

Triennial Torah Study – 4th Year 30/03/2013

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By Joseph F. Dumond

We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Deut 11	1 Chron 9		Eph 5-6
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A Choice to Make (Deuteronomy 11)

Moses continues impressing on the children of Israel the absolute necessity of obeying each and every one of God's commandments (verse 8) for God to bless them (verses 13-15, 23-25). If they love God with all their heart and soul, then they will carefully keep His commandments and walk in His ways, holding fast to Him (verses 1, 13, 22). After all, this is the love of God—"poured out in our hearts" (Romans 5:5)—"that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3; compare 2 John 6). However, we have a choice of whether to follow or to reject God, just as ancient Israel did. God set before them "a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

God wants man to choose His way, which produces blessings (30:19), but He does not force man to do so. God created man for the purpose of developing godly character—outflowing, loving concern for others—which, by necessity, involves the voluntary decision of the individual to choose, and then act in accordance with, that right way. Otherwise, man would be nothing but a robot that does the right thing automatically without mind and conscience. But God, who is in the process of adding many children to His family, wants His future immortal sons and daughters to think and act like He does—and from eternity God has chosen to never veer from His loving nature. God expects all of us to choose His way of life too—and ultimately, once we are resurrected to incorruptible spirit with perfect godly character ourselves, we will maintain that right choice for eternity to come.

Verses 10-12 describe some agricultural practices of Egypt and Canaan, contrasting the way crops received necessary moisture. All crops in Egypt were supported by irrigation waters from the Nile. The expression relating to Egypt that the people "watered it by foot" refers to the opening or closing of water outlets that regulated flow in the canals that serviced the fields. Canaan, however, was a country without a single major river. The crops received water from the rain and the dew. God placed His people in a land in which the weather patterns were supposed to turn their minds and eyes to heaven, so they would recognize their dependence upon Him.

Indeed, God paints a refreshing picture here and on through verse 14. The Israelites were headed for a land "which drinks water from the rain of heaven...a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.... I will give you rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain...." It should be noted that the land of Israel is not the same today as it was in the time of Moses. A rich land of milk and honey, the Holy Land was then lush and green—more heavily forested with large areas of good pasturage and fertile soil for crops. Of course, the Promised Land was a physical type of the wonderful blessings of the coming Kingdom of God, which will be established over all nations.

1 Chronicles 9

Jerusalemites, Levitical Responsibilities and the Family of Saul (1 Chronicles 9)

The reference to the “book of the kings of Israel” in verse 1 is evidently not to the biblical books of Kings, as these contain no genealogies.

Expositor’s comments in its introduction to this chapter: “Chapter 9 itself is sometimes assigned to the period of Persian restoration...or even equated with a list of Nehemiah’s during his own time (444 B.C.), of those who lived in Jerusalem and of those who resided outside (Neh 11:3-24). But while this latter document exhibits the same order in its categories (perhaps because based on 1 Chron 9), caution is advised. Thus [as one scholar] admits: ‘The two lists are not so alike as sometimes supposed...’ The M[asoretic] T[ext] has about eighty-one names for Nehemiah 11 and about seventy-one for Chronicles, of which only about thirty-five are the same or nearly so. Moreover some of these have a permanent relevance, e.g., names of priestly courses (vv. 10, 12) or of genealogical ancestors (vv. 11, 16), which are not subject to change in any event.”

In other words, it is not clear whether the list of people dwelling in Jerusalem in verses 3-9 predates or postdates the Babylonian Exile. Some suggest that the reason for highlighting the inhabitants of Jerusalem is to put the focus on the city of David in contrast to Saul’s city of Gibeon in the previous chapter. “While both cities were important centers, God had not chosen Gibeon. But He did choose Jerusalem, not [merely] as Israel’s political capital but as the location for His temple. It was in Jerusalem, where the ark [i.e., the Ark of the Covenant] rested, that God met with His people. It was Jerusalem where the priests offered sacrifices for sin. It was Jerusalem where the Levites led in worship” (Bible Reader’s Companion, note on 8:1-9:44).

Jerusalem is “the apple of God’s eye” (Zechariah 2:8). Beyond the focus of 1 Chronicles 9, the place had been special to God even long before the children of Israel dwelt there. Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, had been the place God sent Abraham for the test with Isaac (Genesis 22:2). Indeed, Jerusalem was the site chosen by God for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and it will be the city from which God will later rule the world and even the universe.

Finally, verses 35-44 present again the family of Saul, basically repeating 8:29-38—but here the purpose is to segue into the story of the tragic end of his life and reign related in the next chapter of Chronicles (which we have already read).

Ephesians 5 (http://allanturner.com/eph_5.html)

Walk In Love—5:1-7

(1) Therefore be followers of God as dear children. (2) And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma. (3) But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; (4) neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. (5) For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (6) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (7) Therefore do not be partakers with them.

1. Therefore be followers of God as dear children. After calling upon the Ephesians to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving like God, Paul begins this chapter by asking them to follow God as dear children. God has set the perfect example of forgiving through His Son: “that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them” (II Corinthians 5:19), and all are called on to imitate His example. To do this we must follow as “dear children.” Paul is not calling on these Christians to be childish, but rather, to be humble like children (cf. Matthew 19:14). To be converted and become like children is the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).

2. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma. It is not enough to say we love our brethren. Love must be set in motion. To walk in love requires continuous motion and action. And what kind of love does Paul require? The kind illustrated by Jesus, the perfect example when He went to the cross for all: “who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (I Thessalonians 5:10; II Timothy 2:11; I John 4:9). His offering had a “sweet smelling aroma” to God, which means that it pleased Him. When Christians walk in love with the spirit of sacrifice in their actions, they also are pleasing to God. This represents the way we are to follow in His

footsteps: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (I Peter 2:21).

3. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;. Motivated by Christ’s love, the Christian is to flee fornication, lustful unclean living, and greedy desires. In fact, these things are not even to be mentioned in any positive way, as the world does. Among Christians, these things should be mentioned only to condemn them.

4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. They must also avoid base and lewd conduct, foolish talking, and jests with double meanings, which do not come up to the standard Christ has set for Christians. Jestings refers to speech that is nimble-witted, or easily turned, especially toward a bad meaning. So often the jesting of the world is based on double meanings. Jokes are created that can be taken with two meanings—one harmless, the other shady. Many comedians think they are not funny unless they utter a few such jokes. Such is never fitting for the Christian, and he will avoid all this kind of speech. A tongue turned loose in foolish talk and coarse jesting will “defile the whole body, set on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire by hell” (James 3:6). The same tongue that can do all this (James 3:1-12), when bridled (James 1:26), can also give thanks to God, and this is what Paul wishes for them to do.

5. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Paul gives a second reason why all evil practices should be avoided. In addition to the fact that such is not fitting, he reminds the Ephesians that those who engage in such acts will not inherit the kingdom of Christ (i.e., eternal life or heaven). Why? These evils are of the devil, and those that live by them are cut off from God. These things represent the world, and make those who practice them an enemy of God: “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4). We seem to think idolatry is something that only affects heathens. Conversely, the Bible teaches us that idols are not just to be found on pagan altars, but they exist in the hearts and minds of well-educated people as well (cf. Ezekiel 14). The apostle John warns Christians to keep themselves from idols (I John 5:21). In his Corinthian letter, Paul instructs them to flee from idolatry (I Corinthians 10:14). In this passage and in Colossians 3:5, he informs his readers that idolatry is something that can affect us all.

6. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Gnosticism, a religion already causing problems for Christians, taught that what the body does has no effect on the inner man. Thus, those who advocated this religion believed it was fine to engage in all these unclean sexual acts. However, Paul refers to such teaching as “empty words,” and warns about being deceived. In Colossians 2:8, he wrote, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ,” and in Romans 1:18, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” Deception is still one of the devil’s most effective tools (Genesis 3:4; II Corinthians 11:3), and the Christian must always be on guard against it. The devil does not play fair!

7. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

Walk In Light—5:8-14

(8) For you were once darkness, but now {you are} light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (9) (for the fruit of the Spirit {is} in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), (10) proving what is acceptable to the Lord. (11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose {them}. (12) For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. (13) But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. (14) Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

8. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. To help these Christians see where they were, compared to where they are now, Paul uses a common illustration—light and darkness. God and His kingdom are always referred to as light. On the other hand, the devil and his kingdom are always referred to as darkness: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13). The apostle Peter referred to how Christ “called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9). When converted, the Christian becomes the light of the world

(Matthew 5:14). In other words, the Christian is not just in the light, he is light, just as he was not just in darkness, but was darkness. Christians keep the darkness out by walking as children of light.

9. (For the fruit of the Spirit {is} in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),. When Christians are walking as children of light, they will be bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Instead of those wicked things mentioned in verses 3 and 4, they will be demonstrating goodness, righteousness, and truth. The contrast is as different as day and night or light and darkness.

10. Proving what is acceptable to the Lord. (See Romans 12:2).

11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. The Christian, who is light, must have no association with the works of darkness. Such works are called “unfruitful” because they bear no fruit for goodness, righteousness, and truth. In addition to not having any association with the unfruitful works of darkness, the Christian is to go a step further and expose them. This will serve to warn others. Satan tries to make the works of darkness appear to be light, but this is a lie that must be exposed by the truth of God’s word. Satan, himself, appears as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14).

12. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. Paul continues his warning. They must keep themselves pure for God. They do this by: (1) refraining from associating with darkness, (2) exposing the author of darkness—the devil, and (3) refusing to even speak of the shameful sins committed by them in secret: “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). A Christian must not contaminate his mind with such filth. In so doing, we “abstain from every form of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22), and avoid being influenced by those who are evil (I Corinthians 15:33).

13. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. One of the characteristics of light is to reveal or expose. Isn’t there a vast difference between things at night and in the day? We stumble in the darkness and lose our way, but in the light all becomes visible. Many hated Jesus and His followers because they exposed their sins (John 3:19), and this is still true today. When one is accustomed to darkness, the light becomes very uncomfortable.

14. Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” The Lord will not give enlightenment to those who are spiritually dead. Paul said the same thing to the Romans: “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11). The Christian must not slumber. He must be active, and the Lord will gladly give him light.

Walk In Wisdom—5:15-21

(15) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, (16) redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (17) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord {is}. (18) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, (20) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another in the fear of God.

15. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,. Once again Paul refers to the figure of walking. One can choose to walk in darkness and find much disappointment, foolishness, and death, or he can choose to walk “circumspectly” (carefully) in the light. In so doing, one is walking wisely.

16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. In order to do this, one must take advantage of every opportunity to use time wisely! Why? The times are evil. This is true of all generations. Beware of any inclination to call the days good. We are still living in a perverse generation (Acts 2:40). We will never be able to make a paradise of this sin-sick world. One is to have great confidence in the power of the gospel, but must remember that only a few of all men living at any one time have ever accepted the gospel. Some of the opportunities that come our way will only come once. We must be willing to seize the moment. Although we cannot go back and relive our past, we can take advantage of the moment. Paul regretted his past of persecuting the church (Acts 8:3; I Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:3), but this did not stop him from pressing on (Philippians 3:14). This is the kind of wisdom that Paul wants all Christians to walk in as we redeem (lay up for ourselves) the time.

17. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Paul expands upon the wisdom he desired for the Ephesians. Because the days are evil and are filled with great temptations, the Christian must always beware of foolish, ungodly, time-wasting conduct. Instead, he is to keep before his mind at all times the

will of the Lord. And what is the will of the Lord? That the Christian should keep himself from all the works of darkness.

18. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit. Drunkenness is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments (Proverbs 12:1; 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11,22; Romans 13:13; I Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:21). Drunkenness brings dissipation. "Dissipation" is a translation of the Greek word *asotia*, and, according to Vine, means "prodigality, a wastefulness, profligacy," i.e., reckless and unrestrained living. The prodigal son supposed, like many today, that wild living (which no doubt included drunkenness) was just great. He eventually learned that such had destroyed his happiness and self-respect (Luke 15:11-32). Instead of being filled with wine, Paul calls on Christians to be filled with the Spirit (i.e., the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead). Paul is talking to individuals who had already received the Holy Spirit upon conversion. Therefore, what he is talking about here is being under the influence of the Holy Spirit's teaching. Being "filled with the Spirit" is equivalent to being under the influence of (i.e., being guided and led by) the Holy Spirit. He directs us through His word, which he describes later as the sword (or implement) of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as opposed to being under the influence of wine, which brings dissipation, is that one is filled with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, etc. (Galatians 5:22,23). Being thus filled, believers will give jubilant expression of all this, doing what is mentioned in the next verse.

19. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. The term psalms in all probability has reference to the Old Testament Psalter. Hymns refer mainly to New Testament songs of praise to God and to Christ (cf. verse 14). Finally, spiritual songs probably refer to sacred songs about things other than direct praise to God or to Christ. The drunkard may mumble, moan, and curse, but the Christian that is filled with the Spirit will want to sing from his heart to the Lord. Since Paul mentions "speaking to yourselves," he is referring to the occasions when Christians are assembled together, and not to an individual singing alone. Singing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" is one of the ways Christians are to be taught in the assembly. Those who refuse to sing, refuse to teach! The melody is to be made in their hearts—no mechanical instruments are mentioned (they were added centuries later). In fact, nowhere in the New Testament are Christians told to play anything other than the strings of their hearts.

20. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:18). God wants us to be thankful! When Jesus took notice that only one of the ten lepers who had been healed returned to thank Him, He said: "Were there not ten cleansed?" "But where are the nine?" (Luke 17:11-19). Where would you be classified—with the one, or with the nine? Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5), consequently, all prayers and thanksgivings must be in His name (John 14:13,14).

21. Submitting to one another in the fear of God. In the duty to be "submitting to one another," the verb *hypotasso* means "to subject or subordinate," and is parallel to "giving thanks always." The general principle is that Christians must be subject to one another. This voluntary yielding to others is to be a general characteristic of the Christian community and is urged elsewhere in the New Testament. For example, in Philippians 2:3, Paul says, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." This voluntary submission is based on the example of Jesus: "who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to {the point of} death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). Jesus had always insisted that His followers would have a servant mentality in imitation of Him: "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28). Furthermore, the apostle Peter instructed young men to submit to older men, and for all Christians to submit to one another (I Peter 5:4,5). This is to be done because they fear God (Christ). Some of the manuscripts read "fear of God," others read "fear of Christ." The teaching in all these manuscripts is the same—Christians are to submit to one another out of fear or reverence (Greek = *phobo*) for Christ, who is Himself God.

Husbands And Wives And Christ And The Church—5:22-33

(22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so {let} the wives {be} to their own husbands in everything. (25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, (26) that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28) So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord {does} the church. (30) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. (31) “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (32) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (33) Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife {see} that she respects {her} husband.

Note: In verses 22 through 33 Paul addresses the specific roles of husbands and wives. By placing the mutual submission of all Christians to one another in verse 21, before stating the specific submission of wives to their husbands mentioned in verses 22 through 30, it seems that Paul wants to remind all Christians, men and women, of their duty to be submissive to one another before reminding wives of their particular responsibility to their husbands in marriage. This puts specific, one-directional subjection in the context of general, mutual submission and relates specific duties, roles, and responsibilities to the general Christian concept of mutual submission. Unfortunately, some make the mistake of thinking mutual submission alone is in view in these verses, and, therefore, wives are not being called to a unique or distinct submission to their husbands. However, since verse 21 is a transition verse to the entirety of the section on household responsibilities, consistency would demand that the sections on children and parents and on servants and masters also speak only of mutual submissiveness and not different roles. Since this is self-evidently not so for the verses on children and parents, on the one hand, and masters and servants, on the other, the implication is that distinguishable roles and specific submission are taught in this section on wives and husbands. Therefore, the mutual submission to which all are called and that defines the larger context and sets the tone for what follows does not, therefore, rule out the specific and different roles and relationships to which husbands and wives are called by these verses. In this section on wives and husbands, Paul presents his teaching along three lines: (1) the role each has (submission, headship), (2) the attitude with which each fulfills his or her role (love, respect), and (3) the analogy of marriage to the relationship of Christ and His church.

22. Wives, submit to your own husbands. Paul commands wives to “submit to” or be “subject to” their own husbands. The operative verb *hupotasso* reappears in verse 24, where Paul says wives are to submit to “their own husbands in everything,” “just as the church is subject to Christ.” We know this is the essence of the apostle’s teaching to wives, since in Colossians 3:18 it is the totality of his charge: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Furthermore, this particular exhortation to the wife to submit to her husband is the universal teaching of the New Testament. Every passage that deals with the relationship of the wife to her husband tells her to “submit to” him, using this same verb (*hupotasso*): Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1; Titus 2:4f. Distilled down, the teaching is this: Wives be submissive to your husbands. What is meant by submission? In its simplest form, the wife allows her husband to be head. In other words, there is no way a man can carry out his God-given headship without a submissive wife! In this regard there are three types of wives: (1) Those that deny plain Bible teaching. These do not want to submit. (2) Those who believe what the Bible teaches on this subject, but do not practice it. They do this while giving lip-service to the need to obey the Bible teaching. (3) Those that believe the word of God and spend their lives practicing it. This last group may fall short, but they continue to try. Only this third group is pleasing to God. As to the Lord. Certainly, no Christian ought to resent being in subjection to Christ, and if husbands were what they ought to be, their wives should not resent being in subjection to them. Nevertheless, even when all reasonable causes for voluntary subjection are absent (i.e., gentleness, kindness, wisdom, etc.), the wife is still obligated to be submissive to her husband as to the Lord. Marriage is something neither the female nor male ought to enter into lightly.

23. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. In this verse, Paul gives the basis for his charge to the wives. The husband, he says, is head (*kephale*) of the wife as Christ is head of the Church. Husbands are given a perfect model to follow in Christ as Head and Savior of His body (the church). Christ will never do anything to harm the church, but will save it. Husbands exercising

godly headship will never do anything to harm their wives, but will love, protect, and save them. They will save them from physical harm, from attacks on their character, from unhappiness (when possible), and from spiritual death. Jesus loved the church enough to die for it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25), and godly husbands will strive for this same kind of love (I Corinthians 13).

24. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Since husbands have such an awesome responsibility to care for their wives, Paul again calls upon the wives to be subject to their own husbands. When a church refuses to submit to its head, it becomes an unfaithful church, and the same can be said of a wife who is not submissive to her husband. She is not just to submit in the things she likes, or areas where she agrees, but “in everything.” This phrase is all-encompassing. In other words, submission includes all aspects of life. This removes the misunderstanding that some may have that submission simply refers to sexual intercourse or some other narrow realm. Since by God’s decree marriage partners are “one flesh,” God wants them to function together under one head, not as two autonomous individuals living together. Since Paul is so concerned about this unity, we ought to be also. Paul does not add to the expression “in everything” that all disobedience is excepted (cf. Acts 5:29, “We ought to obey God rather than men”; cf. also Acts 4:19,20). This goes without saying! Nor does he mean to make her a robot and stifle her thinking and acting.

Rather, he wants her thinking and acting to be shared with her husband (as his is to be shared with her), and for her to be willing to submit to his leadership in everything. Just as the church should willingly submit to Christ in all things, and, if it does so, will not find that stifling, demeaning, or stultifying of growth and freedom, so also wives should willingly submit to their husbands in all things, and, if they do so, will not find that stifling, demeaning, or stultifying. Does any of this mean that the husband can rule his wife insensitively? Certainly not! The idea that anyone in authority should “lord it over” those he leads is ruled out by Paul elsewhere (II Corinthians 1:24), just as Peter insists that elders must not lord it over those who are obligated to obey them (I Peter 5:3). Paul takes this for granted. The husband has no authority to speak bitterly against his wife (Colossians 3:19), he certainly has no authority to beat or abuse her. (Paul handles the question of the husband’s misuse of power momentarily in his words to husbands.) The important thing for the wife to know is that she is subject to her husband in everything, that is, that her submission involves all aspects of their relationship.

Note: Many Christian women are heard to complain about preachers and teachers always “jumping on” the woman’s role first. Their complaint is that men need to “get right” on this subject also. In truth, both men and women need to understand what it means to be a godly husband and godly wife, but it is interesting to note that instructions to husbands and wives in the New Testament always focus first on wives and their responsibility to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; I Peter 3:1ff.). If the wife will not submit, the husband cannot lead! Both Paul and Peter reaffirm the role relationship God established by creation before they deal with how men and women should conduct themselves in the relationship. The doctrine (the divinely instituted form) must come first, then the practical application (i.e., how one lives within the relationship). This is an important lesson.

Furthermore, Paul always addresses those under authority before those in authority—wives before husbands, children before parents, and servants before masters (Ephesians 5:22—6:9; Colossians 3:18—4:1). The rationale for the first two of these relationships would seem to be that the divinely instituted relationship is best preserved when the divine order inherent in it is made plain by urging compliance on those under authority first, before addressing those in authority. The apostle may then command those in authority to exercise their authority with loving concern that does not run roughshod over those under authority, thereby tempting them to challenge or resist the divinely established relationship (cf. especially 6:4). Having established the divinely given character of the institution and the God-given roles, Paul then spells out the attitudes with which those in that institution should fulfill their respective roles.

25. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it,. On this backdrop, Paul now addresses husbands. Love appears six times in 5:25-33, and it denotes the husband’s duty to his wife. It is interesting to note that the husband’s role—his headship—was stated in the section addressed to his wife (verse 23), and not in the section addressed to him. In other words, Paul does not tell the husband, “Be head over your wife!” Instead, he commands him twice to love his wife (verses 25,28). The command for the husband to love his wife is illustrated by the analogy of Christ’s love for the church, and by the way one loves

his own body (verse 28), which is by nourishing and cherishing it (verse 29). In this verse, Paul emphasizes the self-giving, self-sacrificing character of the husband's love for his wife: it is to be like the love Christ had and continues to have for the church. It is with this kind of love that the apostle of Christ commands the husband to exercise his headship over his wife in everything.

26. That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Christ loved the church so much that He died for it, that is, He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). In doing so, "He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). When we obey the gospel, which includes believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized, we are added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). In other words, when the penitent believer is baptized, he is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), and into His death (Romans 6:3), where His blood was shed (John 19:34). How does one know this? "By the word," of course: "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (I Peter 1:22,23). This is consistent with Mark 16:15,16, which describes the process of salvation as being (1) a preaching of the gospel (or the word), (2) faith, (3) baptism, and (4) salvation. The "washing of water" clearly refers to baptism (cf. Hebrews 10:22; Titus 3:5), and the necessary conclusion one must make from this is that all the church (the sanctified and cleansed) had been baptized. Since Christ did all this for the church, husbands should be willing to do whatever is good and right for their wives.

27. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. The uniqueness of Christ's redemptive work on behalf of the church cannot be precisely imitated by the husband, but Paul seems to be teaching that just as Christ works to present His church to Himself as a glorious bride in a glorious marriage, so should the husband work to make his wife glorious and their marriage magnificent. The husband's love, like Christ's, was to be beneficial to his wife, just as Christ's love for the church is beneficial to it. Of this love, Chrysostom wrote: "Wouldst thou that thy wife should obey thee as the church obeys Christ? Do thou then care for her, as Christ for the church, even if thou must lay down thy life for her?—shirk not, shouldst thou suffer even this. Thou hast not yet matched all that which Christ hath done. For thou doest this after thou hast already won her, but he sacrificed himself for her that turned away from him and hated him; and when she was thus disposed, he brought her to his feet not by threats, or insults, or terror, or any such thing, but by this great solicitude. So do thou conduct thyself toward that wife of thine... Her that is the partner of thy life, the mother of thy children, the spring of thy joy, thou must not bind by terror and threats, but by love and gentleness."

28. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. Seeing that Christ loved the church so much that he gave Himself up for it, men ought to also love their own wives as they do their own bodies. The love that Paul calls for here is agape—love that considers what is best for the one loved. Only when this kind of love is present can a husband love his wife as his own body. Generally speaking, we want what is best for our own physical bodies. When sick, we seek medical attention. When hot or cold, we seek comfort. When hungry, we obtain food. It is so natural to love ourselves that Christ used this as the standard by which we are to love our neighbor (Matthew 19:19). Paul wants the husband to become one with his wife to the extent that when he loves her, he love himself. Just as all of us who are thinking rationally seek the best for ourselves, the husband who truly loves his wife and is exercising the headship that God has ordained will seek the best for his wife.

29. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. The church is spiritually nourished and cherished by the Lord to the point that nothing can destroy it, not even the gates of hades (Matthew 16:18). When this kind of love is present, all other problems can be solved by both husband and wife.

30. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Before Paul approaches the one flesh concept concerning a husband and wife, as taught in Genesis 2:24, he establishes the Christian's relationship to Christ's body, the church. The "we" refers to Christians and represents members of His body, flesh, and bones. This is a very close relationship to Christ and other members of the body. It serves as a figure of unity, cooperation, concern, and love. This figure is discussed in full detail in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. When Eve was presented to Adam after being made from his side, he said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh

of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23). This same kind of unity and oneness is used to show the closeness of those in Christ’s church.

31. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” After discussing the oneness of members of Christ’s body, Paul returns to the oneness of the husband and wife. At this point, he quotes Genesis 2:24, the first recorded law of marriage. There are three important demands mentioned in this verse for marriage: (1) The man will leave his father and mother, (2) he will be joined to his wife, and (3) together they will become one flesh. To leave his father and mother means he is to begin his own home. The man and woman who leaves father and mother still loves them and respects their faithful teaching, but they must leave to establish their own home. Happiness in marriage cannot be found when one runs back home every time there is a ripple on the sea of marital bliss. Mistakes will be made, but, as a general rule, these should be worked out by the couple as they grow deeper in their love for one another. To be joined to his wife means that they stay together. The Greek word means to “glue upon, glue to, or to join one’s self closely to.” When two pieces of wood are well glued together, the wood will break before the glue-joint does. Likewise, in the marriage bond, the husband or wife should die before the marriage bond breaks.

Becoming one flesh is more than the sexual act. The henosis—the making of two one—is brought about by the total commitment of two personalities, each to the other, in the closest relationship of the flesh, i.e., sexual intercourse. Nevertheless, sexual intercourse alone does not make the henosis. In case of rape and seduction, there is no mutual commitment. In cases of harlotry, the sexual intercourse which was designed by God to be experienced in marriage, as a part of the “one flesh” experience, does not establish an actual henosis, but simply a “one body” relationship (cf. I Corinthians 6:16). What a great concept from God! This is one of the blessings of His creation that man and woman are made that they can become “one flesh.” But, how many married couples really believe this? For example, suppose we were to gather an audience of people and bring before them a healthy man. Then, we ask the audience, “Is it okay to cut this man’s arm off?” Or, “How do you feel about cutting this man’s body in half?” If they were to actually think we were serious, there would be a mob effort to prevent such a thing from happening. However, in the case of a married couple that has become “one flesh,” they can be divided in our society today without much concern at all. In God’s sight, however, He sees a couple as ONE, just as surely as He sees the oneness of an individual body.

32. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Unbeknown to the people of Moses’ day (i.e., “it was a `mystery”), marriage was designed by God from the very beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose—it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday exist between Christ and His church. And now, in the New Testament Age, the apostle Paul reveals this mystery, and it is simply amazing! This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly discover that “Christ and the church” might be a good teaching illustration. No, it was much more fundamental than that. By inspiration, Paul understood that when God designed marriage, He already had Christ and the church in mind. This is one of God’s great purposes in marriage—to picture the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever! If this is so, then the order Paul is writing of here (submission and love) is not accidental or temporary or culturally determined. It is, instead, part of the essence of marriage, part of God’s original plan for a perfect, sinless, harmonious marriage. Therefore, here we have a very powerful argument for the fact that Christlike, loving headship and church-like, willing submission are rooted in creation and in God’s eternal purposes, not just in the passing trends of culture.

33. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Notwithstanding the fact that the original marriage law was intended to show the relationship between Christ and His church, its application to human marriage remains unchanged. The husband MUST love his wife and the wife MUST be in subjection to her husband by respecting his God-given authority.

Note: The traditional family, as defined by secular society, has assumed the husband to be the superior ruler and the wife to be the inferior servant. This is far to the right of what God has ordained in His word. On the other hand, the feminist movement has swung the pendulum far to the left in denying the family structure and roles God has ordained. Let us, as Christians, strive to speak and act “as the oracles of God” (I Peter 4:11), and “not

be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind[s], that [we] may prove [to a lost and dying world] what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Ephesians 6

Children And Parents—6:1-4

(1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: (3) "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (4) And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. The home does not stop with the husband and wife relationship, but is expanded to include children. The first commandment given to Adam and Eve after God made them in His image was "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). In Genesis 4:1, the Bible says, "Adam knew his Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain." Consequently, rules for the home must include both parents and children. As he did in the husband and wife relationship, Paul first addresses the one who is commanded to be in subjection. In this case, it is the child. This obedience is to be done "in the Lord," and when children respond in the Lord, all is well. Elsewhere, Paul wrote, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Colossians 3:20), that is, obeying parents in all things as the Lord has indicated children should (i.e., "in the Lord") is pleasing to Him. It is most unlikely that Paul meant that children were to judge whether or not the things their parents commanded were in harmony with the Lord's will. Most children would not be capable of deciding such things. Simply stated: The duty of the child is to obey. Of course, just as in the case of the wife, the child could refuse to do anything commanded that was contrary to God's will. There is no higher authority than Christ, and all rightful authority ultimately derives from Him. No one has the moral authority to command someone to circumvent God's laws.

2. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:. In this verse, Paul is appealing to the Fifth Commandment (Exodus 20:12), but it is actually the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it. And what is the specific promise? Look at the next verse.

3. "That it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." This promise was twofold: (1) That it may be well with you. Generally speaking, any child that obeys his parents will be spared many troubles and mistakes. He will also be spared much chastisement as well. The law of Moses actually permitted the stoning of a rebellious child (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). This should impress us with the fact that God considers incorrigibility a terrible thing. (2) That you may live long on the earth. This originally referred to the privilege of dwelling in the land of Canaan (cf. Deuteronomy 5:33; 6:2; 11:8,9; 28:36). Of course, this promise has a fulfillment in the present times. The child who obeys his parents will probably have better health, safer habits, wiser ways, and certainly the blessing of God to lengthen and enrich his life. Just think of all the children who have dissipated their lives because they have refused to obey their parents.

4. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. Paul gave the headship to the husband, and he now gives the responsibility of discipline to the father. This, no doubt, includes the mother, but all under the headship of the father. Parents who are unreasonably strict with their children often drive them from home into early, unwise marriages, juvenile gangs, or into the ranks of the hardcore incorrigibles. No parent should tease or repress children until they are in a rage. Foolishness is indeed bound up in the heart of a child (Proverbs 22:15). Consequently, the rod of correction is needed (Proverbs 13:24; 29:15,17), and a child will not long resent just punishment. Even godly parents are not perfect and will occasionally make mistakes with their children. Children who are loved will not hold this against their parents. But, unjust and continuous abuse (corporeal or verbal) inevitably leads to exasperation and discouragement and will be avoided by godly parents. Training means that parents are under divine mandate to train, educate, and chasten their children. Children are not just ours to enjoy and caress, but to train for this life and the life to come. Admonition refers to exhortation, urging, and warning. We need to teach our children not only the truth, but to urge them to live by it. Parents will do well to notice the attitude of entreaty and exhortation found in Proverbs 5:1ff. and 6:1ff.

Servants And Masters—6:5-9

(5) Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; (6) not with eyeservice, as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will

of God from the heart, (7) with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, (8) knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether {he is} a slave or free. (9) And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

5. Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;. The servants referred to in these verses were bond-servants or slaves (cf. Colossians 3:22-25). Even though Paul may have disliked the concept of masters and slaves, such was a fact of life in the world in which he lived. Therefore, he felt obligated to give spiritual instruction to those in such positions. This is analogous to the way Moses is represented by Jesus as having given instruction about what a man must do when he divorces his wife (i.e., “because of the hardness of your hearts”) without thereby indicating, as those who asked the question were implying, that Moses approved of or encouraged divorce (cf. Matthew 19:7,8). Furthermore, Paul elsewhere indicates that a slave could properly become free (I Corinthians 7:21), therefore, he does not treat slavery as a divinely ordained institution, as he does that of husband and wife and parent and child. Since many households had parents, children, and slaves, he continues his teaching on having a relationship that will please God.

The civil law of that time gave masters authority over their slaves, and slaves were legally bound to obey. When one became a Christian, there may have been the feeling that one was no longer under obligation to obey his master. Paul teaches that the gospel of Christ does not automatically cancel slavery, but it does completely change the estimation of the slaves in the master’s eyes. To the Romans, slaves were generally looked upon only as things. To the Christian master, they became people, and even brothers in the Lord, if the slaves were Christians. Also, Christianity changed the slave’s estimation of his master. The service his master required became an opportunity to serve Christ, and to demonstrate the power of Christ in his heart. Lest he should be displeasing to his master the Christian served with the usual “fear and trembling,” but he served even more earnestly lest he should be displeasing to his Lord, who was expecting him to be an obedient slave. (Although slavery has now been outlawed, the obligations of slave and master cannot longer be specifically obeyed. Nevertheless, in all of our earthly relationships, Christ must be the standard of authority. Consequently, one ought to recognize that the general principles articulated in the days of slavery are applicable to the employer/employee relationship.)

6. Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,. Paul does not stop with asking slaves to obey, but specifies for them to obey “as servants of Christ” and “fearing God” (Colossians 3:22). With Christ as the standard, they will obey even if the master is not kind and good (cf. I Peter 2:18,19). With Christ as their model, Christian slaves will obey when the master is watching, and when he is not watching. This service will not be affected in any way—it will be absolutely genuine!

7. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,. See the comments that are made on the next verse.

8. Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Those who serve with eyeservice, as men-pleasers only, will work when the master is watching, but when they can get by with it they will engage in fraud, laziness, deceit, etc. This is not true of the Christian servant. They “Have regard for good things in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17), and they follow the rule: “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance” (Colossians 3:23,24). The Bible says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10). This fact is true whether one is a slave or free!

9. And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Masters are under obligation to exercise the same benevolent, conscientious acts toward his slaves that Christ requires of the slave toward the master. He must give up threatening his slaves, knowing that the Lord of both slave and master is in heaven on His throne, and in the judgment that Christ shall conduct upon His servants, He will respect no man’s earthly rank or title, but will reward or punish everyone according to his deeds. Those who are obedient and faithful to the Lord will be saved, but those who rebel in sin will be lost (Matthew 25:32-34). (The phrase “giving up threatening” carries the

idea of moderating threats, relaxing threats, or omitting threats. Threats often produce more terror and hurt more deeply than stripes and lashings.)

The Panoply Of God—6:10-20

(10) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual {hosts} of wickedness in the heavenly {places}. (13) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (18) praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints — (19) and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, (20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The word “finally” lets the reader know that Paul is getting ready to close this letter, and now desires to leave them something very special. In being “strong in the Lord,” Christians must not trust their own strength. Instead, they must rely upon “the power of His might.” God’s power is the only true resistance against the devil. This power is in the “panoply” or “whole armor” of God. Without it, they have no chance of winning against satan.

11. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. In describing the Christian’s spiritual panoply, the apostle Paul uses the Roman soldier as an analogy. Those of his day would immediately be able to understand the effect of such an analogy because they were accustomed to seeing the Roman soldiers in their midst. For us to get a better appreciation of what Paul is saying, it will be necessary to explore the actual panoply of the Roman foot soldier. We will do this starting in verse 14. In this verse, Paul makes it clear from the very beginning that protection is not afforded one who simply puts on one piece of the panoply—he must put it all on. If just one part is missing, this is the place where the enemy will strike. Paul also makes it clear that the foe we fight against is not an unskilled enemy—he is deceitful and will use every trick in the book. The devil is a murderer, without truth, a liar, and the father of lies (John 8:44), full of deceit, an enemy of righteousness, and a perverter of the right way (Acts 13:10), who can transform himself into an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14), and goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). Again, without the whole armor of God, one will not be able to stand against him, which brings up a very important point: Christians are called upon, not to run or retreat from the devil, but rather to stand and fight.

12. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. This passage makes it clear that behind the physical confrontations we experience with our fellow human beings, there are unseen spiritual hosts of evil at work. There is an ongoing confrontation between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. The powers which are opposed to us, and against us, and making war on us are the very highest order of evil angels, those with great power, those who rule over the idolatrous and sinful men in this world of darkness. They are a wicked spiritual host that inhabits the heavenlies, that is, the regions of the air, from which they continually assault us and seek to get us to commit sin. This battle is unseen but real. If we do not guard our hearts, satan has the ability to fill them with evil thoughts (Acts 5:3). If we do not “gird up the loins of our minds,” then satan can blind our eyes and lead us astray (II Corinthians 4:4; 11:3). The Bible warns us that through some “snare,” satan can take us captive to do “his will” (II Timothy 2:26). This snare is evidently the devil’s allurements (temptation) to do evil. Of course, this does not teach us that satan can force us to do his bidding against our own free wills, only that if we are not careful he can fool us or snare us through the “deceitfulness of sin” and the “deceivableness of unrighteousness” (Hebrews 3:13; II Thessalonians 2:10). Finally, the Bible clearly informs us that Christians, even in the 20th century, must not be ignorant of satan’s “devices” (II Corinthians 2:11). Although we are told to put on the armor, as if to fight on a battlefield, we are told that our struggle is also a “wrestling.” No armor is worn by wrestlers. Consequently, there is a mixing of metaphors in these verses, but correctly so. We are engaged in a battle, and all that is involved in this metaphor is important to understanding our spiritual battle with the forces of evil. We are also involved in a close, personal

struggle with the forces of evil that is best described as wrestling. The close, hand to hand combat of the ancient battlefield could very well be described as wrestling, and is, therefore, not out of place in this verse.

13. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. This is the second time Paul tells the Ephesians to “take up” or “put on” the whole armor of God. However, the first time they were not fully aware of its importance. After giving a powerful description of the enemy, he says, “take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.” Soldiers do not do battle every day, but the day of battle is the day of testing. A soldier who, on the day of battle, had not “taken up” his full armor, would be unprepared to stand against and prevail over the enemy. Consequently, the “evil day” under discussion in this verse is the day of severe trial or testing, the critical moments in our lives when the devil and his sinister horde assault us fiercely. Seeing as one never knows when these crises will occur, one needs to be ready always. When the Christian makes all the preparations God has specified, then he will be able to “stand” and prevail against him, for the Bible tells us that if we resist satan, he will flee from us (James 4:7).

14. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,. Truth here is not objective but subjective and is not, therefore, the Word of God, but truthfulness. The Christian is to be sincere and non-hypocritical. He puts away lying (Ephesians 4:25) and learns to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) as he demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit in his life (Ephesians 5:9). Paul is allegorizing the thick belt the Roman soldier placed around his waist. To this belt the soldier attached his dagger and sword. Furthermore, the breastplate was held in place by being attached to this belt. In addition, leather straps reaching to the knees hung from this belt and protected the soldier from sword strokes to that part of his body. What Paul was saying was that honesty and truthfulness are foundational in our fight against satan and his evil horde. The apostle Peter taught this same principle when he wrote that the very first thing a person needed to add to his faith was virtue or moral integrity (II Peter 1:5). According to Peter, moral integrity must precede a further knowledge of God’s Word because without it one will never apply the truth of God’s Word to his life. One cannot defeat satan and his horde without first being honest.

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness,. Righteousness in an ethical sense is here meant (Ephesians 4:24; 5:9). In order to defeat the enemy, the Christian must lead a devout and holy life as he presents the members of his body as “instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:13; 14:17). The breastplate was a very important part of the Roman soldier’s battle gear. It protected his vital organs, particularly his heart, from serious injury. If we think in terms of the heart as representing the mind, as the Bible sometimes does, then we understand how the breastplate of righteousness protects the Christian soldier from the arrows of satan. Furthermore, awards the Roman soldier won were attached to the breastplate in medallion form for all to see. Likewise, when one looks at the Christian today, he ought to see the many medallions that reflect the righteous acts of the faithful Christian soldier. Clearly, then, unless the Christian puts on “the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” (II Corinthians 6:7), and walks worthy of the Christian army into which he has been called (Ephesians 4:1), he can have no real defense against satan.

15. And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;. This is perhaps a difficult metaphor to understand. Just what Paul had in mind cannot be understood without some knowledge of the Roman soldier’s footwear. The Roman soldier wore a thick-soled sandal with hobnails embedded on the underside for traction. The sandal was laced to the foot and lower leg with leather straps. During the winter months these straps were tied around leather leggings for warmth. Shod like this, the Roman soldier was able to quickly traverse various kinds of terrain. The Roman legions were notorious for their ability to quick-march fifty miles in one day. Surprising their enemy by being where it was thought they could not be, the legions were prepared for battle on any kind of terrain, whether it happened to be the rough and rocky highlands or the hot and dry deserts. When the command came to stand and hold, the legionnaire was able to do so partly because of the traction he could get with his hobnailed sandals. In other words, the Roman sandal was both an offensive and defensive weapon. Likewise, the Christian soldier, having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, is always ready to give an answer to every man that asks a reason for the hope that is in him (I Peter 3:15). Just as the Roman soldiers were ready for any set of circumstances that came their way, Christian soldiers, likewise, are “anxious for nothing” and know that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard [their] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Paul is alluding to the large shield used by the Roman foot soldier of his day. This shield was not the small

round one used by the cavalry; it was, instead, four feet long, two feet wide and resembled a door. It was constructed of wood and wicker over which animal skins were stretched and the edges were studded with iron to protect the leather. The shield, in addition to providing the normal protection one would expect from a shield, was designed specifically to stop and extinguish the flaming projectiles of the enemy. The leather was stretched over the wicker so as to provide a space between it and the wood underneath. When the fiery arrows and darts passed through the leather and stuck to the wood underneath, they were extinguished. It was this very effect to which Paul was referring. In the devil's quiver there are all types of fiery missiles. The apostle mentions tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, etc. All of these can start the fires of doubt, lust, greed, vanity, envy, etc. But when the Christian soldier takes up his shield (his belief or conviction or trust) he is able to quench all the fiery darts of Satan and his army. The Christian knows that God is able to deliver him from every temptation (II Peter 2:9) and will always be faithful in that He will not allow him to be tempted beyond what he is able to endure and with every temptation will also make a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13).

As we contemplate the strength and power God has designed into this shield, we are reminded of a battle technique used so effectively by the Roman soldiers. Upon approaching the enemy's ramparts, the Romans would be pelted with every kind of missile the enemy had at his disposal. In such circumstances, the soldiers were commanded to form the "movement of the tortoise." This was accomplished by closing ranks and locking shields in front, on the sides and over the top. The shields had hooks at the top, bottom and sides that allowed them to be locked together. When in the formation of the turtle the soldiers were practically invulnerable. Consequently, when spiritual soldiers of the cross lock their shields of faith together in spiritual combat, they are, as the apostle Paul wrote, "more than conquerors through Him who loved [them]" (Romans 8:37). He went on to say, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

The Christian soldier who steps out on the battlefield without his shield is committing spiritual suicide. This very foolish and hurtful process is described in I Timothy 6:9-10, which reads: "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Yes, it is unfortunate that there are Christian soldiers who are pierced through with Satan's fiery darts. Wounded and dying they cry out that the Lord has not been faithful to them. On the contrary, it is they who have not been faithful to Him. It is they who have failed to take up the shield of faith. The fault is with them, not God.

17. And take the helmet of salvation,. The Roman soldier's helmet in Paul's time was very different than the skullcap type that is usually depicted by modern artists. The Roman soldier of the First Century and thereafter wore a helmet that flared out on the sides and back to protect the neck area as well as the head. If the soldier got careless or became weary and let his guard down, this helmet protected him from a sword stroke that would have otherwise been fatal. Likewise, the Christian who, either through carelessness or weariness, lets his guard down is still protected from the death blows of the enemy. As Christian soldiers we sometimes make serious mistakes (in other words, in a weakened state of faith, we sin), but isn't it wonderful to know that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9)? Although our shield of faith is the greatest defensive weapon we have in our entire panoply, in that it is able to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy, it is heartening to know that even when we fail to use it as God has designed it, we are still protected. The blow of the enemy still hurts and we may even be knocked to our knees, but the enemy's death stroke does not kill. Praise God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

In many instances the Roman soldiers placed some kind of plumage on the tops of their helmets, and when observed from a distance by the enemy they looked to be seven feet tall. Consequently, many adversaries were known to have fled just at the approach of the Roman legions. Frankly, with the panoply of God firmly in place, it would not surprise us one bit if our enemy was sometimes tempted to flee at our approach. In I Thessalonians 5:8, Paul refers to this helmet as the "hope of salvation." Realizing that the helmet of salvation protects us from our own weaknesses and carelessness, we confidently enter the affray knowing that we are going to be victorious with God's help (cf. Romans 8:14-17). And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The Spanish gladius, a two-edged sword which was used by the Romans during Paul's lifetime, was two feet long and two and one half inches wide, and was designed primarily as a thrusting weapon. With it, the Roman

legions were successful in conquering the world. A great deal of skill was needed to master the gladius sword. It has been reported that the Roman authorities thought it needful for their soldiers to train for up to five years before they ever saw combat. Often the sword the soldier practiced with was twice as heavy as the one he would actually use in combat. Developing the strength to wield the heavier practice sword enabled the soldier to use the gladius sword very effectively. He also had to be broken from the natural human tendency to slash with the sword. As we have already mentioned, the gladius sword was designed for thrusting and it was this use of the sword that made it so deadly effective. Most of the armies the Romans fought against used curved swords designed primarily for slashing. Consequently, when the enemy soldier lifted his arm to slash with his sword, he left himself vulnerable under his arm where there was no protection from his breastplate. As the enemy soldier swung with all his might, the Roman soldier would block his swing with his shield as he stepped to the left where he would thrust forward with his short sword and ram it into the armpit of his opponent. Without practice the Roman soldier was destined to fail; but with it he conquered every enemy.

Likewise, “the word of God,” which is actually “sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12), requires practice if it is going to be used effectively. Therefore, in his instructions to Timothy, Paul wrote: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15). The skillful use of God’s Word “belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). When used skillfully, the sword of the Spirit pierces the heart (cf. Acts 2:37; 7:54). In order to defeat the enemy, the Christian soldier must learn to use the sword of the Spirit expertly.

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all saints—. Although some think Paul is still using the military metaphor of the soldier’s appeal to his General, we are of the opinion that Paul is now referring to something not available to the carnal soldier. The Christian soldier, unlike the Roman soldier, has at his disposal a means whereby he can continuously communicate (through Christ, of course) with the General (viz. God, the Father). Understanding the seriousness of his warfare, the Christian soldier is always (not just on special occasions) involved in prayer and supplication in harmony with the truths taught in God’s Word (i.e., “in the Spirit”). As he fights the good fight of faith, the Christian soldier petitions for the fulfillment of definite needs with the understanding that the One to whom he appeals is not just interested and concerned, but loving too.

Praying for the fulfillment of one’s own needs, as well as the needs of “all saints,” requires that one must be acquainted with the specific situations that are taking place in the world today. Part of our problem today is that many Christians are uninformed as to what is happening and consequently they are not praying frequently and knowledgeably. Unalert or indifferent to what is happening in the world, their country, their town, their church, and their home, they have a very restricted prayer life. We must remember that if there is any fault it is not with God. We must repent and pray to God for forgiveness and that He keep us from temptation.

19. And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,. Paul’s request is not selfish! So many prayers are: “Lord, give me!” It is, of course, not wrong to ask for personal things, but our prayers must certainly not stop there. Paul felt the weight of responsibility of preaching the gospel (I Corinthians 9:16). However, it was not just enough to preach the gospel, he wanted to speak it “boldly.” Why? Because that which had been a mystery needed to be revealed. The world needed to know that Jesus died, was buried, and arose from the dead so that both Jews and Gentiles might be saved and be ONE in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). The gospel to the Gentiles was not a popular subject, and it took courage to go against the opposition of the Jews. Thus, Paul felt the need of prayers so that he could open his mouth and speak boldly. Today, society is more interested in entertainment, sports, and materialism than the gospel, but this must not keep Christians from spreading the “power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16), for the gospel represents lost humanity’s only hope in eternity.

20. For which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Paul, as we have already learned, is writing this letter from prison. He is in prison not for murder, theft, or insurrection, but because he dared preach the gospel of Christ. He asks that the Ephesians pray for him that he might “speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

A Gracious Greeting—6:21-24

(21) But that you also may know my affairs {and} how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; (22) whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and {that} he may comfort your hearts. (23) Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (24) Grace {be} with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

21. But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;. This verse reminds us once again of Paul's great concern for others. He believed that these brethren would be deeply concerned about him being in prison, therefore, he sent word by Tychicus. What a great recommendation Paul gave this man! He is described as a beloved brother who was faithful in the Lord. Every faithful preacher of the gospel should desire this kind of description. Tychicus is mentioned in other places and was of great value to Paul and his work as a "faithful minister," "fellow servant," and messenger (Acts 20:4; Colossians 4:7; II Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12).

22. Whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts. Surely, he was able to bring great comfort to the Ephesians, since he was faithful to Paul and the Lord.

23. Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (24) Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. Paul closes this wonderful letter with four of his favorite words: peace, love, faith, and grace.

Note: Paul did not fail in his mission, and neither must we. Like Paul, ultimately, victory is ours. With the full armor of God, we know that we are "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:17) and that we are "more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). As such, we are confident that "neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38–39). In other words, we know we have no excuse for failing to win the battles of life. By faith, we know we can do everything the Lord has determined that we should do (cf. Philippians 4:13). By faith, we know that "those who are with us are more than those who are with [our enemy]" (II Kings 6:16).