

# Triennial Torah Study – 4<sup>th</sup> Year 23/03/2013

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This week's Triennial Torah reading can be found at:

<https://sightedmoon.com/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf>

<b>Deut 10</b>	<b>1 Chron 7-8</b>	<b>Eph 3-4</b>
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## **Becoming More Like God (Deuteronomy 10)**

Since Moses had broken the tablets of the Ten Commandments in anger over the sinfulness of the people, God told him to make two new tablets of stone and to appear before Him again, while fasting for a second span of 40 days and 40 nights. God then wrote the Ten Commandments on the newly hewn tablets of stone. They were placed inside the Ark of the Covenant (verses 1-5). Moses impresses on Israel that God requires of them to “fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes...for your good” (verses 12-13).

Some think of God's commandments as harsh and burdensome. But His Word tells us that “His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). And, as stated here, the things God commands us are for our own good. Today, the “ancient” standard given here is as modern and relevant as ever. But people can only live by it if they “circumcise the foreskins of [their] heart, and be stiff-necked no longer” (Deuteronomy 10:16)—or, in other words, if they become converted and receive God's Spirit, which will enable them to become more and more like God in their thinking and way of life. And God tells us here a little bit about His way of life—such as the fact that He “shows no partiality nor takes a bribe,” and “administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing” (verses 17-18). Since we are to become perfect as God is (Matthew 5:48), we too are to “love the stranger” (Deuteronomy 10:19) and help the fatherless and the widow, without showing partiality (Psalm 82:3-4; Leviticus 19:15; James 3:17).

## **1 Chronicles 7**

The Rest of Israel (1 Chronicles 7)

Chapter 7 contains the genealogies for other tribes of Israel. Not much is said in these chapters of the family of Naphtali (verse 13). And nothing at all is said of the descendants of Dan and Zebulun. The reason for this is not known. Expositor's Bible Commentary suggests that “these tribes may simply have had little influence or relevance among the Jews who made up Ezra's community.”

Verses 20-27 gives the descent of Joshua from Joseph's son Ephraim. “The fact that there were nine generations between Joshua, the famous successor to Moses, and Ephraim (vv. 23-27) supports the view that the story in vv. 21, 22 [of the men of Gath killing Ephraim's sons] occurred before the Exodus” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verse 27).

## **1 Chronicles 8**

## The Benjamite Lineage of Saul (1 Chronicles 8)

Chapter 8 gives a more detailed lineage of Benjamin than the one in chapter 7, because this one is concerned with showing the descent of Israel's first king, Saul. The Nelson Study Bible notes on verse 32 regarding the mention of Jerusalem: "Since Saul was not yet born at this point in the genealogy, the Jerusalem here is the city of pre-Davidic times. Jerusalem remained under Jebusite control until David conquered it (2 Sam. 5:6-10). Perhaps at this time the Benjamites lived among the Jebusites."

In verse 33, Saul's youngest son is referred to as Esh-Baal, meaning "Man of Baal," perhaps demonstrating Saul's apostasy from God, though Baal, meaning "Lord" or "Master," could sometimes refer to the true God. Notice, however, that this son of Saul is referred to in 2 Samuel and elsewhere as Ishbosheth, which is probably a euphemistic reference by the biblical writers as it means "Man of Shame."

Also note that in 8:34 and 9:40, Jonathan's son is Meribbaal, possibly meaning "Opponent of Baal," "Loved by Baal" or "Baal Is My Advocate." As Jonathan was apparently faithful to God, the first meaning here seems likely, though again it may be that the name Baal here is used for the true Lord. We should also consider that Saul could have given his grandson this name.

Meribbaal's name was later changed to Mephibosheth, meaning "Exterminator of Shame" or "He Scatters Shame," the shame probably referring to idolatry. After Jonathan's death, Mephibosheth was brought by David to his palace to live there as royalty (2 Samuel 9).

## **Ephesians 3 ([http://allanturner.com/eph\\_3.html](http://allanturner.com/eph_3.html))**

### The Mystery Revealed—3:1 – 7

(1) For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles — (2) if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, (3) how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, (4) by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), (5) which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: (6) that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, (7) of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

1. For this reason. What he now writes is to be connected with what has already been written. I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles—. Before Paul was in Christ, he used to put Christians in prison. Now, because he is an apostle to the Gentiles, he finds himself in prison. In fact, his chains authenticate his apostleship (II Corinthians 11:16-33). In every reference that Paul makes of himself as a prisoner, he stresses that he belongs to Jesus Christ, his Lord (4:1; Philemon 1:9; II Timothy 1:8).
2. If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you. This is a difficult construction. Is he questioning whether the Ephesians know of his part in proclaiming the gospel? Surely not! He knows some of them personally and knows they know his work as an apostle. The fact that five years have passed since he was with them would indicate that others had obeyed the gospel since then. It is, therefore, perfectly proper for him to say "if indeed you have heard."
3. How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery. Paul always insists that his apostleship to the Gentiles and his knowledge of the revealed mystery did not come from human origin (Galatians 1:12). (As I wrote before in a few words. Some think he is referring to a letter now lost. He is probably just referring to what he has just written in 2:11-22.

4. By which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Paul wrote to be understood. He did not use the loquacious rhetoric or “great swelling words of emptiness” (II Peter 2:18) of the Greek and Roman schools of oratory. When we read what Paul wrote, then we can know what he knew by divine revelation.

5. Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: This “mystery of Christ” had never been fully revealed until it was made known to the holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:26; I Corinthians 12:8).

6. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel. This is not to say that no one, not even prophets like Moses, Isaiah, etc., knew anything about the future blessing in which the Gentiles would share. In fact, the Old

Testament writers did know about it and referred to it over and over (Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Psalm 72; 87; Isaiah 11:10; 49:6; 54:1-3; 60:1-3; Hosea 1:10; Amos 9:11ff; Malachi 1:11; etc.). What they did not know was that the old theocracy would be abolished and in its place the church of Christ would be established and in this body the Gentiles and Jews would be on equal footing before God.

7. Of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. The office with which Paul had been invested was a gift of God’s grace. Verse 8 makes this even clearer. He became a Christian by obeying the gospel like everyone else; but he became an apostle and minister of the gospel by the power of God.

God was working in and through Paul. Paul deserved none of the credit.

Purpose Of The Mystery—3:8 – 13

(8) To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, (9) and to make all {people} see what {is} the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; (10) to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly {places}, (11) according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, (12) in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. (13) Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

8. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles. Paul does not call himself the “least” but “less than the least” of all saints. This is not just false humility on his part. To think that a man with a record like Paul, a violent persecutor of the church, should upon his conversion be made one of the Lord’s chosen apostles seems absolutely incredible. Nevertheless, it is true. We certainly would not have done this, but God did. “Gift,” “given,” and “was given” in this verse and in verse 7 glorify the magnificent Giver. Paul’s office in the church of Christ was an almost unbelievable gift, and he never grew tired of saying so (cf. I Corinthians 15:9-11; I Timothy 1:15). The unsearchable riches of Christ. Some translate “unsearchable” as “unfathomable.” The idea being something that cannot be tracked or traced. The same word is used in Romans 11:33. Man could have never understood the spiritual riches connected with Christ unless God Himself had revealed it.

9. And to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;. This was the purpose of Paul’s preaching to the Gentiles. Preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ was like setting this mystery that had been hidden in the mind of God into the fullest light of day so that all men could see it clearly. In contrast with the pagan mystery religions

which claimed to reveal secrets to the privileged few, Paul states that his mission is to tell all people. Of course, all men would not take advantage of the gospel, but the preaching of it would place the unsearchable riches before them to hear and see. That this was effectively done by Paul can be seen from the eloquent testimony of Demetrius, who rejected the gospel, in Acts 19:26.

10. To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,. Not in times past but now, the manifold or infinite diversity of God's wisdom is made known to the angelic rulers and powers. This is accomplished through what God has done by means of or through the church. The reconciliation of Jew and Gentile to God and to each other through the cross of Christ— which to the Jew is a stumbling block and to the Gentile foolishness (I Corinthians 1:22-25)— manifests the manifold

wisdom of Almighty God. God's wisdom reconciles the irreconcilables! Therefore, it should not surprise us that the angelic hosts have learned a great deal about the God they adore by watching what He has done through or by means of the church. Angels have been curious about the things connected with man's redemption in Christ Jesus (I Peter 1:12), and are themselves "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).

11. According to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,. What "has been hidden in God" (v. 9) has "now" been "made known" (v. 10). God's "eternal purpose" to save mankind, which becomes visible in the church, was not some last minute thought on His part. The scheme of redemption in all of history is focused in and through Jesus Christ and His church.

12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. In our connection with Jesus Christ our Lord, we have the boldness (or courage) that lets us draw near to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) and confident access to the Father (John 14:6) and all those spiritual blessings mentioned in 1:3. This courage and confident access stems directly from our faith (i.e., trust and reliance) in Jesus.

13. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. Paul does not want the Ephesians to be disheartened by the imprisonment, persecutions, and sufferings that he experienced preaching the gospel for their sake. In another letter written to those who were anxious about his imprisonment and tribulations, he had written that the things that happened to him had actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel

(Philippians 1:12). Knowing his labor for them and their spiritual blessings they have in connection with Jesus Christ, this great apostle to the Gentiles wants them to be both bold and confident. One might be tempted to ask: How was it to their glory that God permitted Paul to suffer for them?

Simply this: If God allowed Paul to endure so much as the consequence of his work with the Gentiles, this was evidence of how important God figured this work to be. One of the prominent fruits of Paul's labors was the three years he spent with the Ephesians (cf. Acts 20:31).

Appreciation Of The Mystery—3:14 – 21

(14) For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, (17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what {is} the width and length and depth and height—(19) to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness

of God. (20) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (21) to Him {be} glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

14. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,. For this reason (i.e., all the things he has mentioned in 2:11 – 3:13), Paul kneels in prayer to God the Father. There are many positions for prayer, but all of them ought to express humiliation and lowly supplication. I am convinced that too many Christians are simply too casual as they engage in worship today. Formalism is certainly wrong, but so is a thoughtless and careless attitude about our worship to God. When is the last time you actually bowed your knees to the Father? Paul, like the rest of us, are, in our connection with Christ, permitted to pray “to the Father.”

15. From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,. The family or “household of God” (2:19), the “kingdom of God,” i.e., the “whole building” (2:21), is under consideration here. This family consists of God, the “ministering spirits” or angels, the saints who are alive on planet earth, and those who have passed from this earthly existence and now reside in the Hadean realm. Everything else is the kingdom of darkness (cf. I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 1:13). Every day the praise of the entire church in heaven and on earth is offered to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

16. That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,. Paul was praying that out of the wealth of His glory, God would strengthen them with power through or in connection with the Holy Spirit, who dwells in them individually (I Corinthians 6:19,20) and collectively (I Corinthians 3:16), to be strong in the inner man as they comprehend the promises the Father has made to them in Christ. The “inner man,” which is equal to the heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37), is contrasted with the “outward man” or physical body (II Corinthians 4:16). It is this inner man that has been made alive in Christ Jesus (2:5), and all this in our connection with the Holy Spirit.

17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;. This is not another gift. It is a continuation of what is mentioned in verse 16. As we are strengthened with power in connection with the Holy Spirit, Christ dwells in our hearts through or in connection with faith. Faith, of course, comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), which, in turn, is the “sword of the Spirit” (6:17). It seems Paul is here speaking of that process that has to do with growing in “grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:14-18). That you, being rooted and grounded in love,. The Ephesians, like all Christians, had been rooted and grounded in love. These two words are derived from two different conceptions—one borrowed from the process of nature and the other from architectural parlance. For a plant to be healthy, it must have good roots, and for a building to be sound, it must have a good foundation. These roots and this foundation are God’s love for us in Christ. As our appreciation for God’s love for us increases—as a plant whose roots grow wide, deep, and strong in the soil of that love, and as a foundation upon which a sound structure can be built—our love expands for God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for brothers and sisters in Christ, for neighbors, and even for our enemies (cf. I John 4:721).

18. May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—. The immediate purpose of all that Paul has prayed for on their behalf is now stated. He wanted the Ephesians (and all Christians) to grasp or understand the width, length, depth, and height (i.e., all aspects) of Christ’s love.

19. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;. Just as our hearts and minds are guarded by a faith in God that produces a peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7), there is a knowledge that comes from our experience of Christ’s love for us that surpasses the knowledge we have of Him intellectually. That you may

be filled with all the fullness of God. We have now reached the climax of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and, by extension, all saints everywhere. He wants Christians to be filled with all the fullness (blessings, grace, etc.) that is ours "of," with respect to, God. This all derives from God because He is who He is. This is very similar to the idea conveyed in Colossians 2:9,10, which says: "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." In other words, our completeness is connected to Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (cf. John 1:16).

20. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,. In his prayer, Paul has asked much for the Ephesians. Nevertheless, he is firmly persuaded that God can do much more than we ask or ever think or conceive in our minds. This power has no limits in that it is "above all." In association with this omnipotence, God's grace, which is actually "the power that works in us," saves us from our past sins (2:8) and makes us spiritually "alive" (2:1) through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16.).
21. To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. May worshipful praise and adoration be rendered to God, the Father of our Lord (v. 14), because of the splendor of His wonderful and magnificent attributes (i.e., power [1:19; 2:20], wisdom [3:10], mercy [2:4], love [2:4], grace [2:5-8], etc.) made manifest in connection with the church, the glorious body of Christ, and in connection with Christ Jesus, its exalted head. This glory is to be God's now and forever. Amen. When the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write these glorious words of praise to God, he was moved by that same Spirit to express his wholehearted approval by his use of the solemn "Amen."

## **Ephesians 4**

The first three chapters of this letter dealt with doctrine. Starting with this chapter, Paul embarks upon the practical application of the truth stated in the first three chapters. In other words, he now tells these Christians how they ought to live.

Walk In Unity—4:1–6

(1) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, (2) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, (3) endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) {There is} one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism; (6) one God and Father of all, who {is} above all, and through all, and in you all.

1. I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,. What he says here is similar to what he said in 3:1, but the expression "for you Gentiles" is missing. He is not bringing to mind his suffering for their sakes, but his faithfulness to the Lord. Beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,. Like all Christians, these brethren were called to faith by the gospel that Paul preached (II Thessalonians 2:14). Of course, faith without works or a "worthy walk" is nothing other than dead faith (James 2:26). True faith must show itself by true devotion to the Lord, and Paul is simply exhorting these Christians to live faithfully (cf. Romans 12:1).

2. With all lowliness and gentleness,. These are characteristics of walking worthily. Lowliness(humility) and gentleness (meekness) are attitudes of the mind that are naturally connected. The opposite of lowliness would be pride and self-assertive arrogance. The opposite of gentleness is violence. With longsuffering,. Longsuffering (patience) is a part of walking worthily and is closely associated with lowliness and gentleness, but is here introduced by itself. It means not taking swift vengeance nor inflicting speedy punishment. It is

prompted by our remembrance that we were called when sinners, and that the wonderful relationship we have in Christ is proof of God's

longsuffering. Bearing with one another in love,. This is the outworking of all these other things. Forbearing the faults and failings of others is the obligation our Lord demands of us. This kind of love is mentioned in I Corinthians 13.

3. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. Faith comes by hearing the word of God(Romans 10:17), which, in turn, is the sword or implement of the Spirit. Consequently, we, who are to speak the same thing (I Corinthians 1:10) and walk by the same rule (Philippians 3:16), are not surprised to be admonished to maintain the unity of the Spirit. This unity or "sameness" is articulated in the word the Holy Spirit has revealed to us in the Bible. Conversely, all human teachings, inventions, and institutions are occasions of discord, stumbling, and division in the religious world today. In the bond of peace. Any unity that does not secure peace between believers is not of the Spirit.
4. There is one body,. Paul is writing of the universal church of Christ (i.e., the "My church" of Matthew 16:18). This is made absolutely clear in Ephesians 1:22,23 and Colossians 1:18. The church (i.e., the Christians) at Ephesus were part of this one body. They had been added to it by none other than the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). And one Spirit,. The body animated (I Corinthians 12:13) and guided (Romans 8:14) by the one Spirit cannot be divided. Just as you were called in one hope of your calling;. We are "called" by the gospel of Jesus Christ, who said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The only hope of salvation and eternal life the world has is through Jesus. (The reader is referred back to 1:18 for a further explanation of hope.)
5. One Lord,. This one Lord is Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, risen, exalted, and invested with all authority in heaven and earth. One faith,. Some argue that this is subjective faith. I disagree and think Paul is writing of objective faith, which is "the faith" of Jude 3. One baptism;. At the time Paul writes this letter, there is only one baptism, which would be baptism in water for the remission of sins, and there is absolutely nothing divisive about it. Consequently, there are not three different ways of administering it (sprinkling, pouring, and immersion). It is a burial or immersion (Colossians 2:12) in water (Acts 8:36) in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27).
6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Notice that this passage is not saying one God who is the Father. Under consideration is the one God and Father of all, that is, our heavenly Father.

"All" equals "the household of God" (2:19) and, therefore, constitutes all those who make up the one body. No matter what angle one looks at the "one body" or "all," who constitute us believers, it is God the Father who is above, through, and in us all.

Gifts—4:7–16

(7) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (8) Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (9) (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) (11) And He Himself gave some {to be} apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (13) till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the

Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (14) that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, (15) but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ—(16) from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

7. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. The measure of Christ's gift from the Father (speaking of His humanity) was "the name above every name" (Philippians 2:9). In connection with all the power that was given to Him in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:19), He has given each one of us grace or gifts as He has seen fit. Some of these were miraculous gifts (cf. I Corinthians 12:11) and some were offices (v. 11). In this manner, Paul was given the grace or gift of being an apostle to the Gentiles (3:2,7).

8. Therefore he says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." The giving of these gifts was dependent upon His ascension into heaven. The citation is from Psalm 68:19. "Captivity" itself (sin and death) was captured by the victorious Christ and He divides the spoils with His followers (cf. Colossians 2:15 and I Corinthians 15:57).

9. (Now this, These words introduce a statement that will explain the preceding verse. "He ascended"—. This implies a previous descent, which has to be from heaven, as Jesus said, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven" (John 3:13). What does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? Ascent does not always imply descent, as it does here. For example, the fact that Elijah ascended into heaven does not imply that he previously came down from heaven. But,

Paul here speaks of Christ, who "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant and coming in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7).

10. He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) The One who "fills all in all" (1:23) is the One who is able to "fill all things." He who first descended so as to take upon Himself flesh and shed His blood for the remission of sins, has now ascended back into heaven where He rules supreme over the nations and is the head of His church. In connection with this He gives gifts to His inheritance.

11. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,. Paul here numerates the various gifts and positions of leadership used by the Lord to promote unity in His body. His great plan for edification and unity began with the apostles. Jesus originally called twelve men as apostles

(Matthew 10:2-4). The word apostle means "a messenger or one sent on a mission," and this is the purpose of the apostles of Christ. They were to take the gospel to the whole world (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15,16). These special men (with the exception of Judas who was later replaced by Matthias) had an essential part in establishing the unity to be found in Christ's church. Paul, of course, was included in this number because he was an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15,16; I Thessalonians 2:6). All of these apostles preached the same gospel and called upon all to unite in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:14). The prophets were special spokesmen for God who received divine revelation from the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 14:5, 29-33). This



promoted unity for “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (I Peter 1:20,21). The work of unity was further established by giving some to be evangelists (Acts 21:8; II Timothy 4:5). An evangelist was a preacher of the gospel. These men, like everyone else, were under obligation to “speak as the oracles of God” (I Peter 4:11). In doing so, they would promote the unity that word called for. Then Paul mentions pastors and teachers. Each local church of Christ was to have its own pastors and teachers. The pastors (or shepherds) are elsewhere identified as elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14) and bishops (I Timothy 3:1; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:7).

While overseeing the local church, these men fed the flock spiritual food (Acts 20:28). With their special qualifications (I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9), they were the kind of men who could keep unity and peace within the congregation. One of their qualifications was “able to teach” (I Timothy 3:2). They, along with others, had the ability to teach. Therefore, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers represented God’s gifts to the church. Of course, it must be understood that this list was not intended to be exhaustive (cf. I Corinthians 12:28).

12. For the equipping of the saints. Every Christian needs to be equipped for service to Christ. The previous gifts are given for this purpose. For the work of the ministry,. When properly equipped, they are able to devote themselves to ministering to the needs of others. In fact, every household of Christians ought to imitate the example of the house of Stephanas, who devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints (I Corinthians 16:15). A preacher is a minister of the gospel (Colossians 1:23; II Corinthians 3:6), but all Christians, not just preachers, are to devote themselves to ministering, which includes both the physical and spiritual needs of people. For the edifying of the body of Christ. When the gifts Christ gave to the church are doing their work, and getting Christians to do their work, then the body of Christ is going to be built up, as it grows in numbers, knowledge, piety, and good works.

13. Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. According to 4:3, we already have a unity which needs only to be kept or guarded. Paul here begins to tell us about something that still needs to be attained. The ultimate goal or purpose of all these gifts is to lead us to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. Unity of the faith was the goal of the early church and should be the goal of the church today. There can never be unity with a denominational concept of “many faiths,” because the unity that God accepts comes only through the knowledge of the Son of God, who is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). To a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;. The goal is further discussed and considers the end result. The aim of every faithful Christian is to be more like Christ. The word “perfect” means full-grown, and suggests maturity. The only way Christians can be sinlessly perfect is to be forgiven through Christ (I John 1:7). However, we can strive every day to measure up to the stature of the fulness of Christ, and this is what pleases God. In this process, one can grow from an unskilled diet of milk to a mature diet of meat, able to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14). The knowledge of Christ mentioned here is precise, personal knowledge of Christ, not merely a knowledge of who He is, but a close personal relationship and a profound understanding of Him, the kind that comes with understanding what Paul is writing about Him in this epistle.

14. That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive,. Without such special gifts, the saints would remain immature children who would be tossed about like something on the sea (perhaps a small boat or wave) driven by the wind. The wind here represents the various false doctrines of the false teachers, who were crafty and tricky. As one matures on the one true doctrine of Christ, he cannot be fooled by these teachers and their

doctrines: “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.” 15. But, speaking the truth in love,. Truth and love must be joined together. It is possible to speak the truth, but not out of love, and this is very hurtful. Truth without love will repel people. However, true love can never be devoid of the truth. It is not true love to allow someone to go to hell to avoid hurting their feelings. Those who speak the truth “in love” are interested in the ones who are being taught. May grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—. No longer children but mature or grown up in Christ Jesus, who is the head of the body. The idea here is not identity but intimacy. As we serve Him, pray unto Him, and learn of Him, we grow into Him. As Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

16. From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. The “from whom” in this verse is Christ. His spiritual body (the church) is totally dependent upon His headship. Here Paul (as in I Corinthians 12) illustrates the church by the make-up and functioning of the human body. Christ, as the head of His body, wants every member of His body joined and knit together in unity. When this happens, His prayer for unity (John 17) is answered, and His spiritual body grows. Each member (or part) is called upon to do its share under the headship of Christ. Unfortunately, this truth is lost on the modern church which places too much emphasis on an office or offices and too little on the work required of every member of the body. The church builds itself up in love when everyone is working to make increase of the body. People who are busy usually have little time for quarreling.

The New Man—4:17–24

(17) This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, (18) having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; (19) who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (20) But you have not so learned Christ, (21) if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: (22) that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, (23) and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, (24) and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.

17. This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,. Paul here calls on the Gentile brethren to walk differently from the unconverted Gentiles, who do not let Christ direct them as head, but follow their own think-so’s. This would take a lot of courage for the Ephesian Christians. They lived in the shadow of the glorious temple of Diana and with the multitude of her worshippers. To refuse to associate in the practices of their former friends took much conviction and courage. Today, it still takes a lot of conviction and courage to no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk. Social drinking, lewd movies, night clubs, dancing, gambling, and many other things are very much a part of our modern society. As followers of the Christ, we must not walk in these things.

18. Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;. The world considers itself too wise to believe the things revealed in

the Bible. But, as Paul wrote elsewhere, “Professing themselves wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). They have allowed Satan to blind their minds to the gospel (II Corinthians 4:4), and are, therefore, alienated from the life of God. This alienation occurs for two reasons: (1) the ignorance that is in them, and (2) the hardening (callousing) of their heart.

19. Who, being past feeling,. Sin is like anesthesia. At first, it is offensive and our conscience revolts against it. However, if we do not get away from it, it soon becomes less offensive and will finally overpower us. We could also compare it to freezing to death. The cold numbs its victims and they are doomed, but feel no pain. Being past feeling is the last stage before destruction. If one is never bothered by his conscience, he is in terrible peril. Have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Those who lose all feeling of guilt readily enter into licentiousness (cf. Romans 1:26-32). Licentiousness is a term that includes adultery, fornication, immodesty, shameless dress and speech, indecent behavior, etc. All these things are quite natural for one who has cast aside the feelings of conscience. Nothing is more terrible than the loss of shame. Immodesty should embarrass or anger us. If it does not, then we only need to remove the checks of circumstances to complete our descent into sin. These non-Christian Gentiles do not hesitate to involve themselves in uncleanness. They desire the pleasures of sin, and go greedily after them. This kind of greediness is usually associated with the love of money which Paul says is “a root of all kinds of evil” (I Timothy 6:10).

20. But you have not so learned Christ,. Paul now reminds the Ephesian Christians, who were mostly Gentiles, that they are called to be different from the other Gentiles he just mentioned.

What has made the difference? The opening of their hearts to learn of Christ.

21. If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:. When one hears of Christ and allows His teaching to permeate the heart, the obeying and doing of truth is the result.

22. That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,. Paul taught that one went through a complete change when converted to the Lord. This requires that one “put off...the old man.” Consequently, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). We should notice that the old man is corrupted by deceitful lusts. In other words, the things lusted for in this world promise thrills and satisfaction. Instead, they bring disappointment, shame, disgrace, and contention. Our old man—our former life before we obeyed the gospel—was becoming more and more corrupt (cf. II Timothy 3:13). Age and experience usually do not improve sinners. In fact, their consciences become duller and habits of evil become even more firmly fixed.

23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind,. It is not enough to put off the old man, the old man must be replaced with something new. The only way one’s life will change is to have a new mind: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Elsewhere Paul teaches that this transformation comes about by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). Be renewed is in the present imperative and is, therefore, a continuous duty and process. The spirit of your mind is the spirit that directs your mind. Before conversion it was disobedient. Now, it is a spirit of meekness, humility, and obedience.

24. And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness. The new man, or new nature, is a creation of God (II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10). With God’s help we can improve ourselves. We can “put on” the new man like one puts on a garment. We do not have to be the same old detestable person we once were. We can put on the “new man,” who will live “soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12). In other words, those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24).

### Do Not Grieve The Spirit—4:25-32

(25) Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. (26) “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, (27) nor give place to the devil. (28) Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. (29) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. (32) And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.

25. Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Created in righteousness and true holiness, certain obligations are placed on the Christian. This verse begins a series of seven practical exhortations concerning the walk of the Christian. The admonition to put away falsehood and speak the truth is always very hard to keep, but is repeatedly commanded in the New Testament (4:15; 5:9). Since the general theme of this chapter is unity, speaking truth to one’s neighbor is important. Speaking lies can destroy peace and harmony faster than anything else. Paul reminds the Ephesians that they are members of one another, and to lie to each other would be like one member of the body fighting another member of the body. God’s people—of all people—ought to be able to trust one another. Remember, lying is one of the things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16,17).

26. “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,. This is a quote from Psalm 4:4. It is not a command to be angry, but a caution not to sin when angry. People often do things when they are angry that they would not normally do. While this is not a command to be angry, neither is it a prohibition of anger. Sometimes anger is necessary. Paul felt anger (Acts 13:9,10; 23:3) and so did Jesus (Mark 3:5). It would be impossible to live and never be stirred within one’s emotions; however, the Christian must keep his emotions under control. While anger may be justified at times, it must be speedily cooled down. It should subside the same day it arises. When the sun goes down, our anger ought to be gone. If anger is held very long, it turns into malice, hatred, resentment, and the desire for revenge.

27. Nor give place to the devil. All this, in turn, gives a place (opportunity) to the devil to lead us into transgression. And while there is definitely a connection between anger and giving place to the devil, there are also other ways we can give a place to the devil. Some examples would be: (1) meditating upon lustful things, (2) thinking on what we think is our unfair share of earthly riches, (3) reading books, watching television, or going to movies that undermine faith and morals.

28. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. It may seem strange that Christians would have to be told not to steal. But stealing is not uncommon. Some folks who never think of themselves as thieves are actually involved in stealing. They cheat on taxes, drive hard bargains, misrepresent products, loaf on their employer’s time, short an employee’s time, cheat on examinations, etc. Paul says let him who stole—regardless of how he did it, or what he stole—steal no more. Of course, the best antidote for stealing is honest labor. Work is not just for selfish gain, but to help others. We do this not by stealing from the rich to give to the poor. We do this by being gainfully employed and sharing our bounty with those who are in need. This passage is not an authorization for Communism. This verse commands private generosity and assumes private ownership of property. If we don’t own anything, we can’t give it away. Communism, on the other hand, destroys private ownership and makes all things state property.

29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. Christians must carefully control their speech at all times. Paul is warning the Ephesians not to let any speech that is rotten and corrupt go out of their mouths (cf. 5:4; Matthew 12:36,37). Words carry with them the personality and thoughts of the speaker. They can do evil or good. The Christian must use his words for good things, such as giving instruction, encouragement, and correction.

30. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Israel grieved the Holy Spirit by their sins in the wilderness and in the land of Canaan (Isaiah 63:10). We grieve the Holy Spirit by wicked deeds and rotten speech. We grieve Him when we violate the commandments He has given us through the apostle Paul in this epistle. Holiness is always sensitive. Therefore, we should not be surprised to learn that the Holy Spirit by whom we were sealed is sensitive. For comments on being sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption, see 1:13,14.

31. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Bitterness is an evil attitude which refuses to forgive or be forgiven. It manifests itself in sharpness, harshness, spitefulness, and resentment. This sin closes all doors to reconciliation. The wrath and anger in this context represent an explosion of one's temper that is sinful, the kind that produces uncontrolled words and actions. Clamor is loud speaking, boasting, and quarrelling. With clamor there is no room for kindness. Evil speaking is from the Greek word *blasphemia*, and is often used to describe those who speak injuriously against God, as well as one's own fellowman. Malice is ill will, the desire to injure. Those who hold malice are wicked and depraved with a heart full of hatred. It is a sad state of affairs when disciples of Christ exhibit these "old man" traits. We must work hard to put away from us these sins by being "renewed in the spirit of [our] minds" (4:23), putting on the "new man." (4:24).

32. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you. The word kind is usually used to describe God. It describes one who is virtuous, good, mild, and pleasant. It manifests a tender attitude toward others to the point of being concerned and considerate toward their needs. Elsewhere Paul calls this "brotherly kindness" (II Peter 1:7). The word translated forgiving in this passage does not just mean to release from guilt. It also means to be gracious, kind, and benevolent. Someone might ask, "How can I be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward one who has wronged me?" This is an "old man" question. The motive for Christian goodness and forgiveness is different from that of the world. Out in the world, people are good because "it pays." They get something in return. The Christian is good and forgiving toward our fellow men because God in Christ has forgiven us. We realize how much we are indebted unto God; therefore, we forgive the small offenses our neighbors commit against us. Although there can be no greater motivation for kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness than this, we must also recognize that if we don't forgive, we are committing spiritual suicide (Matthew 6:15).