closer

to us than the visible one.

13:15 Praise replaces sacrifice; the harvest we bring is the tribute of our lips acknowledging his Name. *(His Name represents the authority of our identity and restored innocence.)*

13:16 God delights in good deeds. These deeds are like beautiful poetry giving a voice to your fellowship. *(They are inspired by your innocence; rather than offered as guilt-driven sacrifices).*

13:17 Trust your guides *(in this grace revelation)* and yield to their instruction. *(Even though it seems different to the law system that you were formerly acquainted with).* They are genuinely alert to your wellbeing. *(Just as with shepherds guarding their sheep, you are their total concern.)* They have taken official accountability for you. *(They represent to you all that grace reveals rather than what the law requires.)* It is to your advantage to embrace their care with joy; this makes their work a pleasure and not a burden.

13:18 Worship prayerfully with us; we believe that our joint seeing inspires a beautiful life.

13:19 Pray also that I might be able to rejoin you speedily; I can hardly wait!

13:20 This is my prayer for you: that the God who made peace with the human race through the blood of the eternal Testament, who raised Jesus from the dead as the supreme Shepherd of the sheep,

13:21 will thoroughly equip you in the most distinguished way possible, to give expression to his design in you according to his delight realised in Jesus Christ, who is the blueprint of the ages. Jesus is the accurate expression of God's glory. Our lives confirm and echo the Amen!

13:22 My brothers, I have written to you briefly, reminding you of your original identity in order to increase the volume of its resonance in your hearts. (*anechomai*, to hold oneself up against, from *ana*, often means, by repetition in order to increase intensity, and echo, to hold, embrace or echo, resonance. *parakaleo*, *para*, originating from a sphere of influence, and *kaleo*, to call by name, to surname, see notes on *ekklesia*, 12:23.)

13:23 Brother Timothy has already been released from prison; as soon as he arrives we will visit you together.

13:24 Greet all your leaders and the saints; the Italian believers salute you!

13:25 Grace is our embrace! YES!

JAMES - the brother of Jesus

Introduction

The Mirror Message

"In your presence is fullness of joy!" Psalm 16:11. (*Hebrew: face to face, mirrored in you*)

Fullness of joy is to see the Father's face mirrored in the reflection of your own eyes.

This was the critical moment when, in the movie, 'the Lion King' the cub discovered his true identity, and the roar returned!

Man's lost and found identity

From the first and the last verse of James chapter one it appears that James sets this teaching up against the sense of a lost identity: the twelve scattered tribes, and the widows and the orphans.

To lose your land of heritage and your family would be the greatest and most challenging test or temptation anyone can face: "to forget what manner of man you are." (*James 1:24, Deut.32:18.*)

As a flesh and blood brother of Jesus, James had to discover a greater identity to that of his physical conception. Beyond the desire of a natural parent, mankind shares a common origin, the broumami, the affectionate desire and deliberate resolve of God, the Father of lights, with whom there is no distortion or hidden agenda, he conceived us by the unveiled logic of God, (*truth, alethea, from a + lanthano, not hidden*) "He brought us forth by the Word of truth." Jam 1:18

Man began in God.

The truth about man's genesis is that he is God's personal invention. We are *anouthen*, from above. We are perfect and complete and lacking in nothing. (*1:4*) God's Sabbath is the celebration of our perfection, both by design and redemption. "Every good and perfect gift comes from above, (*anouthen*) from the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness and no shadow due to change, he brought us forth by the Word of truth."

Born from above

"No one ascended into heaven, who did not also descend from heaven, even the son of man." John 3:13. John sees the same genesis.

When John writes his gospel he is already more than 90 years old. Unlike Luke and Matthew he skips the genealogies of Joseph and returns to the Logos/Word that was from the beginning, before Adam was. The original blueprint thought of God. The Word that was always directed towards God, (*The Word was with God, pros, a Greek preposition of direction, its predicted destiny is always to return to where it comes from, (Is.55:10,11,)*) "Like the rain and the snow that comes

down from heaven and returns not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, so shall my Word be that goes forth from my mouth (the eye of the fountain) it shall not return to me void, it shall accomplish my purpose and prosper in my resolve!" Jesus returned with the full harvest, the salvation of the human race.)

The Word is God; the Word equals God in essence, that same Word incarnated; the Word became flesh and dwelt within us; God finding accurate expression of himself, his image and likeness revealed in human form. Genesis 1:26 lives again; man is standing tall in the stature of the invisible God, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father!" See Col 1:15 "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation."

Christ in whom all the fullness of Deity dwells; and man returning to his own completeness realised in him. (*Col.2:9,10.*)

"Unless a man is born from above, (*anouthen*) he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The kingdom of God (*the reign of God's image and likeness in human life*) is made visible again on earth as it is in heaven; tangible in human form. John 3:3. Nicodemus discovers that his attraction to Jesus was founded upon the fact that man is more than the fruit of his mother's womb. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Man's natural features and identity reveals a glimpse of his parents', but there is another womb that man comes from, the womb of the spirit; man's birth is not merely by the desire of an earthly parent, (*John 1:13*) but by the desire of God. "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb." (*Jer.1:5.*) If man did not come from above, then the heavenly realm would offer no appeal or attraction to him. In our make-up we are the god-kind with an appetite for more than what bread and the senses could satisfy us with. We are designed to hunger for and feast from the Logos that comes from above. From a dimension where the original thought remains preserved and intact without contamination; the Logos that comes from his mouth is the unveiled mirror radiance of our authentic origin, quickening and sustaining the life of our design.

Paul celebrates the same theme in Galatians 1:15, "God separated me from my mother's womb and revealed his son in me in order that I may declare him in the nations! He understood what Jesus said to Peter, "Flesh and blood cannot reveal to you who the son of man is, but my Father who is in heaven; blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, I give you a new name that reveals your original identity: you are Rock! (*Greek, petros, hewn out of the rock, petra, Is.51:1, Deut.32:3,4,18.*) This revelation is the rock foundation that I will build my identity upon, (*my image and likeness*) and the strong gates of *hades*, (*Greek, ha + ideis, not to see*) that trapped man into the walled city of the senses will not prevail against the voice that surnames and summons man again. Mat.16:13,17. (*Church, ekklesia, from ek, denoting source or origin and klesia from kaleo, to surname or identify by name.*) Therefore Paul did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. He deliberately avoided the

opportunity to get to know Jesus from a human point of view by visiting the eleven disciples who were still alive and living in Jerusalem. They could have informed him firsthand about the life, ministry, parables and miracles of Jesus. (2Cor.5:16.) But Paul does not make mention in any of his writings even of a single parable Jesus told or miracle he performed, because his mandate and revelation was not to merely relate Christ in history, but to reveal Christ in man. Three years later only he returned briefly to Jerusalem specifically to visit Peter and James, the Lord's brother. (Gal.1:18,19.) One is not surprised to discover that the first believers ever to be called Christians were the Greeks in Antioch who sat under Paul's ministry.

What James, Peter and Paul had in common was an understanding that Jesus came to reveal and redeem man's authentic spirit identity, mankind is the godkind.

CHAPTER 1

1:1 My name is James, I am bonded to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in this capacity that I am writing to you, wherever you are. You might even be part of the twelve tribes which are scattered like seed all over the world. I greet you with joyful encouragement!

1:2 Temptations come in different shapes, sizes and intervals, their intention is always to suck you into their energy field. However my brothers, your joy leads you out triumphantly every time. (*hegeomai, strengthened form of ago, to lead, thus, to officially appoint in a position of authority, to lead with distinguished authority. Joy is the official voice of faith! "Count it all joy" make a calculation to which joy can be the only logical conclusion.*)

1:3 Here is the secret: joy is not something you have to fake, it is the fruit of what your faith knows to be true about you! You know that the proof of your faith results in persuasion that remains constant in contradiction.

1:4 (*Just like a mother hen patiently broods over her eggs,*) steadfastness provides you with a consistent environment, and so patience prevails and proves your perfection; how entirely whole you are and without any shortfall.

1:5 The only thing you could possibly lack is wisdom. (*One might sometimes feel challenged beyond the point of sanity*) however, make your request in such a way that you draw directly from the source, (*not filtered through other opinions*) God is the origin and author of wisdom; he intertwines your thoughts with good judgment. His gifts are available to all, without regret. (*Gr. haplous, from ha, particle of union (hama, together with) + pleko to plait, braid, weave together. See Math.6:22, "if your eye is haplous your whole body will be full of light." Wisdom that comes from above remains unaffected by the contradictions*

of the senses. Gr. *didomi*, to give, to be the author or source of a thing, Wesley J. Perschbacher.)

1:6 Faith must prompt your requests (*not your needs*). Faith is the stabilizing factor; otherwise you become driven by emotions (*inconsistent judgments*) that get out of control like rough seas tossed by tempest winds.

1:7 A haphazard request makes it impossible to interpret God's wisdom accurately; (*faith is the grace that reveals one's capacity to receive from God. Gr. para, with the genitive, indicating source or origin, 'coming from' Wesley J. Perschbacher, lambano, to receive, to comprehend.*)

1:8 Someone of two opinions remains jittery in all his judgments and seems always lost for direction.

1:9 (*Adverse circumstances can make or break you, depending on how you respond under pressure and allow these conditions to influence your judgment.*) Let the down and out brother boast in his elevation in the Lord. (*God's wisdom makes you see things differently.*)

1:10 The rich should boast with confidence when things seem to threaten their position of financial strength. Flowers fade; so does fame when wealth is lost. (*Poverty or wealth is not the measure of your life, faith is.*)

1:11 A severe sun combined with scorching eastern winds can completely destroy a harvest before it ripens; something that looked so beautiful and promising the one day, can be gone the next day; even so a wealthy man can suddenly perish in his pursuits. (*Man must have a reference that is more stable than changing conditions.*)

1:12 Blessed is the man who does not lose his footing when temptation strikes; he is crowned the victor; his life proves the currency and character of his design (*Greek, birth.*) This is the Lord's pledge for those who love him. (*Love inspires faith. Stephanos, which means a mark of royal rank, or a wreath or garland, which was given as a prize to victors in public games. Yet life as God sees it is a gift, not a reward. Jm.1:17. Thus even our reward is a gift, because our enduring and steadfastness is not something we engage in with our diligence and willpower, but the energy ignited within us by the revelation of the Word of truth. Gr. dokimos, accepted, particularly of coins and money, thus, currency.*)

1:13 Do not say, "I am scrutinized by God" when you feel enticed. He is not in the teasing business; evil offers no attraction to God for God to be tempted by it, neither is he experimenting with your design! (*God cannot be both the source of light and darkness. Every temptation is an attempt of darkness to intercept light.*)

1:14 Temptation employs lust to lure someone into a trap, *(just like in hunting or fishing)* one is deceived by the attraction of the bait. Your own private desires can snare you. *(Gr **exelko**, to lure as in hunting or fishing, and **deleatzo** from the word **dolos**, to deceive by bait.)*

1:15 When passion conceives, it becomes the parent of sin. Sin's mission is to murder you.

1:16 My dear brothers, do not go wandering off into deception. *(By giving credit to temptation, thinking that it could be God's way of speaking to you!)*

1:17 Without exception God's gifts are only good, its perfection cannot be improved upon, they come from above, *(**anouthen**, where we originate from, Jn.3:3,13, man is not the product of his mother's womb; man began in God, we are from above!)* proceeding like light rays from its source, the Father of lights. With whom there is no distortion, or even a shadow of shifting to obstruct or intercept the light; no hint of a hidden agenda.

1:18 It was his delightful resolve to give birth to us; we were conceived by the unveiled logic of God. *(The Word of truth. Gr. **boulomai**, the affectionate desire and deliberate resolve of God. Truth, **alethea**, from **a**, negative + **lanthano**, hidden; that which is unveiled)* We lead the exhibition of his handiwork, like first fruits introducing the rest of the harvest he anticipates.

1:19 Consequently my beloved brethren, *(when you are faced with temptation and contradiction)* ponder the Word that reveals your true origin, do not ponder the problem; that is how frustration is conceived. Rather remain silent than to give anger your voice. *(Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.)*

1:20 Anger distorts the picture and brings no credit to compliment God's righteousness.

1:21 Get rid of any remaining residue of evil that polluted your life before, *(if a quick temper was your problem then, don't make it your problem again.)* Welcome with sensitive embrace the word that powerfully conceives salvation in your soul. *(The inner man, your mind and emotion.)*

1:22 By being a mere spectator in the audience you underestimate yourself *(you come to an inferior conclusion about who you really are)* . You are God's poem; let his voice make poetry of your life!
*(A hearer only, remains a mere spectator. A doer of the Word, **poetes**, poet. To deceive yourself, **paralogizomai** underestimate - Thayer Definition: 1. to reckon wrong, miscount 2. to cheat by false reckoning, to deceive by false reasoning 3. to deceive, delude, circumvent) .*

1:23 The difference between a mere spectator and a participator is that both of them hear the same voice and perceive in its message the face of their own genesis reflected as in a mirror;

1:24 they realize that they are looking at themselves, but for the one it seems just too good to be true, he departs (*back to his old way of seeing himself*) never giving another thought to the man he saw there in the mirror.

1:25 The other one is mesmerized by what he sees; he is captivated by the effect of a law that frees man from the obligation to the old written code that restricted him to his own efforts and willpower. No distraction or contradiction can dim the impact of what he sees in that mirror concerning the law of perfect liberty (*the law of faith*) that now frees him to get on with the act of living the life (*of his original design.*) He finds a new spontaneous lifestyle; the poetry of practical living. (*The law of perfect liberty is the image and likeness of God revealed in Christ, now redeemed in man as in a mirror. Look deep enough into that law of faith that you may see there in its perfection a portrait that so resembles the original that he becomes distinctly visible in the spirit of your mind and in the face of every man you behold. Let us briefly consider these two words that James use here, **parakupto** and **parameno**. I translated the word **parakupto** with mesmerized, from **para**, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection, and **kupto**, to bend, stoop down to view at close scrutiny, **parameno**, to remain under the influence. The word often translated, freedom, **eleutheria**, means without obligation.)*

1:26 Meaningless conversation is often disguised in religious eloquence. Just because it sounds sincere, doesn't make it true. If your tongue is not bridled by what your heart knows to be true about you, you cheat yourself.

1:27 The purest and most uncompromised form of religious expression, is found at its source. God is the Father of mankind (***para**, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection*). He inspires one to take a genuine interest in helping the fatherless and the widows in their plight, and to make sure that one's own life does not become blemished in the process.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 Jesus heads up the kind of faith that does not judge on face value, neither is it influenced by popular opinion or outward appearance. (*Face value,*

prosopolepsia).

2:2 Here is a typical example: an influential impressive looking man, dressed in glitter and fine jewelry may visit your assembly; then a shabby looking poor man may walk into the same gathering;

2:3 the smart guy gets the best seat while the shabby looking chap gets told to stand in the back or sit on the ground like a slave at your feet.

2:4 To discriminate in your heart against anyone conceives a judgment in you that can cause great ill; can you imagine how it hurts to be rejected like that?

2:5 May I have your full attention on this issue my dear brothers, faith in who you really are according to your original identity is the real measure of your wealth; you might be poor according to the standards of this world but according to God you possess your allotted portion which is the kingdom of his promise to those who love him. (Gr. *eklegomai*, *ek*, preposition denoting origin, and *lego*, to speak, thus the original blueprint-word, *logos*, traditionally translated, chosen.)

2:6 But you insult the poor, in your effort to impress the rich meanwhile you fail to realize that the rich have abused their influence against you; they have conned you into their prejudices and discriminatory judgments; they bought your vote with cheap currency. (Any value outside of the price God paid in Christ is an inferior value to human life)

2:7 You mean nothing to them; behind your backs they blaspheme that beautiful name.

2:8 Scripture confirms that the law of the kingdom is fulfilled in you placing the same value on your neighbour as you would upon yourself; that is what doing the word is all about, it makes beautiful poetry. (Leviticus 19:18, see also Luke 10:27, Math.22:37-40. By not forgetting what manner of man you are, you will not forget what manner of man your neighbour is according to the mirror principle.)

2:9 To judge anyone on outward appearance is a sin. (Gr. *hamartia*, *ha*, negative and *meros*, allotted portion, sin represents any activity that robs you of your allotted portion; the true measure of your life.) That kind of behaviour is a direct violation of the law and would bring you under immediate conviction.

2:10 If you lower the standard of the law in just one aspect of it you have failed entirely. (To fail, stumble, err, *pipto*, to descend from a higher place to a lower, from *petomai*, to fly, thus to stop flying.)

2:11 For he who said you shall not commit adultery also said you shall not kill.

Here is an example, you might be faithful to your wife, yet you have killed someone, your not committing adultery does not cancel out the murder! (*And vice versa.*)

2:12 Let the law of liberty set the pace (*be the judge*) in your conversation and conduct. (*The law of perfect liberty is the image and likeness of God revealed in Christ, now redeemed in man as in a mirror. Look deep enough into that law of faith that you may see there in its perfection a portrait that so resembles the original that he becomes distinctly visible in the spirit of your mind and in the face of every man you behold. 1:25*)

2:13 Judgment shows no mercy to those who do not walk in mercy, but (*the law of liberty*) mercy fears no judgment. (*Gal.5:22,23, There is no law against love. See also 1 John 4:18*)

2:14 My brothers if your faith (*in your true identity*) is not practical and visible in your conduct it is fake and cannot benefit you in any way.

2:15 Let's bring it closer to home, (*I am not even talking about your duty to strangers*) someone in your own family might be struggling financially to the extent that they do not even have the basics as far as clothes and food are concerned.

2:16 What's the good if you keep your contact with them very brief and distant and wave them goodbye with empty words, something like, "May the Lord richly bless you brother! Be warm, be fed, ok, bye! Have a great day!" A coat and a cup of soup is going to say so much more!

2:17 It is clear then that without corresponding acts of kindness, faith on its own is fake.

2:18 Faith is not in competition with works; the one cannot operate without the other; faith remains invisible without action; indeed the only way to communicate faith is in doing the things prompted and inspired by faith.

2:19 Congratulations! So you believe in one God; so does demons; however their belief in God doesn't change them it just gives them the shivers.

2:20 Hey man, if you have nothing to show for your faith your faith is meaningless; it remains a dead doctrine.

2:21 Abraham's righteousness inspired his act of faith when he presented his son Isaac as a sacrifice upon the altar. (*Gen.15:1,6 confirms that Abraham was justified long before Isaac was born, God was his reward, not Isaac. No amount of good works can justify a man; good works follow faith, not the other way around! Here James asks the question, "Was not Abraham our father justified by*

works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? The answer is clearly, "No! Abraham was justified when he believed God's Word concerning his offspring, many years before Isaac was born." Gen.15:1,6.)

2:22 His works were in synergy with his faith, and completed it. The one compliments the other.

2:23 Abraham's friendship with God was the fruit of the righteousness he received by faith; this was announced in Genesis 15:6 and prompted a lifestyle that confirmed his faith. (*2Cron.20:7 calls Abraham the friend of God*)

2:24 It is obvious then that justification does not stop at faith but continuous into action.

2:25 By protecting the messengers Rahab the prostitute showed her faith in their message and was justified. (*Hebrews 11:31*)

2:26 Just as the body gives expression to the spirit, so actions give expression to faith.

CHAPTER 3

3:1 My brothers let's not be quick to assume the title of teacher, remember when we teach we subject ourselves to greater scrutiny.

3:2 It is a common habit to descend from a higher place (*of faith*) to a lower (*of the senses*), especially in conversation. (*Greek, **peripipto**, from, **peri**, surrounded + **pipto**, from **petomai**, to fly; thus, to descend from a higher place to a lower, to stop flying*). However, if you want to be in perfect charge of your whole person, the best place to begin is to take charge of your tongue. (*To reflect the word that confirms your true genesis, James 1:18,19.*)

3:3 With bit and bridle we are able to direct the strong body of a horse; you see it's the little bit in the mouth that makes the difference!

3:4 Consider the effect of a small rudder on a large ship, when the seasoned Captain skillfully steers that vessel on a straight course contrary to fierce winds and weather.

3:5 As small a member the tongue might be it can make great claims. A little fire can go out of control and consume a large forest!

3:6 A tongue can strike like lightning and turn the harmony of your world into chaos; one little member can stain the whole body. It can disrupt the pattern of your design; taking its spark from the smouldering garbage heaps of Gehenna.

(The garbage heap outside Jerusalem, commonly related to hell. Gehenna = Latin, Geenas = Greek, is the word used for the Hebrew "Valley of Hinnom" = modern day Wadi er-Rababi. A fiery place for the disposal of waste matter from the city of Jerusalem. The "Valley of Hinnom" lies outside of ancient Jerusalem. Thus to slander someone is to reduce that person to rubbish.)

3:7 From tigers to eagles, cobras to dolphins, man has succeeded to curb the wild nature of beasts and birds, reptiles and sea creatures.

3:8 No man can tame a tongue though; no human can restrain the evil in its fatal venom.

3:9 We can say beautiful things about God the Father but with the same mouth curse a man made in his mirror likeness.

3:10 My brothers, a blessing and a curse ought not to originate from the same source.

3:11 Not even a natural fountain produces both bitter and sweet water.

3:12 As impossible it is for a fig tree to bear olives, and a vine to produce figs, so a fountain cannot yield salt and fresh water from the same source.

3:13 Humility advertises wisdom; it shows in the quality of your conversation and actions. This distinguishes you with the reputation of someone who is acquainted with wisdom and skilled in understanding.

3:14 If there is any hidden agenda, secretly driven by bitter jealousy and contention, you have nothing to be proud of. Your big talk sounds superficial and offers no disguise against the truth. *(The fountain of your heart always shows)*

3:15 This wisdom does not originate from above, but is clearly reduced to a kind that is earthly, ruled by the senses and dictated to by demons.

3:16 An environment of envy and rivalry is conducive to confusion and disorder and all kinds of worthless pursuits.

3:17 The wisdom that originates from above sets the pace in innocence, it loves peace, it is always appropriate (*polite*), persuaded about that which is good, filled with compassion; these fruits are pure goodness and without hypocrisy (*discrimination.*)

3:18 Seed always predicts the harvest; righteousness inspires the kind deeds of those who embrace peace; these are like seeds sown into fertile soil.

CHAPTER 4

4:1 What is it that triggers disputes and fighting? Is it not your own selfish desires that both parties host within them; wars are born when one feels that the other has something that he doesn't have, (*Greek, **enteuthen** both sides. Any sense of lack causes you to forget what manner of man you are and how perfect and complete and without lack you already are!*)

4:2 You allow your heart to become so consumed with longing for something that you don't have until you are ready to kill for it. Then you are still not satisfied, what you want keeps evading you; you quarrel and strive, and you just can't get it. If you are desperately unfulfilled why don't you simply ask God to give you what you need? (*See 1:5 The only thing you could possibly lack is wisdom. (One might sometimes feel challenged beyond the point of sanity) however, make your request in such a way that you draw directly from the source, (not filtered through other opinions) God is the origin and author of wisdom; he intertwines your thoughts with good judgment. His gifts are available to all, without regret.*)

4:3 You have asked, but God seems reluctant to give it to you, you may say. But when your motivation is to get something just so that you can squander it on yourself, you are doing it all wrong! (*See James 1:2-4, 17,18, 23-25*)

4:4 Adultery, whether it is the husband or the wife that does the flirting, is destructive. Can't you see that even though the world system might approve of such behaviour, it is contrary to God's design for you? (*Remember, what seems wise for the world is foolishness with God.*) Whose friend do you want to be? Are you prepared to distance yourself from God (*and the life of your design*) just to win the applause of the world?

4:5 Scripture is not quoting empty words when it states that God yearns with jealous expectation over the spirit which he has made to inhabit us.

4:6 His gift of grace surpasses the onslaught of lust. Scripture says God opposes the haughty and gives grace to the humble.

4:7 Yield yourselves in total abandonment under God's authority so that the devil knows who backs you when you resist him, he will scramble away from you.

4:8 Snuggle up to the warm embrace of God, experience his closeness to you, (*In Christ he cancelled every definition of distance.*) The sinner can come with all stains washed from his hands; the double-minded can come with a purified heart.

4:9 This is not a light-hearted yielding; realize the misery you have brought upon yourself with intense grief and weeping; replace your laughter with sincere sorrow, and your joy with shame. *(Your efforts to justify yourself through striving and fighting only further exposed your nakedness. Your superficial laughter and fake-joy could never hide the shame of your sins; the perfect law of liberty, the mirror message revealing the finished work of Christ removed your sins from the mind of God; there is no other reference to your restored innocence.)*

4:10 Put down your own efforts to fight for your rights; let him lift you up to the dignity of his presence; *(see your face reflected in his!)*

4:11 Gossip is out. To bad-mouth and point your finger at your brother, is to insult the law; you put yourself up as a law enforcer and thereby assume that you are above scrutiny.

4:12 God is the ultimate legislator, that makes him the only judge with power to save or render useless; he never handed you the power of attorney to judge anyone.

4:13 Hey, you've got your year planner out and can already taste the profits in all your business ventures, you're going big, travel and trade from city to city!

4:14 Meanwhile you have no handle on tomorrow! Your life is like a mist that is visible for a short while before it evaporates.

4:15 My best advice is to wrap all your plans and conversation in the delightful resolve of God.

4:16 Don't be so cocksure about your dreams for the future. Plans that presumptuously exclude God's opinion end up to be full of labours, annoyances and hardships.

4:17 To turn a blind eye to an obvious opportunity to do good, is a sin.

CHAPTER 5

5:1 Your wealth cannot disguise your sin when calamity strikes. Then it is too late to scream and cry.

5:2 Whatever you have hoarded to show how strong you are financially show signs of rot; your wardrobes of fine clothing are moth eaten.

5:3 Your tarnished treasures of gold and silver bears witness against you; instead of exhibiting your riches they show off your shame. Your wealth worries

have given you ulcers that consume you like a fire from within. You would have thought that you stored up enough insurance to last you to the end of days.

5:4 In the process you have short paid your labourers who reaped your harvests; those wages have now become a loud voice together with the groans of the workers you have cheated and abused, they shout out against you in earshot of the Lord of the masses.

5:5 You have indulged in a delicate lifestyle on all your properties; you have stuffed yourselves, grabbing and looting like soldiers on the battlefield.

5:6 In your quest to get to the top you have stepped on others and ruined innocent lives; while no-one opposed you.

5:7 My brothers, if you are the ones abused, remain passionate about the presence of the Lord. Consider how the farmer lays hold of the harvest by patiently letting the early and latter rain do its work in the soil to prepare its precious yield. (Gr. *parousia*, presence, traditionally translated, coming of the Lord.)

5:8 Let your hearts also be firm in patience while the closeness of the embrace of his presence sustains you. (Gr. *engidzo*, to bring near, reflexively, Strongs; here translated, "the closeness of his embrace.")

5:9 When circumstances squeeze you into tight spots, don't make your problem your topic of conversation with one another (*there is no relief in feeling sorry for yourselves*), while the Lord is left standing outside behind closed doors, let him be the judge of your situation. (Gr. *stenadzo*, to groan, complain, from *stenos*, narrow.)

5:10 The prophets who spoke in the Name of the Lord are our mentors (Gr. *upodeigma*, an exhibit, pattern for imitation); consider what they had to put up with and what hardships they went through and with what fortitude they prevailed.

5:11 To look back at the faith heroes of yesterday is always an inspiration. Even Job's life was prophetic; (*the first part represents life under the law of fear, the latter the law of faith*) consider how God came through for him in the end; his endurance proved God's extreme compassion and tender mercies.

5:12 (*Since you are convinced of God's tender feelings towards you*), making foolish oaths does not add weight to your intentions! It makes no difference if you try and tap into heaven's magic or swear by some earthly institution or any other binding authority; keep it simple, yes cannot mean no at the same time. Swearing oaths make you look like a hypocrite. (*It is again a matter of the law of willpower vs. the law of faith.*)

5:13 If anyone is going through a tough time, let him worship; If times are good, sing praises. *(Don't take your lead from your negative or your positive circumstances!)*

5:14 If you feel too weak to worship, find encouragement in the care of the elders who are established in their true identity; let them anoint you with oil and worship with you in prayer; identify yourself in all that the Lord's name represents. *(Gr. [astheneo](#) , weak, feeble. Gr. [proskaleomai](#), towards surname, identity, traditionally translated, call. Gr. [proseuxomai](#), worship; [euxomai](#), prayer.)*

5:15 The prayer *(environment)* of faith shall restore the feeble. The Lord shall revitalize and quicken you; he even forgives you anything stupid you might have done to have caused the situation.

5:16 *(Don't tolerate vibes between yourselves)* if you have wronged someone talk to him about it; pray for each other to maintain a healthy fellowship. Righteousness is the fuel of effective prayer. *(Not the size or the detail of the problem.)*

5:17 Elijah wasn't superman, yet his prayers had supernatural results with global impact. Remember how he prayed. He prayed with such resolve that he stopped the rain for three and a half years!

5:18 He prayed again and everything was back to normal; rain and harvest in season!

5:19 If a brother strays off from the truth, go and fetch him.

5:20 To turn a sinner back from error not only rescues the individual but stops the ripple effect of the rot in a community.

A STUDY IN 2 PETER CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1

1:1 I am Simon the Rock, bondman and ambassador of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of God (*what God accomplished in Christ in order to redeem his image and likeness in us*) is what gives our faith its valid reference. God's faith sees everyone equally justified in Jesus Christ. (*If righteousness had anything to do with personal merit or performance, then only the good enough amongst us would qualify. The word, **lanchano**, to be measured out beforehand, to be allocated something by allotment, emphasizes the fact that nothing we did or determined to achieve had any influence upon God to qualify us. Faith is not a reward for personal diligence; it is everyone's portion; no one's faith is inferior to another's because God sees all equally justified in Jesus Christ. Salvation belongs to everyone based on exactly the same merit. God's righteousness is responsible for our faith, Rom.1:17.*)

1:2 With a faith of equal value as our reference, we may now increasingly know ourselves the way God has always known us, (*the knowledge of God*) realised in Jesus our leader, and be overwhelmed by the multiplied effect of grace and peace in our lives. (*In this context no one can ever feel ignored or neglected again.*)

1:3 God's powerful intervention gifted us with all that it takes to live life to the full. He has always known us. (*Jer 1:5, 1 Cor 13:12*) He introduced us as it were to ourselves again (*kaleo, to surname*) through a glorious display of his efficiency. (*Through his own glory and virtue, or "through a glorious display of his efficiency" as Dr. Robinson (Lexicon) renders it.*)

1:4 This is exactly what God always had in mind for us; every one of his abundant and priceless promises pointed to our restored participation in our godly origin! This is his gift to us! (*Had it been a reward for good behavior, we would never have qualified!*) In this fellowship we have escaped the distorted influence of the corrupt cosmic virus of greed. (*Our godly origin: his image and likeness redeemed in us. The factory settings are restored; every compatible program is again installed in our hard-drive to facilitate the Divine Nature.*)

1:5 Now (*in the light of what we are gifted with in Christ*) the stage is set to display life's excellence. Now imagine the extreme devotion and focus of a conductor of music; how he would diligently acquaint himself with every individual voice in the choir, as well as the contribution of every specific instrument, to follow the precise sound represented in every note in order to give maximum credit to the original composition; this is exactly what it means to exhibit the divine character. You are the choir conductor of your own life; study the full content of faith; you will find virtue there, and within virtue, faith-

inspired enlightenment will voice its contribution. *(There is a level of understanding that can only be accessed by faith. Heb.11:3, "by faith we understand that the ages were framed by the Word of God...*

epichoregeo, epi, preposition of position, over, in charge, + chorus, choir or orchestra, + ago, to lead as a shepherd leads his sheep. Thus, the director of music.

"Giving all diligence, extreme devotion" spoude, to interest one's self immediately and most earnestly, pareisenengkantes from pareisphero: para + eisphero, a preposition indicating close proximity, a thing proceeding from a sphere of influence, with a suggestion of union of place of residence, to sprung from its author and giver, originating from, denoting the point from which an action originates, intimate connection, + eisphero, to carry or reach inward.

Before a performance the first violinist will give the exact note; now every instrument can be finely tuned to that note, in the same way the faith of God gives that exact pitch.)

1:6 The one attribute reveals the other, strength of character emerges out of faith-knowledge, in its strength follows the ability to prevail in patient perseverance, these are the ingredients that constitute your devotion;

1:7 out of such devotion flows true friendship, brotherly affection is founded in agape. Agape is at the heart of every virtue that faith reveals. *(Greek, agape, from ago, to lead as a shepherd leads his sheep, and pao, to rest. Thus Ps.23, "he leads me besides still waters, he restores my soul, by waters of reflection, my soul remembers who I am!"*

See the Message translation, "...each dimension fitting into and developing the other.")

1:8 While you diligently rehearse the exact qualities of every divine attribute within you; the volume will rise with ever increasing gusto, guarding you from being ineffective and barren in your knowledge of the Christ-life displayed with such authority and eloquence in Jesus. *("These things being in you", uparcho, to begin under, from upo + archomai, to commence or rehearse from the beginning.)*

1:9 If anyone feels that these things are absent in his life, they are not; spiritual blindness and short sightedness only veil them from you. This happens when one loses sight of one's innocence. *(The moment one forgets the tremendous consequence of the fact that we were cleansed from our past sins, one seems to become pre-occupied again with the immediate sense ruled horizon, which is what short sightedness is all about; this makes one blind to his blessings. Spiritual realities suddenly seem vague and distant.)*

1:10 Therefore I would encourage you my Brothers to make every immediate effort to become cemented in the knowledge of your original identity revealed and confirmed in the logic of God; fully engage these realities in your lifestyle; if

you do this you will never falter. (Greek *ptaio* fail, falter, or get out of tune again in the context of verse 5, lit. to fall, lose height, to stop flying. Your original identity, *kaleo*, often translated, calling, to surname, to identify by name; *eklogen*, often translated election; yet the two parts of this word, *ek*, preposition denoting origin or source, and *lego*, from *logos*, suggests the original word (the logic of God) as our source; John 1:1,14.)

1:11 Thus the great Conductor of music will draw your life into the full volume of the harmony of the ages; the royal song of our saviour Jesus Christ. (See Col 2:19, "You are directly connected to Christ who like a choir conductor draws out the music in everyone like a tapestry of art that intertwines in harmony to reveal the full stature of divine inspiration," which is Christ in you. Again the word *epichoregeo* is used, the choir conductor; this time, God is doing the conducting, and is leading us into his harmony, *eis + odos*, access into the road; yet in this context I prefer the thought that we are led into a song, an *ode*; a ceremonious lyric poem. The form is usually marked by exalted feeling and style. The term *ode* derives from a Greek word alluding to a choric song, usually accompanied by a dance. Also a poem to be sung composed for royal occasions.)

1:12 Having said all this I am sure that you can appreciate why I feel so urgent in my commitment to you to repeatedly bring these things to your attention; as indeed you have already taken your stand for the truth as it is now revealed (*in the Gospel*) .

1:13 So while I am still in this body-suit, I take my lead from the revelation of righteousness and make it my business to thoroughly arouse you until these truths become permanently moulded in your memory.

1:14 All the more since I know that my time in this tabernacle is almost done; our Lord Jesus Christ has prepared me for this.

1:15 In the meantime I will do whatever it takes to make it possible for you to always be able to easily recall these realities even in my absence.

1:16 We are not con-artists, fabricating fictions and fables to add weight to our account of his majestic appearance; with our own eyes we witnessed the powerful display of the illuminate presence of Jesus the Master of the Christ life. (*His face shone like the sun, even his raiment were radiant white. Mat.17*)

1:17 He was spectacularly endorsed by God the Father in the highest honour and glory. God's majestic voice announced, "This is the son of my delight; he has my total approval."

1:18 For John, James and I the prophetic word is fulfilled beyond doubt; we heard this voice loud and clear from the heavenly realm while we were with

Jesus in that sacred moment on the mountain.

1:19 For us the appearing of the Messiah is no longer a future promise, but a fulfilled reality. Now it is your turn to have more than a second hand, hear-say testimony; take my word as one would take a lamp at night; the day is about to dawn for you in your own understanding. When the morning star appears, you no longer need the lamp; this will happen shortly on the horizon of your own hearts...

1:20 It is most important to understand that the prophetic word recorded in scripture does not need our interpretation or opinion to make it valid;

1:21 even the holy men who first spoke these words of old did not invent these thoughts, they simply voiced God's oracles as they were individually inspired by the Holy Spirit.

1:22 -

1 John 1

CHAPTER 1

1:1 The Logos is the source; everything commences in him; what initial reports concerning him have reached our ears, what we indeed bore witness to with our own eyes to the point that we became irresistibly attracted to him, now captivated our gaze. In him we witnessed tangible life in its most articulate form. (*Gr.psallo, to touch the string of a musical instrument, thus resonance*)

1:2 The same life that was with the Father from the beginning, now dawned on us! The infinite life of the Father became visible before our eyes in a human person!

1:3 This life now finds expression in a fellowship union with the Father and the son that is without limit or interruption.

1:4 In all these years since the ascension of Jesus, John now ninety years old continues to enjoy unhindered friendship with God and desires to extend this same fellowship to everyone through his writing, "so that joy may be yours in its most complete measure."