

# Triennial Torah Study – 4<sup>th</sup> Year 13/04/2013



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

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

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| <b>Deut 13</b> | <b>1 Chron 12-13</b> |  | <b>Phillip 3-4</b> |
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## **A Dreamer of Dreams (Deuteronomy 13)**

Moses continues warning against the danger of pagan worship. God commanded that everyone who would try to introduce Israel to the worship of other gods had to be killed— including one's brother, son, daughter, wife or close friend—"so all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you" (Deuteronomy 13:6-11). Today, the death penalty is not being carried out, of course, by spiritual Israel—the Church. Nevertheless, the principle of spiritual and, if need be, physical separation from wrong influences still applies.

Christ clearly told His disciples: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of

Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37-38).

Christ expects His disciples to choose between Him and their relatives when it comes to conflict in worship and true Christian living. We are to leave every form of paganism, and we are not to allow anyone to entice us to return to it.

In addition, Israel was admonished to not be deceived even by a prophet or a dreamer whose prophecies or dreams came true—if his goal was to influence others to worship pagan gods (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Rather, such a prophet was to be killed too. Isaiah later gives us the way to discern a false prophet or teacher: "To the law and to the testimony [i.e., Holy Scripture]! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Sometimes false prophets will arise, prophesying events that do come to pass so as to "test" us in order to "know" whether we really love God with all our heart and soul (Deuteronomy 13:3). In fact, in a few years from now, a powerful religious figure will appear on the world scene, called the "lawless one" or "false prophet," who will perform "signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Satan will give him the power to do so; and by those signs he will deceive the multitudes (Revelation 19:20; see our free booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*). Also, at that time, "false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24). Therefore, signs and wonders are no proof that the person performing them is from God. Yet, unless we have received the "love of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10) and are seriously committed to God's way of life, we too can become deceived by those mighty signs, believing that, because of them, the religious message of the "prophet" or "dreamer" must be believed—and followed.

## **1 Chronicles 12**

David's Harem Grows; Alliance with Phoenicia and a Royal Palace (1 Chronicles 14; 2 Samuel 5:11-25; 1 Chronicles 3:5-9; Psalm 30)

As time draws on, David's kingdom increases in fame throughout the region due to God's blessing and unification of all Israel. But again, one of David's weaknesses is exposed in that he takes to himself yet more wives. The account in 1 Chronicles 3:5-9 lists the children born to David in Jerusalem. Four sons are born by Bathsheba (including Solomon). Nine sons are born to his other wives. There are also other sons and daughters born to David's concubines.

Hiram, King of Tyre, a powerful city-state on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel and center of the Phoenician Empire, shows great respect by sending builders and materials to help build a palace for David at Jerusalem. This demonstrates David's growing prominence—that the ruler of the Phoenician Empire, which dominated ancient maritime commerce, would seek to cement an alliance with Israel through such projects. The Philistines, on the other hand, regarded David's strength as a threat to their nation. Here, David's real strength is shown as he once again seeks God first for instruction in regard to the Philistines. After defeating the Philistines, David burns the idols that are left behind. Once again, God is with him in defeating his enemies.

### **1 Chronicles 13**

Psalm 30 is written by David in his dedication of the palace built for him in Jerusalem. In these verses, David recounts both the dark times and the bright times. This chapter can be a testimony for us today. All of us have experienced troubling times in our lives in which we cried out to God for His intervention. Though we never deserve it, and cannot earn it, God has constantly shown us His endless grace and mercy. Individually, it would be helpful to record some of our own trials and remember how God has always delivered us when we have sought Him, as David did, with all our heart. Can God look upon each of us and say, "I have found \_\_\_\_\_ a man/woman after My own heart, who will do all My will"? We have a great advantage today, as we can strive to emulate the positive qualities of a man like King David and also learn not to repeat his mistakes. Let's follow the example of David and give thanks to God forever!

### **Philippians 3**

All For Christ—3:1-11

(1) Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you {is} not tedious, but for you {it is} safe. (2) Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! (3) For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, (4) though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: (5) circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, {of} the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; (6) concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. (7) But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. (8) But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which {is} from the law, but that which {is} through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (10) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, (11) if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. He encourages them to rejoice in the Lord. "In the Lord" marks the true ground for rejoicing and is to be contrasted with "confidence in the flesh"

(verse 3). For me to write the same things to you {is} not tedious, but for you {it is} safe. The

“same things” to which Paul is referring is probably found in 1:27-30. There he warns the Philippians to stand against opponents. Now he issues the same warnings against another set of opponents. The word translated “tedious” also means “slothful.” In other words, Paul was not being slothful by repeating the same things over and over again, but was doing so for their own good. He wasn’t just an old negative preacher, born in the kickative mood; he was, instead, a conscientious servant who was not going to fail to warn the Philippians concerning the problems they faced.

2. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!. These are very strong words addressed toward the Judaizers. The Jews referred to the Gentiles as “dogs” and Paul hurls this name back at them. As evil workers, their motives and actions are base. They are the kind of people who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18). Furthermore, their circumcision (peritome), something the Judaizers took great pride in and were trying to bind on the Gentiles, was nothing other than mutilation (katatome). Changing the prefix of their favorite word, Paul stigmatized these people as the “mutilation party.” They were not the true circumcision at all!
3. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,. In the Old Testament, circumcision was a symbol of faithfulness. The Judaizers were arguing that in order to be faithful to God one needed to be circumcised in his flesh. Paul is saying that under Christ circumcision of the flesh has nothing to do with one’s faithfulness to the Lord. In the New Testament, faithfulness is to be judged solely by one’s reliance on Christ. Consequently, those who are obedient to Christ are the true circumcision or faithful. This expression is used in other places: “For he is not a Jew who {is one} outwardly, nor {is} that circumcision {which is} outward in the flesh; but {he is} a Jew who {is one} inwardly, and circumcision {is that} of the heart, in the Spirit, {and} not in the letter; whose praise {is} not from men but from God” (Romans 2:28,29).
4. Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:. Here Paul argues that if anyone with a Jewish background had a right to have confidence in the flesh, it was him. Nevertheless, he disclaimed all such confidence (verses 3,7), and every Judaizer was bound to do the same (cf. II Corinthians 11:22,23).
5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, {of} the tribe of Benjamin,. The fact that he was circumcised on the eighth day in strict conformity to the law shows that he was neither a heathen or Ishmaelite, but was born of law-observing Jewish parents. (Converts to Judaism were circumcised in maturity and Ishmaelites in their thirteenth year.) He was a descendent of the patriarch Israel, or Jacob. Therefore, he could trace his genealogy back as far as any other Jew. The tribe of which he was a member was not one of the tribes that apostatized in the time of Rehoboam, but maintained its allegiance to Judah. A Hebrew of the Hebrews;. Even though Paul was a Jew, he could have been a child of Greek-speaking Jews. But this was not the case. His parents were Hebrews who had retained their native tongue and customs (cf. II Corinthians 11:22; Acts 6:1). Concerning the law, a Pharisee;. Paul had been a member of what he called “the strictest sect of our religion” (Acts 26:5).

6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;. Paul had not just been a follower of Judaism, but he was very zealous in persecuting those who he thought believed and taught things contrary to the law of Moses. Concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Paul was not saying he had not violated the law and therefore was not a sinner; to do so would be a contradiction of what he taught elsewhere (Romans 3:9,10,19,20,23; Galatians 3:10,11; 3:12). It seems evident then that he is saying that his observance of the law was so strict that in the eyes of men he was held blameless.
7. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Having found the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), he now counted all the things associated with his Jewish heritage as loss.
8. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,. Not only did he consider all things associated with his Jewish heritage as loss, but also all other things that could come between him and his Lord, such as material possessions, the esteem of his fellow men, family acceptance, etc. Everything pales in significance to his relationship with Jesus Christ his Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ. Not only did he consider all as loss for the knowledge of Christ, he actually lost them. When he embraced Christianity, he gave up or lost all things that stood between him and his Lord. The word translated “rubbish” can mean excrement or what is thrown away from the table. Everything he gave up he considered so worthless as to be considered “dung,” as this word is translated in the KJV.
9. And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which {is} from the law, but that which {is} through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;. Any righteousness that Paul had as a Jew (through the perfect keeping of the law) was imaginary. But now, in connection with Christ, he had a righteousness that was given to him by God as a result of his faith in Christ (Romans 3:22).
10. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,. The knowledge of Christ that Paul is here writing of is not mere intellectual recognition. It is, instead, a personal, intimate, trusting, loving relationship with the living Christ. The power of His resurrection probably speaks to its redemptive effect. By His resurrection He was made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). As such, He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). As Jesus suffered for righteousness’ sake while on earth, all who know Him, walk with Him, and follow His example will also suffer for righteousness’ sake (cf. 1:21; 4:13; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 2:14). This is what Paul is referring to when he mentions the “fellowship of His sufferings.” The death Paul wanted to be conformed to was the Lord’s pouring Himself out unto death, which was comprised of an entire earthly life of denying self in order to serve others.
11. If, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Paul’s goal was the “resurrection from the dead.” Obviously, the apostle is not referring to the general resurrection of all the dead, but to the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life (cf. Luke 20:35; 14:14).

### **Pressing Toward The Goal—3:12-16**

(12) Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. (13) Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing {I do}, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, (14) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (15) Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. (16)

Nevertheless, to {the degree} that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

12. Not that I have already attained,. Salvation in heaven is in the future. True, there is a sense in which we are saved now (from past sins), but eternal salvation is something yet to be obtained. (The idea of “Once saved, always saved,” is simply not taught in the Bible.) Or am already perfected;. Paul says he had not yet reached a state of perfection. Only when he receives the crown of righteousness will he have been made perfect (II Timothy 4:7,8). (The idea that one would be perfectly holy in this life is not taught in the Bible.) But I press on,. The verb “press” in the Greek indicates the intense action of a runner in a stadium. Paul was intensely running toward a fixed goal. That I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. The Lord seized Paul to serve Him and go to heaven. Paul was determined to seize that for which the Lord seized him.

13. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;. Again, he repeats that he had not yet laid hold of all those things for which the Lord had laid hold on him, but in order to attain it, he made it the one supreme end of his life. But one thing {I do}, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,. Forgetting all earthly aspirations, honors, and desires, he pressed ahead to obtain his goal.

14. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. With heaven as his goal and eternal life his prize, Paul pressed onward and upward: “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1,2).

15. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind;. To be intensely engaged in the spiritual race is the mind-set of which Paul here writes. This, then, is the sign of a mature Christian. And if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Paul has just articulated the principle (i.e., we are still far from perfect, but in Christ we ought to be striving for perfection). In the meantime, it seems that he is saying that if there is some minor differences on the specific application of this principle to a particular situation, then, as one continues to mature in Christ, the correct application will be revealed. The ability to make the correct application is called “wisdom.” Wisdom comes from a study of God’s word (cf. Proverbs 8:33; 9:8; II Timothy 3:15; Colossians 3:16) and prayer (James 1:5). Either way, the revealing of the right application is from God.

16. Nevertheless, to {the degree} that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Whatever we have already learned, let us walk in light of that knowledge. We must remember that our religion does not consist so much of precept upon precept, as it does upon the application of various principles

taught throughout the Scriptures. Spiritual maturity is a process, and the more spiritually mature we are, the more enlightened we become, and the more enlightened we become, the more spiritually mature we are—“For everyone who partakes {only} of milk {is} unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food 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 5:13,14). If this is fully understood, then there will be less problems among Christians. What do we mean? Sometimes folks think they know more than they do and, therefore, think they are spiritually mature. Consequently, they make their conscience the standard for judging everyone else. In doing so, they are proving themselves to be “babes” who are still thinking carnally (cf. I Corinthians 3:1-5). Speaking to the spiritually mature Christian in Romans 14, as he does here, Paul warned against receiving a spiritually immature Christian into the fellowship if he engages in disputes over doubtful things (Romans 14:1). He then goes on to write of the “law of liberty” that is to be applied by the mature Christian. Let each of us who thinks himself to be mature spiritually be determined to learn all the truth we can, weigh all the difficulties, look upon every side of the question, teach others what we learn, sacrifice no truth, but be patient and forbearing in teaching it, and give the other person time to grow or mature. This, we think, is what Paul is teaching in these passages.

Our Citizenship In Heaven—3:17-21 (17) Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. (18) For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, {that they are} the enemies of the cross of Christ: (19) whose end {is} destruction, whose god {is their} belly, and {whose} glory {is} in their shame – who set their mind on earthly things. (20) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

17. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. Paul and others, who imitate Christ (I Corinthians 11:1), are themselves to be imitated. This is not said in any self-asserting, self-confident, egotistical spirit. However, neither is he filled with false modesty. He recognized that to the extent that he and others (like Timothy and

Epaphroditus) patterned their lives after Christ’s it was worthy of imitation (cf. I Corinthians 2:16). What a wonderful learning experience it is for us to have those around us who are imitators of Christ who we can, in turn, imitate.

18. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, {that they are} the enemies of the cross of Christ: Paul appears to be writing of those Peter mentions in II Peter 2:1-22 and Jude identifies in Jude 1-16. These kinds of folks are not to be imitated.

The message of the cross is humiliation. The gospel calls on all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) and humbly submit to Jesus Christ as Lord of one’s life. In contrast, these enemies of the cross “allure through the lusts of the flesh” (II Peter 2:18). Theirs’s was a feelgood religion that promised liberty but actually retangled them and those that heard them into bondage to sin (II Peter 2:19). No doubt, the pagan philosophies prevalent at that time provided the “great swelling words of emptiness” (II Peter 2:18) that deluded these people and their converts. Paul’s sorrow about all this may have been in the fact that these terrorists sheltered themselves under his own teaching about the liberty we have in Christ and the superiority of the gospel of Christ over the law of Moses.

These, Peter wrote, had wrested some things Paul had written in his epistles to their own destruction (II Peter 3:15-17).

19. Whose end {is} destruction,. The unrepentant end result of these “ungodly men” who turn “the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4) is the destruction that consists of eternal misery in hell. Whose god {is their} belly,. If Paul is using “belly” literally, then he has in mind gluttony. Probably, he is using this term metaphorically, which would include gluttony and every other appetite driven sin (e.g., fornication, drunkenness, etc., cf. Galatians 5:19-21; II Timothy 3:2-4). And {whose} glory {is} in their shame – who set their mind on earthly things. Instead of being ashamed of their carnality, these “lovers of themselves” (II Timothy 3:2) were so depraved and perverted that they took pride in their shameful conduct (cf. I Corinthians 5:1,2). In minding earthly things, they had given themselves over to “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (I John 2:16). We are reminded of Romans 8:5,6, which says: “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those {who live} according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded {is} death, but to be spiritually minded {is} life and peace.”

20. For our citizenship is in heaven,. In contrast to those who set their minds on earthly things, the spiritually minded set their things on the things that are above (Colossians 3:1,2). The commonwealth to which we belong, and this is the meaning of the word translated “citizenship,” is the New Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:26; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 11:13-16; 12:22; Revelation 3:12; 21:3). As citizens of this heavenly commonwealth, we, as resident aliens here on earth, must be constantly moving spiritually toward our heavenly home. This, as Paul has already pointed out to us, is the goal of every maturing Christian. From which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,. In John 14:2,3, our Lord said: “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if {it were} not {so}, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, {there} you may be also.” Therefore, the true Christian eagerly awaits the Lord’s return with great expectation. The goal toward which we are all eagerly running (eternal salvation in heaven) is dependent upon the Lord’s return (Hebrews 9:28). Therefore, with great anticipation we are “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

21. Who will transform our lowly body. Paul is referring to what the Lord will do to those who are raised to eternal life. Our earthly mortal body that goes down to the grave he calls our “lowly body” or, as some other translations say, “vile body” or “the body of our humiliation.” It is this body that is subject to all the earthly woes of weariness, pain, sickness, sorrow, tears, sin, etc., and finally the corruption of death. The fleshly body must be turned into a spiritual body so that our immortal souls will have a fit habitation in which to live in the spiritual realm of heaven. Such a transformed body will be free from all the woes that we are subject to during our earthly state (Revelation 21:4; cf. I Corinthians 15:35-58; II Corinthians 5:1-5). That it may be conformed to His glorious body,. The resurrected body of the faithful Christian will be conformed to the Lord’s glorified body. Now, we don’t know just what this body will be like, but when the Lord returns for us, we shall be like Him (I John 3:2). According to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. The word translated “working” is used only of superhuman power, whether of God or the devil. By virtue of the fact that the Lord is able to bring all things in

subjection to Himself, He has the power to raise us incorruptibly, conforming us to the body of His glory (cf. I Corinthians 15:27,28).

#### **Philippians 4**

(1) Therefore, my beloved and longed for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

1. Therefore, my beloved and longed for brethren, my joy and crown,. This is the concluding remark of the entire third chapter, and not just verses 17-21. These are not words of flattery, but sincere love. They are similar to I Thessalonians 2:19,20, where Paul says: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy." The word translated "crown" is *stephanos*, and signifies the wreath worn by the victor, not the king. So stand fast in the Lord, beloved. With these words, Paul is encouraging the Philippians to be faithful. Again, he calls them his beloved.

Be United, Joyful, And In Prayer – 4:2-7 (2) I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. (3) And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names (are) in the Book of Life. (4) Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (5) Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord (is) at hand. (6) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

2. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. These two women, as indicated by verse 3, had been quite energetic in the work of the gospel. Unfortunately, there were some long standing differences between these two. It was not doctrinal, as Paul did not take sides, but he instructed them both to be of the same mind in the Lord (cf. notes on 2:2).

3. And I urge you also, true companion,. Who does Paul have in mind here? Who is this true companion or "genuine yokefellow"? Some have suggested that Paul is addressing this statement to Epaphroditus, the bearer of this epistle (2:25), or to Timothy, the co-author of the letter. When one takes into consideration that Euodia means "long journey" and Syntyche means "happy chance," it seems more likely that Paul has in mind a member of the Philippian church named Syzygus, which means "true companion." Help these women. The Greek word for "help" literally means "to take hold together with one." Like Barnabas, whose name means "son of consolation," Paul believed that Syzygus was one who lived up to his name. Paul wanted him to be a true friend to these two women by helping them to settle their difference once and for all. Who labored with me in the gospel,. The word "labored" is a strong word indicating that Euodia and Syntyche had "striven" together with Paul for the sake of the gospel.

With Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names (are) in the Book of Life.

There were others at Philippi who had energetically cooperated with Paul in the Lord's work, one of who was named Clement. Paul considers these all to be faithful brethren whose names are written in the book of life (cf. Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Ezekiel 13:9). This expression is also used seven times in Revelation. It designates the register of those whose "citizenship is in heaven" (3:20).



4. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!. The word “always” indicates the Christian is to rejoice even when beset by afflictions (1:28-30). Joy ought to be present in the lives of all who enjoy all the spiritual blessings that are “in the Lord.”
5. Let your gentleness be known to all men. We have no exact English equivalent for the Greek word translated “gentleness.” It means “yieldingness, sweet forbearance, fairness,” etc. It’s the quality of one who is considerate to another. One who has this quality does not demand that he be able to exercise his rights but unselfishly yields to the rights of others. This loving consideration and kindness is to be exhibited to “all men,” not just the church. Nevertheless, only a perverted mind would think the Christian’s gentleness somehow forced him to yield truth to error, right to wrong, or virtue to vice and crime. The Lord (is) at hand. Some think this expression is a reference to the Lord’s second coming. It seems to me to refer to our special relationship with the Lord and the fact that He knows our circumstances and will defend us from our enemies.
6. Be anxious for nothing. In connection to what he has already written, and what he is going to write, Paul is saying that the Christian – the one who trusts the Lord and is aware of His presence – ought not to be anxious about promoting his own interests. He ought not to “worry” or be “fearful” about the future. Instead, he ought to be willing to make his perceived needs known to the Lord in prayer and then be willing to trust that His response to us will be the correct one. But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; We are reminded of I Peter 5:7, which says, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” “Prayer” and “supplication” are often found together in the Bible, as in Ephesians 6:18; I Timothy 2:1; and 5:5. “Prayer” is more general but “supplication” conveys the idea of asking God to supply specific needs. “Thanksgiving” emphasizes that prayer and supplication ought to always be accompanied by an appreciation for God’s blessings. Being truly thankful of what He has done for us in the past will help us not to be anxious about the future.
7. And the peace of God,. The kind of dependence we have been talking about – the kind that trusts God – snuffs out anxiety and produces a mind at peace, the very antithesis of the troubled, fretful, fearful, apprehensive mind. Which surpasses all understanding,. Probably, the meaning here is that the peace of God is beyond all that the mere reason of man can do to relieve anxiety. Will guard your hearts and minds. “Hearts” and “minds” are used here interchangeably, and designate the sources of the thoughts. The Greek word for “guard” is a military term, signifying a sentinel who keeps guard over a castle or camp, or a well-garrisoned stronghold (cf. Isaiah 26:1-3). Therefore, the mind of the Christian who trusts in the Lord is a well-garrisoned stronghold, and no matter what assaults are coming from the outside, on the inside there is peace. Through Christ Jesus. All this takes place as a result of our connection with Jesus Christ.

Meditate On These Things – 4:8,9

(8) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things (are) just, whatever things (are) pure, whatever things (are) lovely, whatever things (are) of good report, if (there is) any virtue and if (there is) anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.

(9) The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

8. Finally, brethren,. Paul now specifies six motives which all who seek maturity should keep constantly in mind. Whatever things are true,. This is not just truth in speech; not in discharge of social trusts; it is truth in itself and for its own sake. It is truth as an achievement of the mind, truth as a rule of conduct, covering all possible spheres and relationships in which one can stand. Whatever things are noble,. The word “noble” in the Greek is *semna*, which was used in classical Greek as an epithet of the gods, meaning “venerable” or “reverend.” It conveys the idea of a dignity and majesty that inspires reverence and relates to either persons or deeds. The KJV translates it as “honest.” Whatever things (are) just,. The Greek word for “just” is *dikaiois*, which conveys righteous conduct and has to do with doing good or positive goodness. Doing justly is the duty of every Christian. Whatever things (are) pure,. *Hagnos*, the Greek word translated “pure,” literally means that which is untainted. It here designates right conduct in the sense of abstaining from evil – negative goodness. Whatever things (are) lovely,. *Prospheiles*, the Greek word rendered “lovely,” refers to that which is acceptable, agreeable, or pleasing. Whatever things (are) of good report,. Here Paul is writing of things so excellent and good that to name them is a good or “fair-sounding” thing. If (there is) any virtue. The word

“virtue,” here and in II Peter 1:5, means moral courage or integrity. Whatever the circumstances a Christian finds himself in, if he has virtue, he will be compelled to do what is right. And if (there is) anything praiseworthy. The Christian ought to be ready to praise anything and everything worthy of commendation. The standard the world would use for this would be much different than the standard the Philippians would use. —meditate on these things. The meditation prescribed here is not Eastern, New Age meditation, which is an emptying of the mind; instead, it means to give oneself over to careful reflection (i.e., letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, Colossians 3:16). The meditation (or filling the mind) of which Paul here speaks will enable the Christian to do the will of the Lord in all things.

9. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do,. The first two verbs refer to his conduct as an instructor when he preached to the Philippians. From him they both “learned ” and “received” the word of the Lord. The last two verbs refer to his private conduct. The Philippians had heard from others and seen with their own eyes how Paul essentially practiced what he preached. And the God of peace will be with you. If the Philippians would do what Paul had said, the God of peace, who brings peace, would be with them. To enjoy this relationship, not only does the Christian need to let his requests be made known to the Lord by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving (4:6,7), but he must also endeavor to obey the divine will. As works without prayer are in vain, so prayer without works is also vain (cf. Hebrews 13:20; I Thessalonians 5:23).

Philippian Generosity – 4:10-20 (10) But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. (11) Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: (12) I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (13) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (14) Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. (15) Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. (16) For even in Thessalonica

you sent (aid) once and again for my necessities. (17) Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. (18) Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things (which were sent) from you, a sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. (19) And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (20) Now to our God and Father (be) glory forever and ever. Amen.

10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly. Not only did Paul feel grateful to the Philippians for their kindness toward him but, above all, to the gracious Lord who made this kindness possible. The effect of such gratitude was great joy. That now at last your care for me has flourished again;. The Philippians' contribution to his support had finally arrived, and not a moment too soon. The word translated "flourished again" means literally "have made the dry tree to flourish." Though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. The fact that their support was late in arriving was not because they were not concerned for him. The lack of opportunity (cf. Galatians 6:10) may have been from a lack of means or the lack of a messenger.

11. Not that I speak in regard to need,. Paul's joy was not because he was short of means and their contribution had taken care of his needs, although this was apparently the case, but because of the flourishing of their thoughtfulness toward him once again. In other words, his joy is not selfish, but derives solely from his thoughts of them and the "proof" of their godly care for him. For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:. Paul is saying that he had learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and by divine providence to be content in whatever state he found himself (cf. Hebrews 5:8). Autarkes, the Greek word for "content," appears only here in the New Testament. The word literally means "sufficient for one's self, strong enough to need no aid or support." It was a familiar word in Stoic egotism. Paul did not claim his self-sufficiency originated with himself, or that it had anything to do with his own wisdom or power. He was independent of circumstances, thus self-sufficient, because of his trust in and dependence on the Lord.

12. I know how to be abased,. The Greek word for "abased" means "to make low, to reduce to meaner circumstances." The apostle had learned to accept his abased circumstances in a gracious, uncomplaining spirit (cf. II Corinthians 4:8; 6:9,10). And I know how to abound. The Greek word for "abound" means "to have in abundance." Paul, as a faithful Christian, did not let poverty degrade him nor prosperity exalt him. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Whether full or hungry, prosperous or poor, Paul had learned to conduct himself as a trusting, loving disciple of the Lord.

13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. This is not some PMA proof-text, as many try to make it. In other words, this is not a faith in faith statement. It is, instead, a statement of faith in Christ that says in all the circumstances of life Paul was convinced that he could bear fruit to the glory of God through the strength the Lord gave him.

14. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. In declaring his dependence upon the Lord, the apostle was careful not to disparage the Philippians' gift. God was doing His part and the Philippians were doing their part, and the latter as a result of the grace of God (cf. II Corinthians 8:1-4).

15. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. In those early days of preaching the gospel in Europe, when he departed from Macedonia (Acts 17:14), no church other than the Philippian church had fellowship with him. This is not to be confused with the fellowship they had with him when he was at Corinth, where he subsequently went after leaving Macedonia (Acts 17:15-34; 18:1), in which other churches were involved (II Corinthians 11:8,9). In this particular case, only the Philippians were involved. The words translated “giving and receiving” are a business term referring to the credit and debit side of the ledger. The Philippians were greatly indebted to Paul since it was through his preaching and teaching that they had been brought to Christ and nurtured in the faith. Thus the apostle had certain credits on their ledger that they were obligated to honor. He referred to a similar matter in I Corinthians 9:11, “If we have sown spiritual things for you, (is it) a great thing if we reap your material things?” This responsibility is included in the “all good things” of Galatians 6:6, “Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”

16. For even in Thessalonica you sent (aid) once and again for my necessities. Not only had they supported him when he left Philippi, but also in his first gospel effort after Philippi when he established a church at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4). Their affection for Paul and their appreciation for the work he was doing prompted them to keep up with his needs, sending support to him in Thessalonica more than once. This support was in addition to what he was able to supply for himself from his own labor (I Thessalonians 2:9, II Thessalonians 3:7-9).

17. Not that I seek the gift, Paul was not preaching the gospel to make money, or out of covetousness. He certainly did not deny the usefulness of their support, making it possible for him to preach the gospel; but he wanted to emphasize that his interest in such support involved no self-seeking or selfishness on his part. But I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. The not/but construction emphasizes the latter at the expense of the first. In other words, Paul was indeed grateful for their gift, which was useful in the furtherance of the gospel; but his chief concern had to do with the good it did those who gave it. The phrase “to your account” is taken from commercial dealings, which literally means “interest which may accumulate to your account.” This reminds us of the following passages: “But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God (is) not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, (in that) you have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Hebrews 6:9,10); “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. (Let them) do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life ” (I Timothy 6:17-19). In the gift the Philippians sent Paul, they laid up for themselves treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20). The principle to which the apostle appeals is the fact that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

18. Indeed I have all and abound. “I have” is the regular expression found in the papyri to indicate the receipt of what is due. The Philippians had paid the debt they owed Paul “in full.” I am full, He was lacking nothing

concerning his physical needs. having received from Epaphroditus the things (which were sent) from you,. “The things” Epaphroditus delivered to Paul probably included clothes and other necessities, as well as money. Epaphroditus must have been loaded down by the generosity of the Philippians. A sweet smelling aroma,. The reference is to the odor of the sacrifices offered to God under the Old Testament. Like these sacrifices, the gift of the Philippians to Paul was considered as sweet-smelling in God’s presence (cf. II Corinthians 2:15,16; Ephesians 5:2). An acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. What the Philippians were doing for Paul, they were doing for the Lord (Matthew 25:40). Therefore, it is designated as an acceptable, well-pleasing sacrifice to God. Their care for Paul was an act of worship rendered to God. When a Christian does anything to help another person, prompted by his love for the Lord and the recipient of his good work, he worships God, offering Him a well-pleasing, acceptable sacrifice. “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).

19. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. The Philippians were generous in their gift to Paul from their limited means, but they were going to receive back from the unlimited storehouse of God’s blessings! Anything a Christian gives in support of the gospel, motivated by love, will yield a rich return far beyond one’s finite ability to understand (cf. Luke 16:9-12).

20. Now to our God and Father (be) glory forever and ever. When one considers the wonderful richness of God’s blessings, praise cannot be repressed. Amen. The “amen” is a fitting conclusion. As the lips shut themselves, the heart once again surveys the facts and adds, “So be it.”

Greeting And Blessing – 4:21-23

(21) Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. (22) All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household. (23) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

21. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Paul wanted his greetings to go to each member of the Philippian church. The brethren who are with me greet you. This probably denotes Paul’s coworkers mentioned in 1:14 and 2:19.

22. All the saints greet you,. All the Christians at Rome not mentioned above extend their greetings. But especially those who are of Caesar’s household. It would be encouraging for the Philippians to know that there were now saints in Nero’s household. The term could refer to his kinsmen, but probably refers to servants holding more or less important positions in the imperial household. Furthermore, the fact of these conversions testifies to the unwearied effort and influence of the apostle. who was willing to use every opportunity to preach and teach the gospel.

23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. This epistle closes with the recognition of Jesus Christ as the means of divine grace, and the invoking of this grace on the Philippians.

Amen.