



THE EPISTLE TO
TITUS

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INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

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Biography:

Russell Haffner currently serves as the director of the WVBS Online Bible School. He graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in 1993. He is also an alumnus of Texas A&M University where he majored in Architecture. He has served as a minister of the gospel for over 30 years. He has spoken on various lectureships and has held several gospel meetings. He has also published articles in numerous lectureship books.

Russell and his wife Dee are blessed with three children - Ross, John and Kati. Ross and John are both graduates of the Southwest School of Bible Studies and currently serve as ministers in the Lord's church. Kati is married to Tony Lopez who is also currently serving as a minister in the Lord's church.

These Course Notes were developed from the original WVBS Course Notes.

BACKGROUND

TITUS

We do not find Titus mentioned by name in the book of Acts, but he is often referred to in Paul's Epistles. Titus was born of Gentile parents (Galatians 2:3), and was in the group from Antioch (Acts 15:2) who went with Paul and Barnabas when they traveled to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders to answer the question as to whether the Gentiles were required to be circumcised to be added to the church (Acts 15:1).

Since Paul called Titus "a true son in our common faith" (Titus 1: 4), it could be that Paul converted him. After the events at Jerusalem (Acts 15), Titus remained Paul's close companion. He may have been with Paul when he wrote his letter to the Galatians. Titus is not mentioned again until the time of the events that caused the writing of the two letters to the Corinthians. At that time Titus made three trips to Corinth and was one of the most active in spreading the gospel among the people in that area. He was with Paul at Ephesus when he was sent on a special mission to Corinth, probably to deliver the first Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 12:18).

The mission of Titus to "set in order" the congregations of Crete was well suited to his character and abilities since there was a strong blending of races and religions on the island. There were many Jews, but the Gentile population was greater in number. The congregations seemed to have been numerous, but disorganized and troubled with many issues. Titus, who had already performed a great work among the Christians at Corinth, was well qualified to set things in order on the island of Crete.

[The historical information above comes from: *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles* by David Lipscomb edited, with additional notes, by J. W. Shepherd, Volume V, pp. 257-258.]

THE ISLAND OF CRETE

Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to do some difficult work.

Titus 1:5, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you."

Crete is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea. It is located about 500 miles southwest of modern-day Turkey and about the same distance west of Syria or Palestine. It is almost an equal distance from Asia, Europe and Africa.

The island is in a chain of islands that served as stepping stones for commercial traffic between Greece and Asia Minor. Some harbors were very important places of safety for ships during bad weather. An example is the ship that was used to take the apostle Paul to Rome (Acts 27:7-14). Ships heading to Rome from Egypt would often seek the shelter of the island of Crete, as did the ship on which Paul was a passenger (Acts 27:5-7).

We find that individuals from Crete were present in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:10-11). Some probably obeyed the gospel that day and returned to Crete to establish the Lord's church there. It is safe to infer that Paul was in Crete at some time since he "left" Titus there to do the work (Titus 1:5). The inhabitants of Crete had a bad reputation of being liars and guilty of gross immorality (Titus 1:12).

INTRODUCTION

WRITER

We want to make it clear that God is the author of this book, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The writer whom God used to reveal this epistle was the apostle Paul (Titus 1:1).

- A. Paul being the writer was never seriously questioned until the nineteenth century. At that time, some modernist and liberal "scholars" began to question whether Paul was the writer.
- B. However, the following sources, who lived much closer to the first century, support Paul as the writer:
 - 1. Clement of Rome (A.D. 30-100)
 - 2. Polycarp of Smyrna (A.D. 115-156)
 - 3. The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170)
 - 4. Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200)
 - 5. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215)
 - 6. Eusebius (A.D. 260-340)
 - 7. Jerome (A.D. 400)
- C. Two books have done an excellent job of refuting the arguments of modernists who claim that Paul was not the human agent whom God used to reveal Titus.
 - 1. Robert R. Taylor, Jr. - *Studies in Titus and Philemon*, published by Lambert Book House, pages 14-15.
 - 2. Carl Spain - *The Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus*, published by R.B. Sweet Co., Inc., pages 8-15.

LANGUAGE

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people in that day. God's word is not reserved for the upper class.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

This letter (epistle) appears to have been written between A.D. 63-67, after Paul's release from his first two-year imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31). [For additional information concerning Paul's release from this first imprisonment please see the appendices - AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM.]

TO WHOM WAS THIS EPISTLE WRITTEN?

This letter was written to Titus (Titus 1:4). Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts. Some say this was because Titus was closely related to Luke who was the writer of Acts. Since Luke did not mention himself by name it is logical to assume that he would not mention a close relative. However, there is nothing revealed in the Bible as to why Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts.

Titus being a Greek was a Gentile and according to the false teachers (Judaizers) he needed to be baptized to gain salvation (Acts 15:4-5; Galatians 2:1-5). However, Titus was not compelled (persuaded) to be circumcised. The church at Jerusalem, after hearing the evidence, had once for all demonstrated that circumcision was not essential to Christianity (Acts 15:6-29). If Paul would have yielded his position in the case of Titus, it would have set the precedent that circumcision was a salvation requirement for all Gentiles.

Some have wondered why Paul had Timothy circumcised while Titus was not circumcised. Paul circumcised Timothy because he was by birth a Jew. Having Timothy circumcised was not required for his salvation, but would give him the opportunity to have a more effective influence when preaching to the Jews.

Titus is mentioned many times in Paul's epistles. It is clear that there was a close relationship between Paul and Titus (Galatians 2:1; 3-5; Titus 1:4). Titus was a partner and fellow worker with Paul.

2 Corinthians 8:23, "If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ."

Titus had a strong Christian character and there was a close relationship between him and Paul.

2 Corinthians 2:13, "I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia."

2 Corinthians 7:5-6, "For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts,

inside were fears. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus."

KEY VERSES

Titus 1:2, 5, 13, 16; 2:1, 5, 11-12, 15; 3:1-2, 5, 10-11

KEY WORDS

The key words in this epistle include "works" (6 times), "Savior" (6 times), "sound" (5 times), "grace" (4 times), "doctrine" (4 times) and "hope" (3 times).

KEY PASSAGE

Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

MAIN THEMES OF THIS EPISTLE

- A. To provide instructions and encouragement to Titus and to all men who preach the gospel.
- B. To set in order the things that were lacking in the church.
- C. To give some qualifications of elders.
- D. To emphasize the importance of exhorting and convicting false teachers.
- E. To stress the necessity of teaching and preaching sound doctrine.
- F. To discuss proper conduct.
- G. To bring to mind the kindness, love, mercy and grace of God.
- H. To emphasize the role of God as Savior.
- I. To focus on the blessings of salvation.
- J. To stress the importance of maintaining good works.
- K. To emphasize Christian hope.

TITUS OUTLINE

Salutation (Greeting)	1:1-4
I. Setting Things in Order.....	1:5-9
II. Dealing with False Teachers	1:10-16
III. Sound Doctrine, Proper Conduct, Motivation for Godliness	2:1-15
IV. The Importance of Good Works.....	3:1-11
Conclusion	3:12-15

TITUS EXPOSITION

CHAPTER ONE

Salutation (Greeting)..... 1:1-4

1:1 *Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,*

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ - In the letter Paul introduces himself as a bondservant and an apostle.

A. Paul was a "bondservant" of God

1. The word "bondservant" is a translation of the Greek word (DOULOS) meaning, "a slave, involuntarily or voluntarily; frequently therefore in a qualified sense of subjection."
2. This indicates that Paul (and indeed all Christians) should be in total submission to God.
 - a) God purchased us at great cost. This should create in us great loyalty and love.

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

- b) Jesus loved us so much that He redeemed us with His own blood.

1 Peter 1:18-19, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

- c) Therefore, we belong to God.

1 Corinthians 6:20, "For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

3. Like Paul, we should consider ourselves slaves of God.
- B. Paul was also an "apostle" of Jesus Christ.
1. As an inspired apostle, Paul had the authority to write these things to Titus.
 2. Paul was an apostle by the command of God and the authority of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:8-9). The word "apostle" is defined as "a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." Paul was chosen by Christ and sent forth with a specific mission.
 3. Paul did not take the office of an apostle to himself (Acts 9:1-9; 26:14-18; Galatians 1:1, 11-16). Those who claim to be apostles today do so without Bible authority.
 4. Paul refers to himself as an apostle to leave no doubt concerning his authority and the assurance of the things written in this epistle. In Acts 26:15-18, we are given a description of Paul's conversion concerning his role as a messenger.

according to the faith of God's elect - God's elect are not chosen arbitrarily. The elect ones are those who are "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:4). The only way to be placed in Christ is to be baptized into Him (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

- A. This election is always of character, not of an arbitrary selection (Luke 8:9-15).
- B. God the Father has chosen a type of individual to be saved (those who are obedient).
- C. God does not arbitrarily choose some to be saved and other to be lost. [For additional information please see the appendices - UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.]

and the acknowledgment of the truth - Paul's mission was to encourage people to acknowledge the truth. The truth is God's word (John 17:17). Only by continuing in the words of Jesus can one know that truth (John 8:31). Only that truth can make a person spiritually free (John 8:32).

which accords with godliness - The word "accords" means, "harmonizes with, agrees, corresponds, unites." The truth agrees with godliness. Truth produces

godliness. What is godliness? It is honor, respect and the fear of God that leads to being devoted to Him (2 Peter 1:6; 3:11).

1:2 *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,*

in hope of eternal life - Those who have such faith, accept the truth, live godly lives and have a great hope. That hope is eternal life with God. "Hope" is, "a favorable and confident expectation, joined together with desire."

- A. The Christian's hope is not an empty aspiration or wish.
 - 1. Mankind can have full trust and confidence that God always fulfills His promises.
 - 2. The righteous will be rewarded, and the wicked will be punished.
 - 3. Christians have full assurance of their hope (Hebrews 6:11).
 - 4. Hope is not only desire but also expectation (Romans 8:24; Hebrews 6:17-19).
 - 5. The faithful Christian's hope is eternal life with God.
- B. The Bible has much to say about hope (Colossians 1:5; Romans 8:24-25; 12:12; 1 Corinthians 15:19; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 6:18-20). Thank God for the wonderful hope He provides through His Son.

1 Peter 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you."

which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began - Think about the fact that God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:17-19).

- A. This gives faithful Christians great hope. It provides great peace, encouragement, joy and stability to think about the promises God has made to the faithful (2 Peter 1:4).
- B. The fact that God cannot lie should also create fear in each person who does not obey Him.

1. It should create great fear in each lukewarm or unfaithful Christian.
2. It should create great fear in each individual who does not obey God's plan of salvation.
 - a) God has promised that He will take vengeance on each person who does not know Him and does not obey the gospel (Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 - b) The only way to have fellowship with God the Father is through His Son (John 14:6).
 - c) If we do not obey God's plan of salvation, we will die in our sins. We will not go to heaven where He is (John 8:21-24).
 - d) There is an everlasting fire of punishment reserved for the Devil, his angels and those who choose not to obey God (Matthew 25:41,46).
 - e) God's wrath will be poured out in full strength to punish forever those who reject the truth (Revelation 14:9-12).
3. Truly, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who is described as a consuming fire (Hebrews 10:25-31; 12:28-29).
4. We should not fear those who can destroy the body, but fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell (Matthew 10:28).
5. We must fear God and choose to keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

1:3 *but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;*

but has in due time manifested His word through preaching - God "manifested" or "made known" that hope through the preaching of His word.

which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior - Preaching was entrusted to faithful men like Paul (2 Timothy 1:11; 2:2). It is a privilege to teach this hope of salvation to the lost (Ephesians 3:8). Paul was motivated to preach the gospel by "the commandment of God our Savior" and his love for the souls of men.

1:4 *To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.*

To Titus - This letter was addressed to Titus. He was a faithful Christian and companion of Paul. He played an important role in Paul's missionary journeys. Paul's confidence in Titus is expressed several times in the New Testament. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul referred to Titus as "my brother" and "my partner and fellow worker among you" (2 Corinthians 2:13; 8:23).

- A. Titus was possibly one of Paul's earliest companions. In the book of Galatians, we read that Titus accompanied Paul on his visit to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1-5). Titus served as an example to the Gentiles of the proper response to the gospel message.
- B. The great controversy of the early church was the relationship of the old law of Moses to the new law of Christ.
 - 1. Some of the Jewish Christians taught that circumcision was necessary before the Gentiles could properly obey the gospel.
 - 2. However, Paul made it clear that Titus would not be compelled to be circumcised, but rather simply obey the gospel of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:3).
 - 3. Titus stood as an example to the Gentiles of being saved by grace through obedience to the gospel plan of salvation, not by circumcision.
 - 4. His stand with Paul against those who taught the necessity of circumcision for salvation took great courage.

a true son in our common faith - Titus was not Paul's physical son, but his spiritual son. Titus may well have been converted by Paul, who had reminded the Corinthians that he was their spiritual father because he had begotten them through the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15).

- A. Please note these six biblical facts about Titus:

1. He was a faithful Christian and companion of Paul.
2. He played an important role in Paul's missionary journeys.
3. Paul referred to Titus as "my brother" and "my partner and fellow worker among you."
4. Titus accompanied Paul on his visit to Jerusalem.
5. Titus served as an example to the Gentiles of the proper response to the gospel message.
6. Titus was not Paul's physical son, but a true son in the common faith.

Grace, mercy, and peace - This is a combination of the usual Greek and Hebrew greetings with the addition of "mercy" meaning, "compassion, kindness or good will towards the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them."

- A. "Grace" is translated from the Greek word (CHARIS) meaning, "that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness" (Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 8:9). Grace is the favor we receive from God (Romans 5:8).
 1. Grace literally means "unmerited favor." Grace is unearned but not unconditional.
 2. It means blessings from God that the sinner does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus conceived as something given to man, not as a matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift.
 3. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit, but works of obedience are required (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:20-26; Titus 2:11-14). [For additional information please see the appendices - FAITH AND WORKS]
- B. "Peace" comes from the Greek word (EIRENE) meaning, "harmony, security, safety, prosperity."
 1. This is the word that was used to translate the Hebrew word "SHALOM" when the Old Testament was translated into Greek.
 2. There is a greater significance to the meaning here of

"peace" than just "the absence of war."

- a) SHALOM considered the "wholeness" or "soundness" of man.
 - b) It is a term of prosperity, especially in the spiritual realm (Colossians 1:2).
3. "Peace" with God, only comes when we are cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 6:3-4).

from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior - The source of grace and peace is Deity.

- A. God the Father is described as, the "God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10) and the "God of peace" (Hebrews 13:20).
- B. The Scriptures also teach that grace and truth come from Christ (John 1:17). He is our peace (Ephesians 2:13-14).

Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

- C. Please notice in this context that God the Father is said to be "our Savior" (Verse 3) and the Lord Jesus Christ is also said to be "our Savior" (verse 4). Deity provided salvation for mankind.
 - 1. There is no opportunity for salvation without the Father's willingness to give His Son as a sacrifice (John 3:16).
 - 2. There is no opportunity for salvation without the willingness of Jesus to give His life as a sacrifice on the cross, (Romans 5:6-11; Hebrews 9:22-28).

I. Setting Things in Order..... 1:5-9

1:5 *For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—*

For this reason, I left you in Crete - This tells us that there was a specific reason that Paul left Titus on the island of Crete. It is also implied that Paul trusted Titus to carry out the work that needed to be done.

that you should set in order the things that are lacking - Improvements needed to be made in the congregations in Crete.

- A. Some things that needed to be set in order in Crete included the following:
 - 1. Dealing with false teachers.
 - 2. Stressing the importance of sound doctrine.
 - 3. Emphasizing the proper conduct of Christians.
 - 4. Teaching the importance of good works.
 - 5. Giving instructions on things that needed to be avoided.

and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you - God wants qualified men serving as elders in each congregation. Faithful men should be working diligently to develop the qualifications needed to serve as elders. It is a good work (1 Timothy 3:1). Congregations should encourage Christian men to work toward that goal.

- A. There must be more than one elder in each congregation.

Acts 14:23, "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."
- B. Paul said to appoint elders, not AN elder, in every church.
- C. The subject of elders is also discussed thoroughly in 1 Timothy 3.

Please See the Chart on the Next Page

Qualifications of Elders (Overseers)	
21 Qualifications 4 qualifications - unique to Titus / 6 qualifications - unique to 1 Timothy 11 qualifications in common	
Titus 1:5-9	1Timothy 3:1-8
1. Blameless (verse 6 & 7)	1. Blameless (verse 2)
2. Husband of one wife (verse 6)	2. Husband of one wife (verse 2)
3. Having faithful children (verse 6)	3. Children in submission (verse 4)
4. Not self-willed (verse 7)	
5. Not quick-tempered (verse 7)	5. Not quarrelsome (verse 3)
6. Not given to wine (verse 7)	6. Not given to wine (verse 3)
7. Not violent (verse 7)	7. Not violent (verse 3)
8. Not greedy for money (verse 7)	8. Not greedy for money (verse 3)
9. Hospitable (verse 8)	9. Hospitable (verse 2)
10. Lover of good (verse 8)	
11. Sober-Minded (verse 8)	11. Sober-Minded (verse 2)
12. Just (verse 8)	
13. Holy (verse 8)	13. Of good behavior (verse 2)
14. Self-Controlled (verse 8)	14. Temperate (verse 2)
15. Holding fast the faithful word (verse 9)	
	16. Able to teach (verse 2)
	17. Gentle (verse 3)
	18. Not covetous (verse 3)
	19. Rules his own house well (verse 4)
	20. Not a novice (verse 6)
	21. A good testimony (verse 7)

In this course we will only study those qualifications in Titus.

1:6 *if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.*

if a man is blameless - The elders must be Christian men whose character is beyond reproach. They must be held in high regard being known for their purity and faithfulness. Being "blameless" means that there can be no **legitimate** accusation made against their character or conduct. The "blameless" man has no outstanding flaw in his character or life and he is morally upright, honorable with deep integrity.

the husband of one wife - We should notice two things from this phrase.

- A. First, we see by the language used here that only a male can serve as an elder. A female cannot be the "husband of one wife." [For additional information please see the appendices - WOMEN - PASTORS AND TEACHERS.]
- B. Second, we see that a bachelor or polygamist cannot serve as an elder. An elder must be married. Some religious groups falsely teach that it is somehow more righteous and holy to be unmarried. However, the Bible teaches that marriage is an honorable state (Hebrews 13:4).

having faithful children - This qualification concerning having "faithful children" has sometimes caused confusion.

- A. The word "faithful" is used universally in the New Testament to refer to a person who is faithful to God and therefore a Christian (Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:2; 4:9; Revelation 2:10).
- B. The apostle Paul never uses this word to describe a person who is a non-Christian.

not accused of dissipation or insubordination - To qualify as an elder, a man must have faithful children who are not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

- A. The word translated as "dissipation" means, "inability to save (money), one who wastes money on pleasures, luxurious living and extravagant squandering of means" (*Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, by Rienecker and Rogers, page 651).
 - 1. This word is also used to describe those who are drunk in Ephesians 5:18.
 - 2. It refers to the prodigal son in Luke 15:13-14.

3. It is obvious that God is talking about older children in this context.
 4. Such children are old enough to become faithful Christians.
- B. Also, the elder's children must not be accused of "insubordination." The word translated "insubordination" means, "undisciplined and rebellious."
1. It refers to those who are lawless in 1 Timothy 1:9.
 2. The word is also used to refer to false teachers whose mouths must be stopped in Titus 1:10.
- C. These words suggest that the elder's children must be old enough to fulfill the requirements of God's law and must be striving to do so.
- D. If the elder's children are old enough to fulfill the requirements of God's law and yet, have not obeyed the gospel or have become Christians who are not striving to be faithful, then how can that man serve as a leader of God's people?
- E. Conclusion: "Faithful children" means faithful Christians. Therefore, a man who is under consideration to become an elder must have children who are faithful Christians.

1:7 *For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,*

For a bishop - An elder can also be referred to as a "bishop" (Titus 1:5-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:1), "overseer" (Acts 20:28), "pastor" (Ephesian 4:11), "ruler" (Hebrews 13:7, 17), "shepherd" (1 Peter 5:2) and the "presbytery" (1 Timothy 4:14). The different terms are used to emphasize different aspects of the same office. [For additional information concerning these terms please see the appendices - THREE DIFFERENT GREEK WORDS USED FOR THE SAME OFFICE].

must be blameless - The elders must be men whose character is beyond reproach. They must be held in high regard being known for their purity and faithfulness. Being "blameless" means that there can be no **legitimate** accusation made against their character or conduct. The "blameless" man has no outstanding flaw in his character or life and he is morally upright, honorable with deep integrity.

as a steward of God - "Steward" comes from the Greek word (OIKONOMOS) that means, "the manager of household or of household affairs, the manager of a farm or landed estate, an overseer." The importance of being a good steward is often taught in the Scriptures (Luke 16:1-4; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 13:17).

not self-willed - Being "self-willed" is being, "prideful, arrogant, stubborn, refusing to listen to others." This person puts his own will above God's will and that of his fellow elders. He causes strife and division among the elders and in the church.

not quick-tempered - This means not being contentious or always eager to start an argument. There are some who seem to always want to cause controversy. Such an individual would not be qualified to be an elder. It is true that Jesus was often involved in controversy, but He was never quick-tempered.

- A. An elder must be temperate or self-controlled (1 Timothy 3:2).
- B. Man's wrath does not produce God's righteousness (James 1:20).
- C. A quick-tempered shepherd will do much damage.

not given to wine - This is a phrase which is almost never taught correctly. There are many who say this means that an elder can have wine as long as he is not "given to" it, which they define as being drunk. However, that is not at all what this teaches.

- A. This phrase comes from the Greek word PAROINOS which means **not even "staying near wine"** (*Strong's Greek Dictionary of the Bible*, by James Strong).
 - 1. Therefore, not only should an elder abstain from any drinking of wine (or any alcoholic beverage - see "temperate and "sober minded" above), but he should not even put himself in a situation where he is staying near wine, as in going to drinking parties.
 - 2. [For additional information concerning the word "wine" in the Scriptures please see the appendices - ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING.]
- B. Please see the following verses from the book of Proverbs concerning wine:

Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

Proverbs 23:20, "Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat."

Proverbs 23:29-30, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine."

not violent - The Greek word here is *PLĒKTĒS* which describes a person who is contentious and quarrelsome. We have all seen those people who are always eager to pick a fight or disagree.

not greedy for money - Greed is defined as an intense selfish desire for something, especially wealth or power. This does not mean that if we have money or wealth we are automatically guilty of sin. It is the love of money, not money itself, which is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

- A. The money we have should be thought of as belonging to God.
 - 1. We are merely the stewards of God's blessings which we should use for good.
 - 2. In the Bible there are four authorized ways to get money: you can earn it (wages, investments, etc.), you can be given it as a gift, you can find it or you can inherit it.
 - 3. Money by itself is neither good nor evil.
- B. Obviously, it is sinful to OBTAIN money by illegal or immoral means.
 - 1. It is sinful to WANT money to use it for the wrong purposes and it is sinful to USE money for ungodly purposes.
 - 2. However, money CAN be used for good.
 - 3. For example, it can be used to spread the soul saving gospel and to do acts of kindness and benevolence for those in need.
 - 4. Therefore, money by itself is neither good nor evil.

1:8 *but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,*

but hospitable - This characteristic would be seen in one's generosity to guests. The Greek word here (PHILOXENOS) literally means, "making oneself a friend to guests." Guests would include friends, associates, strangers and foreigners.

a lover of what is good - The elder is to love and appreciate all things and people that are good.

A. God emphasizes meditating upon good things.

Philippians 4:8, "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."

B. Christians are to be fruitful in every good work (Colossians 1:10).

C. If God loves these good things, then surely each man who serves Him as an elder will love these good things as well.

sober-minded - This word comes from the Greek word (SŌPHRŌN) that means, "having a sound mind or being sane in one's senses." It can also be used to mean to curb one's desires and impulses (being self-controlled or temperate).

just - This word is a translation of the Greek word (DIKAIOS) that means, "righteous, upright, virtuous, innocent, faultless, guiltless, keeping the commands of God." In a judicial sense it is passing righteous judgment on others. The Scriptures encourage us to always be just (Matthew 7:12; 2 Corinthians 8:21; Colossians 4:1; James 2:1-4).

holy - "Holy" comes from the Greek word (HOSIOS) meaning, "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure holy, pious." A "holy" elder is not contaminated by the continual practice of sin. He cleanses himself from defilement of his flesh and spirit (2 Corinthians 7:1). He knows that without holiness, it will be impossible for him to be saved (Hebrews 12:14).

self-controlled - This comes from the Greek word (EGKRATĒS) that means, "having power over a thing, mastering, controlling one's self, temperate."

1:9 *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught - He must cling with devotion and hold firmly to the word of God. He must hold on tightly to the pattern of

sound words (2 Timothy 1:13). The word of God is "faithful," that is, it is reliable and trustworthy. It is the only standard that we can trust for our salvation (James 1:21; Ephesians 1:13).

- A. The elders hold fast to the word of God several ways:
 - a) By meditating upon it (Psalm 119:97)
 - b) By being in awe of it (Psalm 119:161)
 - c) By handling it correctly (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - d) By contending earnestly for it (Jude 3)

that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict - Elders must use sound doctrine to exhort and convict those who contradict the truth. The word "sound" means, "wholesome, pure and healthy." The word "doctrine" simply means, "teaching." Therefore, elders must be able to use healthy, wholesome, pure teaching in the proper way to convict false teachers.

- A. Elders must be able to teach God's word skillfully (1 Timothy 3:2). They must be diligent students of the word (2 Timothy 2:15).
- B. Elders must use the healthy teaching of God's word to both "exhort" and "convict" those who contradict God and His sound doctrine.
 - 1. To "exhort" means, "to urge, encourage, persuade." An elder cannot do this unless he is very skilled in teaching the word of God.
 - 2. An elder must also be able to use the word of God to "convict." The word "convict" means, to rebuke a man in such a way that he is forced to admit his error.
- C. The purpose of the exhorting and convicting is to encourage those who contradict God word to know the truth and to repent (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
 - 1. This responsibility is also given to others.
 - 2. Preachers are commanded to "convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

3. Every Christian is required to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 1:3).

II. Dealing with False Teachers..... 1:10-16

1:10 *For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,*

For there are many insubordinate - The word "insubordinate" means, "undisciplined, rebellious and lawless." These individuals reject both God's authority and the authority of the inspired apostles.

both idle talkers - The word translated "idle talkers" means, "worthless words, evil talkers and using impressive language with little or no solid content of truth." This is common, empty talk which is of no value to anyone (1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7). It must be avoided and rejected because this empty talk leads to more ungodliness (1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:16).

and deceivers - "Deceivers" mislead others by not speaking the truth. In this context it refers to those who try to look like ministers of righteousness even though they are not (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Deception and lies are tools of the Devil (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 11:13-15).

especially those of the circumcision - This refers to those Christians with a Jewish background who were teaching that the Gentiles could not be saved unless they were first circumcised (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:1-7). This false doctrine was addressed by the apostles in Acts chapter 15.

1:11 *whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.*

whose mouths must be stopped - The Greek word here translated as "whose mouths must be stopped" means, "to put something on the mouth, to muzzle and to silence."

- A. Elders and other Christians MUST silence false teachers. How?
 - a) By using the sound doctrine to exhort and convict such false teachers (Titus 1:9).
 - b) By rebuking them sharply (Titus 1:13).
 - c) By speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).
 - d) By not yielding submission even for one hour (Galatians 2:5).

- e) By marking and avoiding those who cause divisions contrary to sound doctrine (Romans 16:17-18).
- f) By rejecting those who cause such divisions after the first and second admonition (Titus 3:10).
- g) By turning away from them (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

who subvert whole households - The Greek word translated "subvert" means, "to overturn, destroy or ruin." False teachers overturn, destroy, ruin whole families.

- A. False doctrine increases to more ungodliness (2 Timothy 2:16-18).
- B. It spreads like a painful, deadly cancer through the church (body of Christ) and destroys the faith of many (Matthew 15:7-9, 13-14; 2 Peter 3:16-17; 2 John 1:9-11).
- C. How do such false teachers destroy families? By their teaching.

teaching things which they ought not - They teach error, things contrary to sound doctrine (1 Timothy 1:10-11). What is one of the motives of some false teachers?

for the sake of dishonest gain - They are motivated by dishonest gain. The phrase "dishonest gain" means, "shameful, ugly, dishonest profit."

- A. It is not wrong for a preacher to receive compensation for preaching the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:3-15).
- B. However, some preachers use godliness to make a dishonest profit by taking advantage of people and not teaching the truth (1 Timothy 6:3-5).
 - 1. They "tickle" people's ears by telling them the things they want to hear rather than what God wants them to hear (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
 - 2. Because of covetousness, they take advantage of people by using deceptive words (2 Peter 2:1-3).
 - 3. Such actions are an abomination to God.

1:12 *One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."*

One of them, a prophet of their own, said - Here Paul quotes a poet who described the people of Crete in his day. Most scholars believe this refers to the famous poet Epimenides of Gossus who was a native of the island of Crete around 600 B.C.

Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons - The famous poet had many things to say concerning the character of the people of Crete.

- A. He described the people of Crete as "liars." God hates lying (Proverbs 6:17,19). Liars will burn in the lake of fire and brimstone - hell (Revelation 21:8).
- B. He described the people as "evil beasts." Their behavior was like that of wild animals rather than civilized human beings. Apparently, they lived unrestrained lives of ungodly passions.
- C. He described them as "lazy gluttons." They were not industrious or hard working. They loved to eat too much food.

1:13 *This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,*

This testimony is true - The testimony refers to the words of the poet. How, should the Christians in Crete deal with such people.

Therefore, rebuke them sharply - The word "sharply" means severely. This is not a mild reprimand.

- A. Jesus used sharp words to condemn the religious leaders of His day.

Matthew 23:13-14, "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation."

- B. Stephen used sharp words when he defended himself before the highest Jewish Council (Sanhedrin).

Acts 7:51, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."

C. Paul used sharpness by the Lord's authority.

2 Corinthians 13:10, "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction."

D. Should Christians use sharp words today? Yes, when it will benefit the listener. We must always use wisdom concerning how we deal with others.

1. On those who have good and honest hearts, we must show compassion.

Jude 1:22, "And on some have compassion, making a distinction."

2. On others we must take a different path.

Jude 1:23, "But others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh."

3. And of course, all that we do must be done in love (1 Corinthians 16:14).

that they may be sound in the faith - This gives us the reason they should be rebuked sharply. The word "sound" means, "healthy, wholesome, pure."

A. In this verse the word "faith" is used to refer to the gospel of Christ, the New Testament (Philippians 1:27; Acts 6:7).

Jude 1:3, "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints."

B. The goal is helping people to be spiritually healthy by their obedience to the faith.

1. We don't want to discourage people, but to encourage them to repent of their sins and obey the truth (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

2. Sometimes a sharp rebuke is required to reach that goal.

1:14 *not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.*

not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth - The elders are told to encourage people to disregard and ignore Jewish fables and commandments of men.

- A. The "fables" spoken of here were imaginary, invented stories which were often told by both the Jews and Greeks which were vain, trivial and unprofitable (1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7-9). The Jewish Talmud is filled with such fictional legends and myths.
- B. The "commandments of men" always turn people away from the commandments of God (Colossians 2:4-8).

Matthew 15:7-9, "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"

- C. Who were these Paul was talking about, who were teaching Jewish fables and commandments of men?
 - 1. Some were those Christians with a Jewish background who were teaching that a Gentile could not be saved unless he was first circumcised (see verse 10).
 - 2. They developed commandments of men that placed emphasis upon external cleanliness or purity while neglecting spiritual cleanliness or purity (Mark 7:5-23).
 - 3. They were still clinging to the old law that had been nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14).
 - a) They were still teaching that some foods were unclean and could not be eaten, while other foods were clean and could be eaten without sinning.
 - b) This was in spite of the fact that God said that Christians are not to allow anyone to judge them on whether foods are clean or unclean (Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:1-4).

- c) God said no food is unclean under the new law of Christ (Romans 14:14), and that every creature of God is good for food, if it is received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:3-5).
- d) It is those things that come from within that contaminate us spiritually. Such as evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, thefts, covetousness and deceits (Mark 7:15-23).

1:15 *To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.*

To the pure all things are pure - Clearly, those who were pure were the Christians (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Peter 1:22; Revelation 1:5). To such faithful Christians, "all things are pure."

- A. Under the New Testament, foods are no longer considered clean (pure) or unclean (impure) as they had been under the Old Testament.
- B. All things that God created to be eaten are pure as long as they are received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:3-5).
 - a) If we keep ourselves pure inside, we will be pure on the outside also.
 - b) We must guard our heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23).
 - c) We need to meditate upon the right kinds of things (Philippians 4:8).
 - d) As a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7).

but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure - Those "who are defiled" were those who were teaching these false doctrines. Paul also described these people as unbelieving.

- A. They did not believe in and obey God. Therefore, they were dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1).
- B. Their sins separated them from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
- C. Even their minds and consciences were defiled. To such people, nothing is pure.

- a) When a person's mind is polluted with sin, nothing they think, say or do is pure.
- b) No matter how many commandments of **men** they teach, they will still be defiled (2 Timothy 3:1-8).
- c) Their mind and conscience will remain defiled until they allow it to be pierced by the sword of the Spirit, the word of God (Acts 2:37; Ephesians 6:17).
- d) Then, and only then, can they know the truth, come to their senses, repent and allow themselves to be corrected (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

but even their mind and conscience are defiled - "Conscience" comes from the Greek word (SUNEIDĒSIS) that means, "distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, commending one, condemning the other." It is part of our inner being that either accuses us or excuses us of wrong doing (Romans 2:15; Acts 22:4-5; 23:1).

- A. If the conscience is not educated it will not serve as a good guide to make decisions.
- B. A man should educate his conscience (with God's word) and guard it so it will serve as a good regulator for his actions.
- C. If he does not do this, the conscience will not function properly (1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 4:2-3).

1:16 *They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him - In other words, they are hypocrites. They say one thing and do another (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; James 2:14-18; 1 John 2:3-4).

being abominable - "Abominable" is a very strong word. This comes from the Greek word (BDELUKTOS) meaning, "detestable, disgusting, repugnant, revolting, abhorrent." Hypocrites are detestable and disgusting to God.

disobedient - Obedience is a test of our love for the Lord (John 14:15, 21, 23). Disobedience shows a lack of love for the Lord. Obedience is essential to a person's salvation from sin (Hebrews 5:9).

and disqualified for every good work - "Disqualified" means, "rejected as worthless after having been tested." The attitude and actions of these false teachers will result in their rejection by God. One of the purposes of this epistle was to stress the importance of good works. False teachers are disqualified for every good work.

- A. This is truly tragic, because we will be judged by our works (Revelation 20:12-13).
- B. Jesus said He is coming and will bring His reward with Him to give to everyone according to their works (Revelation 22:12).
- C. Clearly, people who deny God by their works are abominable, are disobedient, are disqualified and will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 22:13).

CHAPTER TWO

III. Sound Doctrine, Proper Conduct, Motivation for Godliness2:1-15

2:1 *But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:*

But as for you - Notice this verse contains a sharp contrast.

speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine - The word "sound" means, "healthy, wholesome, pure." In contrast to the actions of the false teachers, every Christian who teaches God's word is commanded to speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine.

- A. God commands every preacher and teacher to proclaim healthy, wholesome and pure teaching.

2 Timothy 4:2-3, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers."
- B. How can some say today that doctrine is not important?
- C. Next, we see that God's command to teach sound doctrine includes the instructions needed for different age groups and categories of people.

2:2 *that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;*

that the older men - Older men should be taught to have several qualities.

be sober - The word "sober" comes from the Greek word (NĒPHALEOS) meaning, "to be sober, to be calm and collected in spirit, to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect."

- A. These qualities are very important.
- B. The word can also be used to condemn all kinds of excess (1 Peter 1:13; 5:8).
- C. The older men should discipline themselves to be clearheaded acting wisely and judiciously.

reverent - The Greek word (SEMNOS) translated as "reverent" means, "grave, honorable, dignified and serious minded." If an older man conducts himself in an honorable manner, then he will have the respect of others.

temperate - This word means, "self-controlled, watchful, cautious, on guard."

sound - The word "sound" means, "healthy, wholesome, pure." The "older men" should be "sound" in several characteristics.

in faith - The older man's faith should be healthy, wholesome and pure.

1 Timothy 4:6, "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."

in love - The older man's love should be wholesome and pure. He must cultivate supreme love for God (Mark 12:30) and pure love for his neighbors (Mark 12:31).

in patience - "Patience" means, "endurance, perseverance, steadfastness." It is actively bearing up under difficult circumstances. Patience is developed by facing trials (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:2-4).

2:3 *the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—*

the older women likewise - Here we find some healthy teaching for older women. They must be taught to have the following qualities and take the following actions.

that they be reverent in behavior - The Greek word (HIEROPREPĒS) translated as "reverent" in this verse is different from the Greek word translated as "reverent" in verse 2.

- A. This word means their conduct should be suitable and proper for a person who is holy.
- B. They should live the kind of lives that are separated from sin and sanctified to God.

2 Corinthians 7:1, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

not slanderers - "Slanderers" comes from a Greek word (DIABOLOUS) meaning, "accusing falsely." A slanderer gossips, spreads rumors and falsely accuses others. This activity damages and destroys people's lives. It creates destructive strife and division (Proverbs 11:13; 18:8; 20:19; 26:20).

- A. "Slanderers" comes from a form of the Greek word (DIABOLOS) that is translated as "devil."
- B. The devil is a liar and an accuser of the faithful (Job 1:9-11; John 8:44; Revelation 12:10).
- C. Slander is truly a devilish activity.

not given to much wine - The phrase, "much wine," is almost never taught correctly. There are many who say this means that the older women can have some wine as long as they do not have "much" wine. However, that is not at all what this teaches. Ecclesiastes 7:17 says, "Do not be overly wicked." Does this mean it is okay to be a little bit wicked? Obviously not!

- A. Those who teach that this verse means the older women can have a little bit of wine, but not "much" wine, fail to realize that the word "much" in this verse is an adjective used as an **adverb** that is modifying the **verb** "given" (Strong's Concordance with Greek and Hebrew Lexicon).

1. **It does not refer to the amount of wine!**

2. The phrase would be better translated as "much given to wine."
- B. The Greek word (PROSECHŌ) translated as "given" in this verse means to hold the mind towards, pay attention to or think about.
- C. Therefore, the older women have the kind of character that doesn't even think about drinking wine. In 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 God commands every Christian to be sober which means being free from the influence of intoxicating beverages.
- D. Please see the following verses from the book of Isaiah concerning wine:

Isaiah 5:11, "Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them!"

Isaiah 28:7-8, "But they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean."

- E. [For additional information concerning the word "wine" in the Scriptures please see the appendices - ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING.]

teachers of good things - Older women should teach those things God identifies in His word as being good. The word "good" means, "morally upright and honorable."

- A. It should be remembered that in this teaching women are not allowed to have authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12).
- B. [For additional information please see the appendices - WOMEN - PASTORS AND TEACHERS.]

2:4 *that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,*

that they admonish the young women - Older women are told to admonish the younger women. The Greek word translated as "admonish" is only found in this verse. This word means, "to encourage, advise and urge."

- A. Older women are supposed to encourage, advise and urge younger women.
- B. This certainly includes the responsibility to teach them.
- C. Notice some of the things that God wants older women to teach younger women:

to love their husbands - Love binds all relationships together. This is especially true in the closest of human relationships, marriage.

1 Corinthians 16:14, "Let all that you do be done with love."

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

to love their children - Children are a gift and blessing from God (Psalm 127:3-5). Mothers should thank God for their children and love them dearly. They must care for their children in such a way that they call her blessed (Proverbs 31:28).

- A. A mother must work diligently to teach God's word to her children. The Lord "builds" the house through this process (Deuteronomy 6:7-9; Psalm 127:1).
- B. She should lovingly support her husband in his efforts to bring up the children in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

2:5 *to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

to be discreet - The Greek word translated as "discreet" means, "self-controlled, serious minded, exercising good judgment."

chaste - This means. "pure, modest and innocent." Not only does this mean to dress modestly and purely (1 Timothy 2:9), but also to be pure and modest in thought and conduct. In a world filled with impurity and wickedness we need to stress this concept more and more.

homemakers - The word "homemakers" is actually made up of two Greek root words, OIKO meaning, "house or home" and OURGOS meaning, "worker." Thus, this word means "workers at home." God wants younger women working primarily at home. Their primary focus is to be upon their family. That is where they can do the most good for the Lord.

- A. Does this mean a woman can never have a job outside of the home? No!
 - 1. The virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:10-31) who serves as an example as the ideal wife and mother, speculated in real estate and operated her own linen garment business.
 - 2. Even though she lived under the old law, her example still proves that she was able to do these things outside of the home without neglecting the responsibilities of her home.
- B. The "young women" are allowed to engage in business outside of the home, if and only if, they are meeting their God given responsibilities in the home.

good - The word "good" means good in character and beneficial in effect. The younger women should have a good character that motivates them to do beneficial or benevolent things for their family and others.

obedient to their own husbands - Younger women need to be taught to obey their husbands.

- A. We dare not question God's wisdom in this, or any other matter.
 - 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."
 - Ephesians 5:22-24, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."
- B. Husbands also have a responsibility to their wives.
 - Ephesians 5:25-28, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that

He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself."

- C. When a husband loves his wife, as taught in the Scriptures, it will be much easier for her to obey him as the Lord commands.
- D. When should she **not** obey her husband? When he asks her to do something contrary to God's word (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29).

that the word of God may not be blasphemed - The word "blasphemed" means to "to vilify, to speak impiously." Basically, it means to speak evil against something that is holy. In this verse it is talking about God's word being respected. If the older women teach the younger women to follow these things, it will bring glory to God and His wonderful word.

- A. The community will see these families living holy and godly lives.
 - 1. They will see these families living together in love and harmony.
 - 2. They will see their good works and glorify God (Matthew 5:16).
- B. If these things are not taught and followed, then people will speak against God.
 - 1. Harm is done when the world sees Christian women not loving their husbands or children, and lacking self-control, being impure and disobedient.
 - 2. This brings reproach upon God and His word.

2:6 *Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,*

Likewise, exhort the young men - Here we find some healthy teaching for young men. They must be taught to have the following qualities and take the following actions.

to be sober-minded - The Greek word for "sober minded" is actually the same Greek word for "discreet" in verse 5 (SŌPHRONEŌ). It means self-controlled,

serious minded and exercising good judgment. Younger men must be taught to have these characteristics.

2:7 *in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,*

in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works - Notice the word "yourself." Paul now turns his attention to Titus as a teacher of others. These principles can certainly be applied to the life of Titus and every other young man. The word "pattern" means, "example or model."

- A. Each teacher and preacher must live a righteous life so as to be a model, example or pattern for others to follow. The specific kind of pattern mentioned here is of "good works."
- B. Preachers must set the proper example in doing good works.
 - 1. They must go about doing good, just as Jesus did (Acts 10:38).
 - 2. They must be an example in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity (1 Timothy 4:12).
 - 3. They must be careful to teach the truth (2 Timothy 4:2-4).
 - 4. They must pay close attention to their own lives (1 Timothy 4:16).

in doctrine showing - The word "doctrine" simply means teaching or instruction.

integrity - The Greek word translated as "integrity" means, "incorruptibility, soundness." Preachers must both live and preach the pure word that encourages purity in its hearers.

reverence - The Greek word translated as "reverence" means, "dignified and serious minded." A preacher or teacher must conduct himself in an honorable and respectable manner. He needs to teach and live in such a way that people will honor and respect him.

incorruptibility - The Greek word translated as incorruptibility here means, "purity, sincerity, genuineness." It must be clear to all that the gospel preacher is sincere. It must be obvious to all that he will never allow himself or his message to be contaminated with the doctrines, philosophies and commandments of men.

2:8 *sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

sound speech that cannot be condemned - "Sound speech" is another way of saying healthy words. These are words that are able to produce spiritual health in the listener. The gospel preacher must use healthy words in his preaching, teaching and life. He needs to use words that cannot be legitimately condemned.

Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

Colossians 3:8, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth."

Matthew 12:36-37, "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you - Why must a preacher be a good example in good works and pay close attention to his teaching and words? So, those who oppose God and Christians will be ashamed, because they do not have anything evil to say about the preacher's conduct.

A. Gospel preachers, and indeed all Christians, should not think, say, or do anything that gives the enemies of the truth an opportunity to speak evil of Christ and Christianity (1 Timothy 5:14).

1. If we are busy doing good works and being careful about what we teach and say, we will not give them such an opportunity.
2. However, some will speak against the truth no matter how we conduct ourselves. We cannot control such people.
3. Still, we must live and speak in such a way that the enemies of truth cannot make any **legitimate** charges against us.

B. We should also notice that God's command was originally directed to Titus. He was to serve as an example (or pattern) for other Christians.

C. We also need to serve as an example for others.

1. We ought to be busy doing good works.

2. We should teach others with integrity, reverence and purity.
3. We need to use healthy, wholesome speech.
4. We must avoid doing anything that will give the enemies of Christ a legitimate reason to speak evil against us.

2:9 *Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,*

Exhort bondservants - "Bondservants" comes from the Greek word (DOULOS) meaning, "a slave, bondman, servant or attendant." Slavery was a major part of the Roman society. God gave instructions in the New Testament to both slaves and masters (cf. 1 Timothy 6:1-2; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1). Thankfully, slavery has been eliminated in many parts of the world. In those places where it still exists, God's instructions still apply.

- A. In studying these verses, we must keep in mind that slavery was widespread in the Roman world at this time.
 1. For example, scholars have estimated 30-40% of the population of Italy were slaves in the 1st century.
 2. That would be upwards of two to three million slaves in Italy alone not including the slaves in the rest of the empire which are estimated to be around 10-15% of the total population.
- B. [For additional information please see the appendices - DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY?]

to be obedient to their own masters - Obedience is the key characteristic of the Christians. The faithful must obey God (John 14:15; 15:14), the elders (Hebrews 13:17) and the governmental authorities (Romans 13:1-7). So, it is not surprising that God commands that slaves obey their masters.

- A. However, there is one exception to this requirement to obey men.
- B. When there is a conflict between man's law and God's law, we must obey God rather than men.

Acts 4:19-20, "But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'"

Acts 5:27-29, "And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!' But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'"

to be well pleasing in all things - Slaves should do all things with their whole heart, that is, with diligence and enthusiasm. They must do what they do as if it is for the Lord (Colossians 3:22-25; Ephesians 6:7-8). When slaves follow these commands from God, they will work in such a way that they will be well pleasing to their masters.

not answering back - Slaves should not speak against or speak disrespectfully to their masters. A rebellious spirit is not pleasing to God or others.

2:10 *not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*

not pilfering - The word "pilfering" means, "to steal or take from someone else what does not belong to you." Christians must work with their hands that which is good (Ephesians 4:28).

but showing all good fidelity - "Fidelity" means, "faithfulness, reliability, trustworthiness." God expects slaves (and all workers) to be trustworthy.

that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things - The word "adorn" means to make beautiful. When slaves follow these commands, they make the doctrine of God beautiful in the eyes of their masters and others. In other words, when masters (and others) see Christian slaves working and living in this way, they will be favorably impressed with the power of God's word in the lives of these slaves.

- A. These instructions can also be applied very well to the employee/employer relationship.
 - 1. Employees should obey their employers.
 - 2. They should be well pleasing by doing their work with their whole heart, as to the Lord.
 - 3. Employees should speak respectfully to their employers, not answering back or being rebellious.

4. Employees should not take from their employers those things that do not belong to them.
 - a) The employer's goods or equipment
 - b) The employer's money or time the employer pays for work to be done.
 5. Employees must be reliable and trustworthy.
- B. If Christians work in these ways, they will make the doctrine of God beautiful in the eyes of those who have honest and good hearts. God will be pleased and glorified.

2:11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,*

For the grace of God that brings salvation - The word "grace" means unmerited or undeserved favor. God gives us grace when we deserve punishment. It is because of our sin that we deserve punishment.

- A. God's love for man appeared in the person of Jesus Christ.
1. God had shown His power and law from the beginning of time, but His love was not **completely** revealed until Jesus came.
 2. The opportunity to be saved from our sin came by God's grace.

Ephesians 2:8-10, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

- B. We do not earn our salvation and there are no **works** of merit that will save us (Ephesians 2:9), but there are works of obedience which God requires (Ephesians 2:10).

James 2:19-20, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

- C. Those who say we are saved by faith separate and apart from works are actually saying that we are saved by a dead faith. They have eliminated the works of obedience that God requires.
- D. What works of obedience are required by God? In the Scriptures, we find that God's plan for man's salvation has several requirements.
1. The first requirement is to **hear** the saving message of salvation (Romans 10:17). In other words, we must learn the truth before we can obey it.
 2. The second requirement is to have **faith** (belief) that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16). However, **this is not the only requirement**. Faith alone will not save (James 2:14, 17, 24).
 3. The third requirement of God's plan is **repentance**. The sinner is required to repent, which is composed of sorrow for sin and a change of will that results in a changed life (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10).
 4. The fourth requirement is **confession**. The sinner is required to confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10).
 5. The fifth requirement is **baptism** (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-19; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21). We must be baptized for the remission (forgiveness) of our sins (Acts 2:38).
 - a) Baptism is a burial in water (immersion), not pouring or sprinkling (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12-13).
 - b) When we are baptized properly, we are baptized into the death of Jesus, where His soul cleansing blood was shed (Romans 6:3-4).
 - c) Thus, in the waters of baptism, our sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus (Acts 22:16).
 - d) When we are baptized properly, God adds us to His one true church, not to any man-made church (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).

- 6. Then the Christian must **remain faithful** (Matthew 10:22; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:1-6; Revelation 2:10).
- E. The Bible also teaches that once one obeys God's plan of salvation, he must then remain faithful to the Lord in order to have an eternal home with God in heaven.
- F. Those who fall away from the Lord and don't come back repenting of their sin, and praying for forgiveness, will lose their souls (James 5:19-20; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

2 Peter 2:20-22, "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'"

(the grace of God) has appeared to all men - Through the preaching of the gospel, God's grace is made apparent to all men. Grace brings the **opportunity** for salvation to all men.

- A. However, man is not saved by grace alone. If God's grace was the only thing necessary for man's salvation, then **all men** would be saved.
- B. Some religious people say, "We are saved by grace only through faith only."
 - 1. Logically, this makes no sense.
 - 2. How can it be both, grace **only** and faith **only**?
- C. Actually, the New Testament teaches we are saved by many things. We are saved by:
 - 1. Grace (Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8)
 - 2. Mercy (Titus 3:5)

3. Jesus' Blood (1 John 1:7; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7)
 4. Works (James 2:24; Acts 10:34-35; Philippians 2:12)
 5. Obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9)
 6. The Love of the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10)
 7. Faith/Belief (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 16:30-31)
 8. Repentance (Luke 13:3; 2 Corinthians 7:10)
 9. Confession (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10)
 10. Baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21)
- D. There is no doubt we are saved by grace, but we are not saved by grace **alone**. Salvation is not by grace **only** or faith **only**. Looking at the list above we can clearly see this.
- E. The phrase, "faith only" is only found once in the Scriptures, and that verse teaches we are **not** saved by "faith only."

James 2:24, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

2:12 *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

teaching us - It is interesting to note that God's grace teaches us. It is only through the teaching and preaching of the gospel that we learn of God's grace (Acts 20:24), and it is God's grace that teaches us about His love and mercy that should prompt us to return His love with our obedience.

that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts - To "deny" is to renounce, reject and give up. The word "ungodliness" means wickedness. It is dishonoring and disrespecting God. It is a lack of reverence that causes men to go deeper and deeper into sin (Romans 1:18-23).

- A. "Worldly lusts" are strong, sinful desires.
1. This includes the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life (1 John 2:15).

2. God wants us to reject, to deny, to say "no" to such sinful desires.
3. Such lusts war against our soul (1 Peter 2:11).

we should live soberly - "Soberly" means self-controlled, serious minded, exercising good judgment. We must guard our minds with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23).

- A. We need to fill our minds with things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8).
- B. We must exercise our senses with God's word, so we can tell the difference between good and evil and make the right decisions in this life (Hebrews 5:12-14).

(we should live) righteously - "Righteously" is that which is in accordance with rule, right and justice. This includes a desire and effort to live in accordance with God's word (Psalm 119:172).

- A. God only accepts those who fear Him and work righteousness (Acts 10:35).
 1. This also includes treating all people justly, without prejudice or partiality.
 2. Prejudice is a horrible sin that God hates (James 2:1-13).
- B. Part of living righteously is to treat others the way we want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

and godly in the present age - Godliness is honor, respect and fear of God that leads to devotion to Him (2 Peter 1:6; 3:11). Every "age" presents challenges to godly living. God's grace and salvation should motivate us to live in accordance with His will.

2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ - This is another motivation for denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and living soberly, righteously and godly. Christians are motivated by their hope and the glorious appearing of Jesus.

- A. Notice that Christians are to be "looking for" that "hope and glorious appearing."
 - 1. "Looking for" means to expect or to eagerly wait for.
 - 2. The faithful are eagerly waiting for the glorious appearing of Jesus (Philippians 3:20).

- B. Hope is directly connected with that final appearing of Jesus.
 - 1. The Christian's hope was discussed in Titus 1:2.
 - 2. In this verse, that hope is described as "blessed."
 - 3. "Blessed" comes from the Greek word (MAKARIOS) that means, "fortunate, well off, happy."
 - 4. Hope should fill our hearts with happiness and joy.

- C. The "appearing" refers to the final appearing of Jesus. What about Jesus' final appearing do the faithful eagerly wait for and draw hope from?
 - 1. Faithful Christians who are alive will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
 - 2. Christians comfort each other with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
 - 3. The faithful will receive eternal rest (2 Thessalonians 1:7).
 - 4. Jesus will be glorified (2 Thessalonians 1:10).
 - 5. If we have suffered with Jesus, we will share in His glory (Romans 8:17).
 - 6. If we were raised with Christ, we will seek and set our minds on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1-4).
 - 7. If we have worked diligently to make our calling and election sure, an abundant entrance will be given to us into the everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:5-11).

- a) We make our calling and election sure by giving all diligence to add the Christian attributes to our faith and by making sure that these attributes abound in our lives.
 - b) We have fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith so that there is crown of righteousness, which the Lord, will give us on that Day (2 Timothy 4:6-8).
 - c) If we have been faithful unto death, He will give us the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).
 - d) He will transform our lowly body that it might be conformed to His glorious body (Philippians 3:21).
 - e) Our corruptible body will be raised as an incorruptible, spiritual body in glory, power and immortality (1 Corinthians 15:42-53).
 - f) Then death will be swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54).
 - g) If we are in Jesus' kingdom, He will deliver us up to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-24).
8. What great hope and joy the glorious, final appearing of Jesus gives to all faithful Christians.
9. If we have been justified by faith, we REJOICE in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1, 2).
- D. Notice the phrase, "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." This shows that Jesus is God, that He is Deity.
- 1. The Greek grammar in this verse indicates that both words "God" and "Savior" refer to Jesus.
 - 2. Also, the Greek word (EPIPHANEIA) translated as "appearing" is found in five verses, in addition to this one (2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; and 2 Timothy 4:1, 8) and in each verse it refers to one person, not two. That one person is the Lord Jesus Christ, not the Father.

3. Also, the one who is "appearing" is defined for us in the next verse, that clearly refers to Jesus, not the Father (Galatians 1:4; 2:20).
4. Jesus is God and He is Savior!

John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

2:14 *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

who gave Himself for us - This is another motivation for Christians to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly. Notice that Jesus gave Himself for us.

- A. We deserve to die for our sins.

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- B. Jesus did not commit any sins (Hebrews 4:15).

1 Peter 2:22, "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth."

- C. Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20; Romans 5:6-8).

- D. May each of us be compelled to live for Him, who died for us, rather than ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

that He might redeem us from every lawless deed - "Redeem" comes from the Greek word (LUTROŌ) meaning, "to set free or rescue by paying the ransom price." This word was used for the purchase of a slave's freedom by paying the requested price.

- A. God paints a beautiful picture for us using this concept.

Romans 6:16-18, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Romans 7:22-24, "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

- B. That deliverer was Jesus the Christ. He paid the price that was necessary to obtain our redemption. What was the price He paid for us?
1. He gave HIS LIFE as a ransom for us (Matthew 20:28).
 2. He bought us at a great price (1 Corinthians 6:20).
 3. He redeemed us by His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18,19).
 4. Therefore, if we are in Christ, we have redemption through His blood (Ephesians 1:7).

and purify for Himself His own special people - Jesus gave Himself to "purify" us. The Greek word (KATHARIZŌ) translated as "purify" means, "to cleanse, with the idea of being cleansed from sin."

- A. Only the blood of Jesus is powerful enough to cleanse our sins (Hebrews 9:14, 22).
- B. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:25-26).
- C. A person's soul is first cleansed from sin when they obey the gospel, God's plan of salvation for man (1 Peter 1:22).
 1. That plan includes baptism, when a person's sins are washed away.

Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Romans 6:3-4, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

2. That is when Jesus washes our sins away with His own blood (Revelation 1:5).
3. And, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, then the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7-9).

D. What a blessing it is to be purified by the blood of the Lamb of God. When a man is purified in this way, he becomes one of the Lord's "own special people" belonging to the Lord.

1. Since Jesus paid the price those who are redeemed belong to Him.
2. What a joy it is to know that Jesus values each soul so much.

zealous for good works - The Lord's own special people should be "zealous" for good works. "Zealous" means eager and enthusiastic. The fact that Jesus loves us and gave Himself for us should create in us an immense love for Him. This should motivate us to be eager and enthusiastic to do His good works.

- A. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:10).
- B. God wants us to be fruitful in every good work (Colossians 1:10).
- C. Jesus went about doing good and we should follow His example (Acts 10:38).

2:15 *Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke - Titus (and indeed every gospel preacher) is commanded to:

- A. "Speak these things"
- B. "Exhort" (urge, encourage or persuade)
- C. "Rebuke" (teach a person in such a way that he is compelled to admit the error of his ways)

with all authority - This means that every gospel preacher can speak with authority when he speaks God's word accurately.

- A. He is speaking the commandments of almighty God (Titus 1:3; 1 Corinthians 14:37).
- B. The authority is IN the word of God, NOT the preacher.

Let no one despise you - "Despise" means to think less of someone. A preacher should live in such a way that people do not think less of him. His actions should not cause his listeners to ignore or disregard the things he is teaching.

- A. He should be an example (1 Timothy 4:12).
- B. He must take heed to himself and the doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16).
- C. He has to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2).
- D. He cannot be ashamed of the gospel because it is God's power to save (Romans 1:16).

CHAPTER THREE

IV. **The Importance of Good Works** **3:1-11**

3:1 *Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,*

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey - Paul told Titus (and every gospel preacher) to remind Christians of some very serious responsibilities. Christians must be subject to, submit to, obey rulers and authorities. This is one of many verses that make it clear that Christians are to be law abiding citizens.

- A. The Roman government was very wicked when Paul wrote these inspired words.
 - 1. The fact that governments are wicked does not give us an excuse to disobey the law.
 - 2. If we resist the rulers we resist God and bring judgment upon ourselves (Romans 13:1-7).
 - 3. We are to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1 Peter 2:13). This includes paying taxes, custom fees, etc. (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:7).
 - 4. The Christian is released from the responsibility to obey rulers only when rulers order things that are contrary to God's word (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29).
- B. God's purpose for government is to reward good and punish evil (1 Peter 2:14; Romans 13:3-4).

to be ready for every good work - The word "ready" means prepared and willing. Christians are to be prepared and willing to do every good work (2 Timothy 2:21; Titus 2:7, 14). How can we prepare ourselves to be ready for every good work?

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

3:2 *to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.*

to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men - In this verse we find four more things Paul told Titus (and every gospel preacher) to tell Christians.

- A. "to speak evil of no one"
 - 1. To "speak evil of no one" means to avoid slandering and treating people with contempt.
 - a) Slander is gossip, spreading rumors and making false accusations.
 - b) The motivation of the slanderer is to wound and destroy people (Romans 12:14, 17, 19, 21; 1

Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 4:29-31; Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 4:6).

2. This does not mean Christians can ignore God's command to note (mark) false teachers (Romans 16:17).

B. "to be peaceable"

1. The word "peaceable" means, "to not be fighting, quarrelsome or contentious" (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; 14:19).

C. "gentle"

1. The word "gentle" comes from the Greek word (EPIEIKĒS) that means, "kind, gracious and forbearing."
2. The meaning of this same word (EPIEIKĒS) is shown beautifully in some of the other verses where it is found in the Scriptures.

Colossians 3:12-13, "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **bearing with one another**, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

1 Thessalonians 2:7, "But we were **gentle** among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children."

James 3:17, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, **gentle**, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

3. When God tells us to be gentle, we are to be kind, gracious, forbearing and courteous to others.

D. "showing all humility to all men"

1. The word "humility" means meekness, mildness and being considerate.

- a) God expects us to be meek, mild and considerate.
 - b) We are to treat others the way we want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).
2. Jesus was meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:28-30).
- a) But He was not weak.
 - b) A meek person will humbly and patiently correct those who contradict the truth (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
 - c) He will confront those in sin with a gentle and meek spirit (Galatians 6:1).
 - d) His purpose in correcting and confronting such people is to convince them to repent and be restored to faithfulness (2 Timothy 2:24-26; Galatians 6:1).
3. Such a humble attitude is not developed easily.
- a) It must be pursued diligently (1 Timothy 6:11).
 - b) It is something we must add to our lives (Colossians 3:12).
 - c) It is a part of the fruit of the spirit that we must strive to produce (Galatians 5:22-23).

3:3 *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*

For we ourselves were also once - The previous verse exhorted Christians to show humility to all men. In this verse we find one reason why Christians should be humble. This verse gives God's graphic description of the character of people before their conversion. Also, note that Paul includes himself in this.

foolish - "Foolish" means without spiritual understanding. This was because of choices made. It is not that the information was not available.

- A. We chose to ignore the evidence for God's existence, eternal power and Deity that He made obvious in the universe (Psalm 14:1; Romans 1:18-20).

1. We did not glorify God. As a result, we became futile in our thoughts, our foolish hearts were darkened and we became fools (Romans 1:21-22).
 2. We chose to ignore and disobey God's will revealed in the Bible (Hosea 4:1-6).
 3. We chose to be spiritually ignorant because of the blindness of our hearts (Ephesians 4:18).
- B. We were without excuse (Romans 1:20).
- C. And God says a lack of such spiritual understanding is foolish.

disobedient - This is being disobedient to God.

deceived - We were deceived when we allowed ourselves to be misled by Satan and his followers (Revelation 12:9; 1 Peter 2:25). Deceit and lies are tools of the devil (2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15; 1 Peter 5:8). Evil men deceive others and allow themselves to be deceived (2 Timothy 3:13).

serving various lusts and pleasures - "Serving" means to be in slavery to these things. "Lusts" means a strong desire, longing or craving. Lust usually refers to sinful desires. "Pleasures" means sinful passions. Jesus used this same word to refer to the pleasures of life that can choke out God's word (Luke 8:14). Before conversion we are slaves to our sinful desires and passions.

- A. This is the choice we made.
- B. No one forced us to do these sinful things.

Romans 6:16, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?"

- C. We really only have two choices in this life.
 - a) We can choose to be slaves to sin (Satan), or slaves to obedience (God).
 - b) If we choose to be slaves to sin, the result will be spiritual death.

- c) If we choose to be slaves to obedience, the result will be righteousness (justification).

living in malice and envy - "Malice" is wickedness, evil disposition of mind, an intense desire to do evil to others. This is a trait of those who will not retain God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28-29). "Envy" is when we hate to see or think about the prosperity or success of another person. It is a work of the flesh that will keep us out of heaven (Galatians 5:19-21). It is a rottenness of the bones (Proverbs 14:30).

hateful and hating one another - People who think and act like this will be filled with hate for others. What a sad and disgusting picture of each person who chooses to live in rebellion to God.

3:4 *But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,*

But when the kindness - No one could be saved without the kindness of God.

- A. The exceeding riches of God's grace was shown in His KINDNESS toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

- B. The riches of God's kindness and goodness should lead us to repent (Romans 2:4).

1. We should thank God daily for His kindness and goodness.
2. If we choose not to remain in God's goodness, we will experience His severity when He cuts us off (Romans 11:22).

and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared - The magnificent love of God is one of the richest themes in the Bible (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10; 1 John 3:16). "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). We should allow Christ's love to motivate us to live for Him who died for us (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

toward man appeared - This is a clear reference to when Jesus came to this earth to live a perfect life, and give that life on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. That was a wonderful expression of God's grace (2 Timothy 1:9-10). It was also a magnificent display of His kindness and love.

3:5 *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

not by works of righteousness which we have done - No man can earn his salvation. The source of our salvation is not the works of merit that we have done (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- A. To earn or merit our salvation we would need to live perfectly without sin.
 - 1. If we could do that, we could boast that God owed us our salvation as a debt because we earned it (Ephesians 2:9; Romans 4:4).
 - 2. But we all sin, so we are not sinless and cannot earn our salvation (Romans 3:23).
 - 3. Thus, salvation is God's gift (Ephesians 2:8).
- B. Some mistakenly teach that man is saved by God's grace ALONE or by faith ALONE.
- C. Truly, we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).
- D. I challenge you to find one passage of Scripture where God says that man is saved by grace ALONE or faith ALONE. There is no such passage.

James 2:24, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

James 2:26, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

- E. **No one can be saved by a dead faith!**
- F. Faith is only made complete when it is joined together with works of obedience (James 2:22).

- G. If man were saved by grace alone, then all would be saved because, "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).
1. It is true, that God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).
 2. However, God tells us that all of mankind will NOT be saved (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 3. In fact, FEW will enter through the narrow gate and walk the difficult way that leads to eternal life (Matthew 7:13-23).
 4. The kind of faith that saves is the faith that works through love (Galatians 5:6).
- G. Therefore, no man can earn his salvation by works of merit, However, there are works of obedience that God requires for man's salvation.

but according to His mercy He saved us - "Mercy" is the compassion, loving kindness and pity of God shown in His long suffering and forbearance with us. If God were not rich in mercy, no one could be saved (Ephesians 2:4). Therefore, we ought to thank the Lord for His compassion and mercy (James 5:11). How has He saved us?

through the washing of regeneration - What is the "washing of regeneration"? "Regeneration" means beginning again, a new birth. This clearly refers to the new birth that Jesus mentioned in John 3:3-5. Jesus said a person must be born of water and spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven. The WATER in John 3:5 and the WASHING in Titus 3:5 refer to baptism in water.

- A. According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, the word translated "washing" means, "a bathing, bath, i.e., the act of bathing; used in the New Testament and in ecclesiastical writings of baptism" (*The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 382).
- B. The fact that this "regeneration" refers to water baptism is seen in several passages of Scripture.
 1. Ephesians 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the **washing** of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious

church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

- a) Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her.
 - b) He did that to **CLEANSE** her through the **WASHING OF WATER** by the word.
 - c) This refers to baptism in water, by which a person is cleansed of his sins so God can add him to Christ's church (Acts 2:38,41,47).
2. Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and **wash** away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- a) Ananias told Saul to arise and be baptized.
 - b) When Saul did that, Ananias promised his sins would be **WASHED** away.
 - c) So, when a person is baptized Scripturally in water, their past sins are washed away.
3. Revelation 1:5, "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and **washed** us from our sins **in His own blood**."
- a) Jesus loves us and **WASHES** us from our sins in His own blood when we obey His gospel plan of salvation.
 - b) But when does a person have their sins washed by the blood of Jesus?
 - c) As we just saw, it is at the point of being baptized in water.
 - d) When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His **DEATH**, where His soul cleansing blood was shed (Romans 6:3-4).
4. Therefore, our baptism into Christ is when we first receive the benefits of Jesus' blood.

- C. It is clear that the washing of "regeneration" refers to baptism in water. God says in this verse that, "He SAVED us through the washing of regeneration." Therefore, God saves people through baptism in water. That is exactly what God says in 1 Peter.

1 Peter 3:21 (KJV), "The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"

- D. Religious leaders say baptism does NOT save us.

1. However, GOD says that baptism DOES save us (1 Peter 3:21).
2. Are we going to believe and obey God or religious leaders?
3. What is there about baptism in water that gives us a clean conscience?
 - a) In baptism our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus.
 - b) And since our sins are washed away, we have a clean conscience before God.

- E. Some claim that baptism is not essential to salvation because it is a work and they say all works are excluded from salvation.

1. However, closely look at Colossians 2:12 to see who does the work in baptism?

Colossians 2:12, Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

2. It is not the person being baptized doing the work. The one being baptized just shows his faith by being baptized. The one who does the work in baptism is GOD.
 - a) He raises us from spiritual death to spiritual life in baptism.
 - b) God makes it crystal clear that baptism is essential to our salvation.

3. God also makes it clear that there are some things a person must do before he can be immersed in water to receive the forgiveness of sins.
 - a) Hear the saving message of salvation (Acts 18:8; Romans 10:17).
 - b) Have faith (belief) that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16; Hebrews 11:6).
 - c) The sinner must repent, which is composed of sorrow for sin and a change of will that results in a changed life (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10).
 - d) Confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:36-37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10).
 - e) Only then is one a candidate for baptism to gain the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
4. When we have done all these things, we have not earned our salvation.
5. We have merely expressed our faith in and love for the Lord by obeying His commands (John 14:15; Galatians 5:6).

Luke 17:10, "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

and renewing of the Holy Spirit - "Renewing" comes from the Greek word (ANAKAINŌSIS) that means, "renovation, to make new." A form of this word is used to refer to the new man after his conversion to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24).

- A. This word appears to refer to the new birth, being born again spiritually.
- B. According to the Greek grammar, the one who creates this new birth is the Holy Spirit.

- C. But what is the Holy Spirit's part in the new birth?
1. Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to His apostles (John 15:26).
 2. He referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth and the truth is the word of God (John 15:26; John 17:17).
 3. Thus, there is a direct connection between the Holy Spirit and the truth, God's word.
 - a) The Holy Spirit is not the word of God and the word of God is not the Holy Spirit.
 - b) However, there is a close connection between the Holy Spirit and God's word.
 4. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide His apostles into all truth (John 16:13).
 5. The apostles spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).
- D. Look more closely at the connection between the Holy Spirit and the word of God.
1. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).
 - a) A sword is an instrument used by someone to cut.
 - b) The Holy Spirit uses the word of God as His instrument to cut the hearts of people.
 2. He did that on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37).
 - a) There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit worked miraculously on that day.
 - b) He enabled the apostles to speak in languages they had never learned before (Acts 2:1-4).
 - c) He enabled the apostles to give inspired interpretations of Old Testament prophecies (Acts 2:16-21; 24-28).

3. But how did He convince the people in that crowd to change their minds so they could be renewed, born again?
 - a) The Holy Spirit moved Peter to speak WORDS to the crowd that day (Acts 2:14).
 - b) When they heard those words, they were pricked in their heart (Acts 2:37).
 - c) They asked Peter and the other apostles what they needed to do (Acts 2:37).
 - d) Peter told them they needed to repent and be baptized to receive the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 - e) 3,000 souls did just that, were saved, and the Lord added them to His one true church (Acts 2:41, 47).
4. The Holy Spirit worked on the hearts of those people.
5. Did He do it in a strange, direct, mysterious, miraculous way as is claimed by some today? No!
6. He used His instrument, the sword of the Spirit, God's word to pierce their hearts. The same way He pierces hearts today.

E. What does that have to do with the renewing of the Holy Spirit?

F. Please notice the connection between the word of God, the sword of the Spirit and being born again in the following passages:

1. 1 Corinthians 4:15, "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."
 - a) Paul said he had begotten those in Corinth through the gospel.
 - b) "Begotten" is a form of the word translated "born" in the phrase "born again" in John 3:3.
 - c) So, those in Corinth were born spiritually through the gospel (the sword of the Spirit).

2. James 1:18, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."
 - a) James says, God "brought us forth" (gave spiritual birth to) the Christians. How?
 - b) Through or "by the word of truth" (the sword of the Spirit, God's word).
 - c) Thus, those people were born again, renewed through the word of truth.
3. 1 Peter 1:23, "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."
 - a) Peter said those to whom he wrote had been born again. How did that new birth take place?
 - b) It was not of, or by, corruptible seed.
 - c) Instead, it was by the incorruptible seed, the word of God (the sword of the Spirit) which lives and abides forever.

G. Consider these conclusions regarding the phrase "renewing of the Holy Spirit" in Titus 3:5.

1. The renewing of the Holy Spirit refers to the new birth, being born again spiritually.
 - a) That new birth is produced by the Holy Spirit.
 - b) He produces that new birth through His instrument, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.
2. Each of us is free to believe and obey the word of God or reject it.
3. If we choose to obey what God said through the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, we will be born again, renewed by the Holy Spirit.

4. One of the things we need to do to be born again is to be baptized, immersed in water.
5. When we do that, we are saved through the "washing of regeneration" and "renewing of the Holy Spirit."

3:6 *whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior - The question is who or what is poured out? The NKJV says, "whom," while other reliable versions (KJV, ASV) say, "which."

- A. Actually, the Greek word translated "whom" or "which" is a relative pronoun that is either masculine or neuter, depending upon the context.
- B. The context supports the understanding that what was poured out was the blessing of salvation, **not** the Holy Spirit.
- C. It is not unusual to find a blessing like salvation being described as being "poured out," such descriptions are in the New Testament (Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Romans 5:5).
- D. The conclusion is what Paul mentioned as having been poured out in verse 6 was the **blessing of salvation** mentioned in verse 5.
- E. This appears to be a better understanding of what God meant. This explanation seems to fit the context better.
 1. In verses 4 and 5 God talked about His kindness, love and mercy.
 2. Verse 5 - Because of those divine attributes, we can be saved from our sins.
 3. Verse 5 - We can be saved through water baptism and the new birth experienced in the waters of baptism.
 4. Verse 6 - God poured out that blessing of salvation through Jesus Christ.
 5. Verse 6 - In talking about that blessing of salvation, God refers to Jesus as our SAVIOR.

6. This reinforces the fact that what was poured out was the blessing of salvation.
 7. In verse 7 we see more words associated with salvation. For example, the words "justified," "grace" and "heirs" are all related to the salvation that Jesus made possible.
 8. Thus, beginning with verse 4 and continuing through verse 7, God is talking about salvation.
 9. Therefore, the understanding that what was poured out (verse 6) was the blessing of salvation by water baptism and the new birth fits the context very well.
- F. In fact, it does not seem reasonable and logical that in the middle of this context (verse 6), God would insert a comment about the baptism with the Holy Spirit that never saved anyone from their sins.
- G. [For additional information concerning the "whom" in this verse please see the appendices - IS THE "WHOM" POURED OUT IN TITUS 3:6 THE HOLY SPIRIT?]

3:7 *that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

that having been justified by His grace - There is a connection between what Paul had said in verses 5 and 6 and what he is going to say in verse 7.

- A. He saved us through the "washing of regeneration," that is, baptism in water.
- B. And God saved us by the "renewing of the Holy Spirit," that is, through the new birth experienced in the waters of baptism.
- C. Through that process, we are also "justified by His grace" (verse 7).
 1. "Justified" comes from a Greek word (DIKAIŌŌ) that means' "to declare innocent, to acquit of guilt, to declare righteous."
 2. Man is declared innocent and righteous by God's grace.
 3. But we are not saved or justified by God's grace ALONE.

- a) In addition, we are justified by the precious blood of Jesus (Romans 5:9).
- b) In addition, we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1). The kind of faith that is an active, obedient faith (Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-16).

we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life - Christians stand to inherit something from their heavenly Father. That inheritance is eternal life with God in heaven (Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 1:4).

Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

3:8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*

This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly - "Affirm" means to speak confidently, to insist. Those who teach and preach should study diligently so that they can confidently speak God's word. They must speak, exhort and rebuke with the authority of God's word (cf. Titus 2:15).

that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works - Teachers and preachers must confidently teach that Christians should be careful to maintain good works.

- A. "Careful" means to be thoughtful, intent and concerned about something. A form of this word is found in Colossians 3:2 and is translated as "set your mind on." Thus, God wants Christians to intently set their minds on good works.
- B. God also commands Christians to "maintain" good works. "Maintain" means to busy oneself with, or to diligently engage in. This word was used of those who practice a profession. Thus, God wants us to diligently engage in and practice good works as a profession.

3:9 *But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.*

But avoid foolish disputes - "Foolish disputes" are senseless controversies.

- A. Christians are to contend earnestly for the faith, not senseless controversies (Jude 3).

- B. The faithful are to be set for the defense of the gospel not foolish disputes (Philippians 1:17).
- C. Christians are to avoid vain, idle, useless discussions about things that do not produce good or about things that create strife and ungodliness.

genealogies - Discussions of genealogies focus on a person's origin, that is, their ancestors. Some thought there was religious significance in who their ancestors were. This caused disputes rather than godly edification (1 Timothy 1:4). We will be judged by the deeds done in our body, not by who our ancestors were or the deeds they did (2 Corinthians 5:10).

contentions - "Contentions" means strife, dissension and quarrels.

Proverbs 6:16-19, "These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and **one who sows discord among brethren.**"

strivings about the law - "Strivings" means fights and controversies. The "law" refers to the old law of Moses given to the children of Israel. False teachers placed great emphasis upon that old law in spite of the fact that Jesus had nailed it to His cross.

Colossians 2:13-15, "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."

for they are unprofitable and useless - We are to avoid such things because they are unprofitable and useless. Maintaining good works is good and profitable. Doing the things mentioned in this verse is not useful or beneficial. It is useless, that is, fruitless, not producing any good.

3:10 *Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,*

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition - The Greek word (PARAITEOMAI) translated "reject" means, "to shun, avoid, have nothing to do with."

- A. In Romans chapter 16 God issued a similar command.

Romans 16:17-18, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

- B. The word translated "divisive" is the one from which we get the word "heretic." This Greek word (AIHRETIKOS) means, "the holding of a self-willed opinion contrary to the truth." It also includes the creation of division by forming sects as a result of holding such self-willed opinions.
- C. "Admonition" includes the idea of both teaching and warning. They need to be taught and warned to repent. However, if a divisive person refuses to repent after the second admonition, he must be rejected.

2 Thessalonians 3:14, "And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed."

3:11 *knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.*

knowing that such a person is warped and sinning - The Greek word (EKSTREPHŌ) translated as "warped" means, "to turn inside out, to change for the worse, to pervert, to corrupt."

- A. This person has chosen to corrupt or pervert himself by his teaching.
- B. He has deliberately chosen to change himself for the worse by moving away from the truth to hold on to his self-willed opinion.
1. The word "sinning" indicates that he is continuing in his false teaching.
 2. He is clearly refusing to repent.

being self-condemned - "Self-condemned" does not mean that he acknowledges his sin. It means that because of his stubborn refusal to repent, he condemns himself.

Conclusion 3:12-15

3:12 *When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.*

When I send Artemas to you - We do not find Artemas mentioned anywhere else in the Scriptures. From the context we can assume he was a faithful brother who did the same work as Tychicus.

or Tychicus - A man named Tychicus is mentioned in Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7 as a beloved brother, faithful minister and fellow servant of the Lord. It is said that Tychicus accompanied Paul along with Timothy and Trophimus (Acts 20:4). In 2 Timothy 4:12, Paul had sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there - Paul asks Titus to join him at Nicopolis. There were several cities with this name, but this Nicopolis seems to be the city situated on the southeast outcrop of Epirus in Greece.

3:13 *Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing.*

Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing - This is the only place Zenas is mentioned, but we can assume he was a faithful brother who would help Apollos on the journey.

A. The Apollos mentioned here may be the one who was eloquent, mighty in the scriptures and fervent in spirit, but needed to be taught the way of the Lord more accurately (Acts 18:24-26).

1. He helped the Christians in Achaia by refuting the Jews, showing from the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:27-28).

2. He also preached in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6).

B. Paul told Titus to "send" these men on their journey quickly.

1. The word "send" can be used to describe helping others by various means, including money.

2. A form of this word is found in Romans 15:24 where it is translated "to be helped on my way."

3. Paul was telling Titus to help these brothers in Christ so they could do the Lord's work.

3:14 *And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*

And let our people also learn to maintain good works - "Our people" refers to the disciples in Crete, who are commanded to maintain good works. "Maintain" means to busy themselves with, diligently engaging in and practicing good works.

- A. Notice that maintaining good works must be LEARNED.
- B. The importance of doing such good works is something that must be taught regularly.
- C. Each Christian needs to be teaching and reminding himself about this daily.
- D. Good works are mentioned several times in this epistle (Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8).

to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful - One of the reasons why Christians are to continually learn to maintain good works is so that they are not unfruitful or unproductive.

- A. The importance of bearing fruit is a regular theme in the New Testament (Luke 8:15; John 4:35-36; 15:8; Philippians 1:11; Colossians 1:10; James 3:17-18).

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

- B. What produces such fruitfulness?
 1. We must hear the word of the truth of the gospel and allow it to bring forth fruit (Colossians 1:5-6).
 2. We must work diligently to ensure that we are doers of that word, and not hearers only (James 1:22).
 3. We must be willing to put forth the work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope (Philippians 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:3).

C. What happens if a Christian chooses not to be fruitful in the Lord's work?

1. They will be cast out as a branch, withered, thrown into the fire and burned (John 15:6).

2. With that sobering thought in mind, let us do the following:

2 Peter 1:5-8, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3:15 *All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*

All who are with me greet you - All the brethren who were with Paul also sent their greetings to Titus. They are not named because these individuals were probably known by Titus. Such a greeting indicates their love and interest in Titus and his work.

Greet those who love us in the faith - Paul asks Titus to deliver his greetings to the faithful brethren who were with him in Crete.

Grace be with you all - Notice that Paul began this epistle by wishing grace upon Titus and he ends it in the same way (Titus 1:4).

Amen - "Amen" literally means "so be it." The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), that was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English.

A. The word comes from a Hebrew root word that means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain."

1. It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3).

2. At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled."

3. When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true."
- B. Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said.
 - C. However, our approval does not make it true.
 - D. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

FINIS

APPENDICES.....

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AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM

Now admittedly, the three epistles do constitute a historical problem. To illustrate, when did Paul and Timothy make that special trip to Ephesus? When did Paul and Luke teach and preach on the island of Crete? Was Paul put to death at the end of his two-year imprisonment in Rome, as many scholars hold? If so, can the visit of Paul and Timothy to Ephesus and the visit of Paul and Titus to Crete be fitted into Luke's itinerary of Paul's travels and works? All who have tried to fit Paul's visits to Ephesus and Crete into Luke's itinerary have failed and theologians with a mind-set that Paul was put to death at the end of his two-year imprisonment at Rome have sought out other explanations for the existence of Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. Their primary conclusions have been that either those epistles are fragments of materials which Paul left with an associate or that they are outright pseudonymous writings.

Some brethren have not given this problem a thought; others contend that Paul was put to death at the end of his two year imprisonment in Rome; and others (hopefully the majority) have given serious study to the question and have concluded that Paul was necessarily released from his two year imprisonment and that he continued his ministry for some five to six years longer during which time he visited Philippi, Ephesus and the island of Crete, and also made his long purposed journey to Spain.

Luke closed his Acts of the Apostles in the following words: "And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and none forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two-year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact, the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free.

When Paul had been in Rome for approximately a year (A.D. 60), he had an occasion to write Philemon, a longtime acquaintance, relative to Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave. In closing his letter to Philemon, Paul wrote: "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you" (Phile 22). The point to be stressed is that Paul expected an early release from prison. A year later (A.D. 61), he wrote the Philippians relative to the possible outcome of his approaching trial before Nero as follows: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh, – if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose, I know not ... and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith ... But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly ... him I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me: but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly" (Phil 1:21-25; 2:23).

The fact is that Paul's case was before the court. He felt reasonably certain that he would be released, but perhaps not as certain as a year ago when he wrote Philemon. He seems to have been much more guarded in his expectation. Some have reasoned

that the difference lay in the fact that Nero had in the meanwhile married Poppea who used their influence with Nero in behalf of the Jews. Josephus described Poppea as a religious woman and that she had requested favors on behalf of the Jews.

According to Josephus, Poppea became a proselyte to Judaism. One historical fact known is that she exerted her influence over Nero relative to the wall which the Jews built to intercept Agrippa's view of the temple. While Josephus referred to Poppea as a religious woman, the case is that she induced Herod, her paramour, to divorce his young wife, Octavia, and marry her. Later she demanded of Nero that he cause his mother, Agrippina, to be "accidentally" killed. She also demanded the death of her rival, Octavia, and gloated when she received the head of her victim, which had been forwarded from Pandataria to her at Rome.

Probably the marriage of Nero to Poppea had nothing to do with Paul's caution relative to whether or not he would in reality be released. The fact remains, however, that through Poppea the Jews could wield a stronger position against Paul, their considered enemy.

Anyway, the fact remains that Paul still anticipated that he would be released and he promised that upon his release he would pay the Philippians an immediate visit. Thus, his promise was out to visit in the area of Ephesus where Philemon dwelt and in Philippi with a church that had contributed to his financial support from its very beginning. Paul's first epistle to Timothy shows beyond reasonable doubt that Paul had been released from his Roman imprisonment; that he did fulfill his promise to visit Philippi; and that he also fulfilled his promise to visit Philemon, for he (Philemon) lived fewer than a hundred miles from Ephesus.

Someone is bound to ask: "Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?" There is external evidence.

To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of Clement of Rome. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied." In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: "Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus, was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of

patience.” Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto “the extreme limit of the west,” and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long-avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.

A second source of external evidence is the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: “Luke compiled for ‘most excellent Theophilus’ what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed from Spain.” Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.

A third source of external evidence is from the historian Eusebius. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: “Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix’s successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large and preached the word of God without restraint. Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.” As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with other external evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already submitted.

A fourth source of external evidence is from the historian Jerome. He wrote from Bethlehem in A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: “And because a full account of his (Paul’s) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord’s passion, that is the second of Nero, at the time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west. As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; ‘at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.’” This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul’s writings

together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that “he preached also in the west,” or Spain. Thus, by both internal and external evidence—Paul’s release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul’s second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.

The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero’s death. Nero’s death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul’s two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well.

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The Epistles of I and II Timothy, Titus
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UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The second doctrine of Calvinism, Unconditional Election, is based on the first, Total Hereditary Depravity. Calvinists say that since mankind is totally depraved and cannot respond in faithful obedience to the invitation of Jesus -- people cannot choose for themselves to obey or disobey God -- then God had to choose for mankind. Unconditional Election states that God chose some to obey and some to disobey.

Unconditional Election is the belief that God, with no regard to the will of man, made an eternal choice of certain persons unto eternal life and some to eternal damnation and that number is so fixed that it cannot be changed.

Rooted in Calvin's view of the sovereignty of God, Unconditional Election is also referred to as the doctrine of predestination.

This article will examine the doctrine of Unconditional Election by defining predestination; analyzing the misused texts used to support it; and citing some Scriptural objections to it.

PREDESTINATION DEFINED

"The doctrine that the salvation or damnation of individuals has been foreordained by God; the determination beforehand of future events." (Webster's Dictionary, 1977 edition, p.289)

To understand predestination, one must understand the Greek word **proorizo**. This Greek word is translated three different ways in the King James Version of the Bible: "predestinated," "ordained," "determined before." It is translated "foreordained" in every occurrence in the American Standard Version of the Bible. It means, "To limit or mark out beforehand; to design definitely beforehand, ordain beforehand, predestine." (The Analytical Greek Lexicon, p, 345) It "...denotes to mark out beforehand, to determine before, foreordain." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 307) A.T. Robertson says it means, "To define or decide beforehand." (Word Pictures in the New Testament, p. 517)

A summary from Scripture reveals that predestination refers to Jehovah's creation of man and His determination beforehand of the conditions through which man might live with Him eternally. It concerns the Father's predetermination that all people who meet His conditions would live eternally in heaven and all who refuse submission to those conditions would suffer eternal damnation.

TEXTS MISUSED TO SUPPORT UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

Acts 4:28. Calvinists use this text to say that God purposed all things before the foundation of the world. One must ask, "What was 'determined before?'" The answer is the death of Jesus. Jesus' death had been prophesied as part of God's plan to save mankind. (Luke 22:21, 22; Acts 2:22, 23) The Jews did not realize that they were fulfilling God's plan. God did not force them to kill His Son. They were accountable for their actions.

Acts 13:48. The argument here is that God, before the foundation of the world, appointed only certain individuals to life. This verse does not state that those who were ordained to eternal life were given it apart from their own will. Belief is made a condition to eternal life. Thus, as many as had been appointed put on Christ, or met the conditions. Reversing the sentence causes the true thought to be clearer: Those who believed became part of those who had been appointed to eternal life.

Romans 8:28-30. The argument from this passage is that God, before the foundation of the world, predestinated certain individuals to salvation. Under consideration in this passage are "those who love God" (v. 28), not just a few who God loves and "those who are called according to His purpose." (v. 28) One is not called by a still small voice or by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit but by the gospel. (2 Thessalonians 2:14) Those who hear, believe, and respond in obedience are referred to as being "called." (Galatians 1:6; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 2:9)

This passage is a statement of God's entire purpose and its succession of events. God determined to send mankind a Savior to die for all who would come to Him. Then He foreordained it all before the events actually took place. In that sense, God predestinated our salvation. God foreordained that anyone who accepted His call would be conformed to the image of His Son. It is the confirmation that is predestinated, not the acceptance. Those who accepted the gospel call were then justified and glorified.

1 Corinthians 2:7. The argument from this passage is the predestination of God elected certain individuals to salvation. The context shows clearly that it is God's plan of redemption that was ordained (predetermined) before the ages. The wisdom and power of God in reference to salvation are revealed in the gospel (Romans 1:16). In times past, it had been a mystery, i.e., not fully revealed. Even the prophets did not understand it. (Note vv. 8-10) Now it is revealed as the wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:3,4).

Ephesians 1:4, 5, 11. The argument is that certain individuals are predestinated and others are not and that if one was not one of those predestinated, he is eternally damned and there is nothing he can do about it. In reality, it is a particular **group** or **class** of people that God chose before He made the world. It is those who are "in Him," i.e., those in Christ.

- a. Verse 4a. The apostle Paul and the others were part of that class which God chose before the foundation of the world. Those "in Him" (this class or group) are the predestinated ones.
- b. Verse 4b. The kind of life these should live is predestinated.
- c. Verse 5. The adoption was predestinated.

- d. Verse 11. One is an heir of eternal life because he is a part of that predestinated group.

A school teacher, on the first day of class, told his students that some would pass and some would fail the course they were about to take. He then described the things necessary for one to be of those who would pass. At the end of the school year, just as the teacher had said, some passed and some failed. Since the teacher predestinated the outcome before he began, did it mean that he caused each individual to either pass or fail and that there was nothing they could do about it? No. Likewise, God predestinated before He made the world that He would choose those "in Christ" and revealed those things necessary for one to be in Him. It is therefore up to each individual to do those things necessary to be found in Christ and have salvation.

SCRIPTURAL OBJECTIONS TO UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

God has given mankind freedom of choice. He gave Adam and Eve the freedom of choice (Genesis 2:16-17). Their choice was plain -- obey and live or disobey and die. Their choice was made through and by their own will having been influenced by Satan. Who is willing to say that since God foreknew the outcome that He forced or ordained Adam and Eve to sin (James 1:13-14)? Mankind today still has freedom of choice (Joshua 24:15). People can choose today whether or not they will serve God (Revelation 22:17). Both the Psalmist (Psa. 119:30) and Mary, the sister of Martha (Luke 10:42), are examples of this principle.

God is impartial -- no respecter of persons (2 Chronicles 19:7; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11; 1 Peter 1:17). If Unconditional Election is true then God has indiscriminately condemned those who will be eternally damned while favoring those who are of His elect. Calvinists who insist that since God is sovereign and can arbitrarily choose who to save do not realize that if God were to do that He would violate His own nature for He is also just (Psalm 89:14). God has not exempted anyone from the opportunity to obtain eternal life (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Salvation is not wholly dependent on God. The origin of salvation is utterly dependent on Him (Ephesians 2:4-10). The reception of salvation is dependent on man (Revelation 22:17; Philippians 2:12). The reception of salvation comes through meeting the conditions God has provided through His grace. God placed on man the responsibility of obtaining the salvation which He foreordained or predestinated. God foreordained the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:7-8; 2 Timothy 1:9-10), but man must obey it in order to receive the benefits of it (1 Peter 4:17). God predestinated that Christ should die for man (1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8), but man must obey Him to receive His blessings (Hebrews 5:9). God foreordained that redemption would be in Christ (Ephesians 1:4-7) but man must do those things to be found in Him (Galatians 3:26-27). The church was predestinated (Ephesians 3:9-11), but one must be baptized into it to be a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:13). God wants all persons saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9). He has not arbitrarily doomed any individual without giving him a chance at eternal life.

Unconditional Election nullifies the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Nothing could be more foolish than to preach the gospel to all if only people whom God arbitrarily chooses are able to understand it. If nothing can change anyone's status in relation to salvation or condemnation, why preach it? Why warn people to flee from the wrath to come (Matthew 3:7)? If they are elect, they will not incur the wrath of God regardless of what they do or do not do. If they are not elect, they cannot flee anyway. Unconditional Election nullifies the universal invitation of Christ (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17). Why would Jesus plead with people to do the impossible?

CONCLUSION

The Bible does teach predestination but not the Unconditional Election that Calvinists teach. It does not teach that individuals have been foreordained to life or death no matter what they do. It states that we are free moral agents with the ability to accept or reject God's commandments thus determining whether we will ultimately be saved or lost.

The predestination or foreordination of God determined that He would save sinful man through the sacrifice of His Son. Those who would respond to the gospel, His power unto salvation (Romans 1:16), and its call (2 Thessalonians 2:14) would become part of His elect. Those who reject the gospel and its message would be damned eternally. God will render judgment on all in the final day based on what they have done. The righteous will have life. The wicked will face the second death. Each person, not the predestination of God, determines what his/her destiny will be (Romans 2:3-11).

FAITH AND WORKS

- I. Can we be saved by our own works?
 - A. Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast."
 - B. 2 Timothy 1:8-9 - "Saved...not according to our works but according to His own purpose."
 - C. Romans 11:6 - "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace, otherwise work is no longer work."

- II. In Romans 4:1-25 Paul is correcting a false belief that man could be saved by his own "perfect works." If a man could do a "perfect work" (one's life being that work — completely void of sin), then there would be no need for God's grace.

Paul argues that God would then be indebted to that person due to their perfect life (4:4). Abraham's righteousness was "by faith," not his own "perfect work," or God would have owed Abraham a debt, and no grace would have been necessary.

But we see that grace AND faith were needed to justify him.

- III. We have seen that we are justified by faith as a result of God's grace (unmerited favor). BUT is it necessary to "obey God in order to receive this grace?"
 - A. 1 Samuel 15:22 - "Then Samuel said: Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."
 - B. Ecclesiastes 12:13 - "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."
 - C. John 14:15 - "If you love Me, keep my commandments."
 - D. Romans 6:17-18 - "But God be thanked that though you were the servants of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, ye became slaves of righteousness."

It is, therefore, necessary to obey God in order to receive His grace, and to become servants of righteousness!

- IV. Why are we God's servants; what is our purpose?
- A. Ephesians 2:10 - "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, [What kind of works? Our own? No!] which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."
 - B. Notice that these are not our own works, but the works that God Himself prepared for us to do.
 - C. Compare Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; Romans 11:6; 4:4-5.
- V. What are these works which these verses refer to?
- A. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 - "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love..."
 - B. Hebrews 6:10 - "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love."
 - 1. God desires all to do the same thing (v. 11).
 - 2. Be not slothful (v. 12).
 - C. Galatians 5:6 - "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."
 - D. Romans 16:26 - "But now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith."
- We can see by these passages that faith is supposed to do something.
- VI. Can we receive the grace of God in vain?
- A. 2 Corinthians 6:1 - "We then as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain."
 - B. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said he had not received the grace of God in vain — "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
 - C. It should be noted here that the grace of God caused Paul to labor (work), and if he would not have worked, the grace would have been in vain!

- D. Through faith we are justified by works:
 - 1. Done in obedience to God's commandments,
 - 2. Which are a result of His grace.

VII. Other examples of faith which led to works which led to perfect faith.

- A. Noah was led by faith to build an ark (Hebrews 11:7).
 - 1. He and his family would not have been saved by faith alone.
 - 2. Without works they, as well as their faith, would have been dead.
- B. The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:4-9).
 - 1. Israel's belief in what God said led them to obey and to look upon the serpent.
 - 2. They could have believed all day long, but without obeying and looking upon the serpent they were without hope.
- C. The wall of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-21).
 - 1. God's promise was not put into action until some works were done.
 - 2. The people had to walk around the city for seven days until God would work His works.
 - 3. Until that last command was obeyed God would not cause the walls to fall.
- D. Naaman the leper (2 Kings 5:1-19).
 - 1. A work of faith led Naaman to obey the prophet by doing something.
 - 2. He evidently believed he would be healed or he would not have sought the prophet in the first place — but that was not enough!
 - 3. He scoffed at a simple command to go and dip in the Jordan river BUT until that command was obeyed the man continued to be a leper!
 - 4. It is amazing how people today scoff at a simple command like

baptism in the same way.

5. Work is a result of God's commands through faith. Nothing more and nothing less is acceptable to God.

CONCLUSION

We are not saved by works of our own, but we are saved by a working obedient faith that submits to God's commands to gain access to the blood of Christ.

- A. Faith in itself is dead.
 1. We must do the will of God, not just be hearers only (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:35-40).
 2. God has shown time and time again that He will not carry out a promise until conditions are met.
 3. That condition is obedience to His word which, when obeyed, are works which He has prepared for us to walk in.
- B. Let us not accept the grace of God in vain by NOT doing the works which He commanded.
 1. In Revelation 2:10 John writes, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."
 2. This was not a dead faith but was one of action and works, and became their work of faith and labor of love.

Through faith we are justified by works done in obedience to God's commands, through which His grace is given!

WOMEN - PASTORS AND PREACHERS

In our world today, women are increasingly taking the roles of preachers and pastors, but is this the work of God? The question cannot be answered by human traditions, emotions, or opinions. The Bible is the inspired Word of God which answers every religious question so that we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Preacher’s Work

First, the Bible defines each work. A preacher publicly proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ. A preacher is an evangelists or minister of the gospel and here is his work:

- Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
- But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (see 2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Paul was an Apostle and “a preacher” especially dedicated to teaching the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7). An evangelist may travel from place to place at times; he also may remain with the same church for several years, teaching “publicly” and “house to house” (Acts 20:20, 31).

The Pastor’s Work

The pastor’s work is entirely different. A pastor is a shepherd of God’s people viewed as sheep. He is also called an elder because of his spiritual maturity and a bishop because he oversees the local church. Pastor (or shepherd), elder (or presbyter), and bishop (or overseer) refer to the same person doing the same work (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7).

This work involves overseeing and managing all the affairs of a local church:

- Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
- Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind (1 Peter 5:2).

The unique work of a pastor is not publicly proclaiming the gospel as a preacher. False religions confuse the roles of pastor and preacher. Each local church must have a plurality of pastors, never a one-man pastor (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

Women Too?

God’s Word teaches men, not women, are to serve as pastors in a local church and as public preachers of the gospel. The New Testament law of Christ clearly forbids women from taking the roles of public leaders in the church. The apostle Paul stated, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Women are not to preach in assemblies with men present or in any other way to exercise places of authority over men. A pastor must be a male: "the husband of one wife . . . one that ruleth well his own house" (1 Timothy 3:1-7). No woman can obey God's Word as a public preacher or as one of the pastors in a local church.

Those who believe the Bible is inspired of God recognize the teaching of the Bible is God's word for all of us. What the Scriptures say about women's role must be taken just as seriously as what the Scriptures teach about redemption. This subject is NOT about the value or equality of women, but it is about different roles. Many women are more intelligent than some men. Many are more devoted to the Lord than some men. The Bible does not teach that women are inferior to men.

The question is not necessarily "can women teach" but rather "in what capacity or setting can women teach?" The teaching prohibited by women in 1 Timothy 2:12 is teaching which would "usurp" authority from the man. Women are permitted to teach women as well as children. However, women are not permitted to teach in such a way which dominates over or takes authority from a man. It is for that reason, as shown forth in the Bible, that women cannot occupy the role of a preacher or pastor. Such is contrary to God's plan and the roles which he has given for women and men.

THREE DIFFERENT GREEK WORDS USED FOR THE SAME OFFICE

1. The Greek word translated “bishop” (episkopos) is one of three different Greek words which are used to refer to the same office. The word episkopos is translated “bishop” in this passage and “overseer” in verses like Acts 20:28. Thus, the terms “bishop” and “overseer” are used interchangeably. According to J. H. Thayer, this word means, “an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any guardian or superintendent.” Thus, according to the meaning of this word, we see that the bishops in a local congregation have AUTHORITY from God to superintend, oversee and ensure that God’s work in that congregation is done properly (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17). Obviously, they have no authority from God to create laws. That is true because God’s word is our law and we must not add to or take away from it (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). However, bishops have the God-given authority and responsibility to ensure that God’s word is taught and implemented properly in the local congregation where they serve (cf. Titus 1:9-14).
2. The second Greek word used to refer to this office is presbuteros. This word is translated “elder” in passages like Titus 1:5 and “presbytery” in 1 Timothy 4:14. This word refers to the age and spiritual maturity of spiritual experience of the men who serve as elders. It is critically important that we understand that the terms bishop, overseer, elder and presbyter refer to THE SAME OFFICE! To see a clear example of that, please turn with me to Titus 1:5-7. Thus, the term bishop (overseer) is used to refer to the elders.
3. The third Greek word used to refer to this office is poimen. As we saw in our study of the background material for this course, this word is translated pastor and shepherd. We also learned that the terms “pastor” and “shepherd” refer to the elders of each local congregation of the Lord’s church. We noted that these terms show that the elders are God’s shepherds who tend (i.e., take care of, guard, feed, etc.) the spiritual flock of God which is His church. But we just learned from our study of Titus 1:5-7 that the term “bishop” (overseer) ALSO refers to the elders of the local congregation. Thus, the terms pastor, shepherd, bishop and overseer ALL refer to the ELDERS (presbyters). Therefore, it is clear that an elder is a presbyter, a bishop, an overseer, a pastor and a shepherd. These are just different descriptive terms which God used to refer to the same office. One of the clearest ways to see that this is the proper understanding is to study 1 Peter 5:1-2.

- Charlie DiPalma

ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING

The use of alcoholic beverages has been popular for so long, few people stop to consider whether the Bible actually supports its use or not. Let us look at each example given above to see if it really supports moderate or social drinking.

Jesus turned water into wine.

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.' Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!' This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him' (John 2:1-11).

The Greek word being used for the word "wine" is OINOS, a generic word that applies to any beverage derived from grapes whether alcoholic or not. To understand whether alcohol was involved or not, we must examine the context.

A wedding feast was in progress and part way through the celebration, the wine that was purchased had run out. Weddings were big things in ancient days. A wedding feast lasted about a week and to run out of provisions before the end would have been an embarrassment to the new couple and their families. Mary asked Jesus to handle the problem. Jesus had six waterpots filled. These held twenty to thirty gallons a piece, which means when the water was changed to wine, Jesus had made between 120 and 180 gallons of wine. If this wine was alcoholic, then there was more than sufficient quantities available to get the guests well drunk -- especially when you consider that everyone had drunk the original supplies. Yet we know that the Bible condemns drunkenness, such as in Romans 13:13 or 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Since Jesus did not sin, we know He would not have been the cause of other men's sins (Romans 1:32). Some point out that the governor of the feast tasted Jesus' wine and declared it to be good -- better than the wine served earlier. The problem with the argument is that one must assume that the higher the alcoholic content of the wine, the better it tastes. Such is definitely not the case. In fact, in a society that lacked refrigerators in every home, fresh juice was prized over juice that had become vinegary or alcoholic from storage. The governor's declaration does not prove the wine contained alcohol.

Another argument is that the governor mentioned that everyone was already drunk. The Greek word METHUO is used much like the English word "drunk." It literally means "filled to the full." It can be used to refer to a person who has had enough to drink to satisfy them; or if it is referring to an alcoholic beverage, it can refer to a person who has had too much to drink. If the guests at this wedding party were drunk with alcohol, then the governor of the feast had failed in his duties. You see the Jews considered drunkenness such a sin, they had people assigned the task of making sure it didn't happen. This is one of the reasons he was offered the first taste of the new wine brought in. If he thought it might cause drunkenness, he would have ordered it to be watered down. The governor's presence at this feast and his praise of Jesus's wine without an order to water it down is strong indication that the wine was not alcoholic.

Finally, this feast is taking place in Israel where the Old Testament laws were enforced. The Old Testament forbade the use of alcoholic beverages. Hence, we must conclude that Jesus did not serve alcoholic beverages.

The result is that the wedding feast does not prove that alcoholic beverages were in use. Instead, there are strong hints that non-alcoholic beverages were available and used.

The disciples were accused of being drunk, so alcohol must have been in use.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.' So, they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?' Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine.' But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day' (Acts 2:1-15)."

The charge is that the apostles were full of new wine. The Greek word is GLUEKOS, which literally means "sweet wine." It is a word that refers to unfermented juice. If you recall that the charge came from those mocking the disciples, it makes perfectly good

sense. Luke records that there were people present from fifteen different regions of the world and as the apostles spoke, they were all hearing them speak in their native language. But even if I knew one of the languages, there were fourteen others being spoken that I could not comprehend. It would have sounded to those running to the scene as chaos. People couldn't understand what was going on. Others taunted and said, "Oh, they're just drunk on grape juice!" In other words, they are so unable to handle their liquor that grape juice makes them drunk. Peter adroitly uses this as an opening to his sermon. He notes that since it is only nine o'clock in the morning, it is too early for people to be drinking. Yes, even in those days, people who were looking to get drunk generally did it at night (1 Thessalonians 5:7).

Once again, this verse does not prove alcoholic beverages were in use. In fact, the crowd was charging the apostles with getting drunk on grape juice. The charge was deliberately facetious because those making the charge were mocking the disciples.

Older women were only told not to be given to much wine.

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:1-5).

The Greek phrase under consideration is ME OINO POLLO DEDOULOMENAS, which literally means not enslaved to much wine. In contrast they were to train the young women to be, among other things, discreet. The word translated "admonish" in the New King James Version, is from the Greek word SOPHRONIZOSIN that means "to train in self-control." The word "discreet" comes from the related Greek work SOPHRONAS, which means "self-controlled." The root word SOPHRON literally means "safe mind." It refers to someone who is intellectually sound of mind or rational. The Jewish philosopher Philo defined the opposite of SOPHROSUNE, namely APHROSUNE, as a person who "inflamed by wine drowns the whole life in ceaseless and unending drunkenness." Paul is making the same point: older women are not to be drunkards enslaved by the overuse of wine but to teach younger women to live as they live -- sober.

In two passages, 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 2:2, the word "sober" (sophron) is joined in a list with the word "temperate" (NEPHALEOUS). As the commentator Adam Clarke explains, "He must be vigilant, NEPHALEOS, from NE - "not" and PINO - "to drink". Watchful; for as one who drinks is apt to sleep, so he who abstains from it is more likely to keep awake, and attend to his work and charge." Though temperate today refers to moderation, it wasn't all that long ago that temperate meant abstinence, as in the women's temperance movement which sought the banning of alcohol. Albert Barnes, another commentator says, "This word (NEPHALIOS) occurs only here [1 Timothy 3:2]

and in verse 11; Titus 2:2. It means, properly, sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then, sober-minded, watchful, circumspect." Hence, elders and older men were charged with both being sober and not to drink. Now are you prepared to say that older men are not to drink, but older woman may drink so long as it is not in excess?

A very similar phrase is found in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 where men seeking to be elders are told to be "not addicted to wine." Actually, the literal translation of the phrase *ME PARONINOS* is "not near to wine." Of this phrase, the commentators Lee and Burn say, "The ancient *PARONINOS* was a man accustomed to attend drinking parties, and, as a consequence, to become intimately associated with strong drink." Albert Barnes said, "The Greek word (*PARONINOS*) occurs in the New Testament only here [1 Timothy 3:3] and in Titus 1:7. It means, properly, by wine; that is, spoken of what takes place by or over wine, as revelry, drinking-songs, etc. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits by wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it ... It means that one who is in the habit of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded it as dangerous and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether."

To tell a group of elderly ladies not to be enslaved by the overuse of wine is not necessarily an implication that moderate use in social settings is allowed. Other words within the same context show that Paul has in mind that people should not be using alcohol casually. Could wine (*OINOS*) be used? Most certainly! In its non-alcoholic form, it makes a pleasant drink. In its vinegar form, it is used in cooking. In its alcoholic form it can be used as medicine. None of these proper uses constitute an overuse of *OINOS*. That is why you don't find a direct forbiddance of *OINOS*. Its use had to be limited.

Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake.

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." (1 Timothy 5:23)

Paul is not instructing Timothy to use *OINOS* (wine) casually at dinner. Timothy had a stomach ailment and other problems for which Paul recommended that he use a little wine to treat the symptoms. Especially notice what is implied here. Timothy normally drank water exclusively. He was not in the habit of using any grape beverage at all. Paul had to encourage him to ease up on his total abstinence so as to use a little wine for its medicinal properties.

Wine was used in the New Testament days for medical purposes. For example, in the parable of the good Samaritan, "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luke 10:34). However, medical uses do not imply acceptance of casual use.

Valium can be used to relax injured muscles, but valium can be abused when casually taken. I knew a man dying of cancer who needed a mild pain killer. He was instructed by his doctor to drink a glass of sherry before bed time so he might sleep in more comfort. This is a proper use of alcoholic beverages.

Hence, once again we fail to find support for social drinking or moderate drinking. Instead we find that at least one Christian strongly avoided all use of wine and had to be encouraged to take some when he needed it for his medical condition.

DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY?

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

Thousands of years prior to the establishment of the Lord's Church, and long before Paul addressed the conduct of Christian slaves in the first century, various forms of slavery were commonplace. In fact, virtually every ancient civilization used slaves.¹ Slavery was prevalent enough in Babylon in the 18th century B.C. to be mentioned numerous times in the Code of Hammurabi.² The Egyptians enslaved hundreds of thousands of Israelites in the 16th century B.C. (Exodus 1; cf. Numbers 1:46). Historians estimate that, by the time Paul wrote his New Testament epistles in the first century A.D., five to eight million slaves resided within the Roman Empire,³ including 15-25% of the total population of Italy.⁴

"SLAVERY"—A BROAD TERM IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The English term "slave" is translated from the Greek word *doulos*. Some translations use the term "servant" (or "bondservant"), but *doulos* is best translated "slave" (especially since "in normal usage at the present time the two words ["slave" and "servant"—EL] are carefully distinguished").⁵

So what is meant by "slave" or "slavery"? Americans often envision ancient slavery as the kind of oppressive bondage that was popular among many slave owners in North America in the 18th and 19th centuries, when millions of Africans were stolen from their homelands and shipped across the Atlantic. Certainly, some first-century slavery was similar, but often it was quite different. For example, slavery in New Testament times was not based on race. Many foreign soldiers and their families became slaves after being captured during times of war.⁶ What's more, "[s]ome became slaves because they could not pay back the money they had borrowed. The government would also take people into slavery if they could not pay their taxes. There were also many cases of poor people selling their children as slaves to richer neighbours."⁷

Consider the fact that the ancients would likely interpret certain modern American practices as forms of "slavery." For example, hundreds of thousands of Americans who work, labor nearly one-third of every year **for the government**. That is, Americans are **forced** by the government **with the threat of fines and imprisonment** to pay over 100 days wages to local, state, and federal governments every year in the form of taxes. Many Americans hand over more money to the government each year than they spend on food, clothing, and shelter combined.⁸ According to irs.gov, U.S. citizens who fail to pay government-mandated taxes can be prosecuted and imprisoned for up to five years. And what about the military draft—"the practice of **ordering people by law to serve** in the armed forces"?⁹ To this day, all 18-25-year-old males in the U.S. are required to register

with the Selective Service System in case of “a crisis requiring a draft”¹⁰—a draft in which thousands or millions of men would be forced to go to war, and possibly die for their country, whether they wanted to or not.

Please understand, I am not suggesting that we should defraud the government, or that we should refuse to submit to its authority if the draft is reinstated. I am simply suggesting that “slavery” was broadly defined in the first century. When people ask questions such as “Did Paul endorse slavery?” we must understand that there were various kinds of slavery in the first century, including some forms that resemble certain practices today which may be generally accepted and morally justified.

DEFINE “ENDORSE”

Did Paul “endorse” slavery? The word “endorse” means “to publicly or officially say that you support or approve of (someone or something).”¹¹ To endorse is to advocate or champion an idea, a thing, or a person. Did Paul “endorse” slavery? Did he champion it or publicly promote it as one advocates a particular product or political candidate? No, at least not the kind of slavery most people think of when they hear the term.

In truth, Paul specifically condemned “kidnappers” (*andrapodistais*) or “menstealers” (KJV) as lawless and insubordinate individuals who practice that which is “contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10). Danker, et al. defines this kidnapper as a “slave-dealer.”¹² Far from endorsing such activity, Paul groups these men-stealing, slave traders with murderers, liars, and other ungodly sinners (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Yet, five chapters later Paul wrote: “Let as many bondservants [*doulos*, slaves] as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things” (1 Timothy 6:1-2). What did Paul instruct Timothy to teach the various Christian slaves in the first century? To respect, honor, and even serve their masters (i.e., to set a good example of Christianity before them).

PAUL ENDORSED GODLY SUBMISSION, NOT SINFUL FORMS OF SLAVERY

Paul’s instruction for slaves to honor their masters is perfectly consistent with the rest of God’s Word regarding all Christians submitting to those in positions of authority. To the Christians living in the heart of the Roman Empire, Paul taught: “Let **every soul** be subject to the governing authorities.... Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:1,7; cf. Matthew 22:21).¹³ Similarly, Peter wrote: “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether

to the king as supreme, or to governors.... For this is the will of God.... Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1 Peter 2:13-17). Was the Roman Empire corrupt in many ways? Certainly. Was a Christian’s submission to Rome a blanket endorsement of the Empire? Not at all. But Christians were (and are) to be humbly compliant.

God expects all Christians to have a spirit of submission. Children are to submit to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Young people are to be submissive to older people (1 Peter 5:5). Wives are to submit to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1-2). Members of local churches are to submit to their overseeing elders who rule over them (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). Local shepherds are to submit fully to the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). In short, all Christians, including those in leadership positions, are to “be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5). And, yes, God expects His people to humbly “submit...to every authority instituted among men,” whether to kings or to slave masters (1 Peter 2:13,18, NIV).

SUBMISSION FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

God did not create the practice of slavery. Furthermore, Paul’s inspired instructions regarding a slave’s submission to his master were not given because God favors a master over his slave (Galatians 3:28), or because He simply wants some people to have harder lives than others. The specific purpose that Paul gave for Christian slaves submitting to their pagan masters was “so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed” (1 Timothy 6:1).

Imagine if Christian slave after slave in the first century became less submissive to their masters as they learned more about the equality of all mankind (Genesis 1:26-27). Consider how the reputation of Christianity would have been greatly tarnished in the eyes of the unbelieving world if Paul explicitly taught that all slaves should be set free. As William Barclay noted: “For the Church to have encouraged slaves to revolt and rebel and rise against their masters would have been fatal. It would simply have caused civil war, mass murder, and the complete discredit of the Church.”¹⁴

God, in His infinite wisdom, commands all men to do their best to make the most for the cause of Christ **in whatever situation** they find themselves. “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave” (1 Corinthians 7:21-23). Whether a person becomes a Christian while in slavery or in a terrible marriage, God wants His people to change from the inside out and have a positive spiritual impact on others. **Be obedient** to parents, husbands, governing officials, and yes, even slave owners. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works **and glorify your Father in heaven**” (Matthew 5:16). Rather than giving people reasons to curse Christ and His

doctrine, be obedient to all those in positions of authority “for the Lord’s sake” (1 Peter 2:13). Be honorable at all times so that you may “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” and “by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:15,12; cf. 3:1-2). In short, “humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 2:6).

TAKING PAUL’S TEACHING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION

Over time, with the spread of Christianity (cf. Acts 19:10,26; 21:20) and with increasing numbers of slave masters becoming Christians, the physical lives of many slaves would have improved dramatically. As slave owners with honest and good hearts learned (1) to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and (2) to love their neighbors (including their slaves) as themselves (Matthew 22:36-40), they would give up “threatening” (Ephesians 6:9). As Christian slave owners contemplated treating others how they want to be treated (Matthew 7:12), they would give their slaves “what is just and fair,” knowing that they, too, had a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1). As slave owners submitted to Christ, they would be transformed by the Gospel, learning to be “kindly affectionate” to everyone (Romans 12:2,10), including all those who served them. In short, far from endorsing sinful slavery, Paul’s teachings, **taken to their logical conclusion**, would eventually lead truth-seeking masters and government officials to help bring an end to any kind of cruel, sinful captivity.¹⁵

ENDNOTES

¹ “History of Slavery” (no date), *History World*, www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41.

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⁵ Frederick William Danker, William Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich (2000), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago), p. 260.

⁶ John Simkin (2014), “Slavery in the Roman Empire,” *Spartacus Educational*, <http://spartacus-educational.com/ROMslaves.htm>.

⁷ Simkin.

⁸ Scott Greenberg (no date), *Tax Foundation*, <https://taxfoundation.org/tax-freedom-day-2016-april-24/>.

⁹ “Conscription,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscription>, emp. added.

¹⁰ “Who Must Register” (2008), Selective Service System, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090507213840/http://www.sss.gov/FSwho.htm>.

¹¹ “Endorse,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/endorse>.

¹² Danker, et al., p. 76.

¹³ All bold text in Scripture quotations has been added for emphasis.

¹⁴ William Barclay (1956), *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Westminster), p. 141.

¹⁵ For a more extensive response to questions regarding slavery, and especially slavery in the Old Testament, see Kyle Butt (2005), “Defending the Bible’s Position on Slavery,” *Reason & Revelation*, 25[6]:41-47, June, https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub_rar/25_6/0506.pdf.

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IS THE "WHOM" Poured OUT IN TITUS 3:6 THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- I. The Holy Spirit being "poured out" is an important idea that deserves our careful attention.
 - A. It appears that in the New Testament the Holy Spirit being "poured out" refers only to the baptism with the Holy Spirit that was limited to the first century when miracles were being worked. Please consider several facts which could point to that conclusion.
 - B. God prophesied through Joel that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28-30).
 1. It is clear that God did not mean for us to take the words "all flesh" literally.
 - a) "All flesh" used literally would include humans, animals, fish and birds (1 Corinthians 15:39).
 - b) Surely God was not saying that He would pour out His Spirit on animals, fish and birds.
 - c) Clearly, there are some restrictions on the words "all flesh."
 - d) God was also not saying that He would pour out His Spirit on wicked people.
 2. To understand what God meant by "all flesh", we must remember a key point.
 - a) Mankind was referred to as belonging to one of two groups.
 - b) They were either Jews or Greeks also called Gentiles (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28).
 3. Logical conclusion: when God predicted He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh, He meant that He would pour His Spirit out on Jews and Gentiles.
 - C. Joel said the result of this outpouring would be that certain people would work signs and wonders, including prophesying (Joel 2:28-30).
 - D. "Poured out" is found together with a reference to the Holy Spirit in only two other passages in the New Testament.

1. Acts chapter 2.
 - a) In verse 16 Peter said what happened on that day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of what Joel prophesied.
 - b) The pouring out of the Holy Spirit referred to the baptism with the Holy Spirit that the apostles of Christ received (Acts 2:1-4).
 - c) As a result, the apostles were able to speak in languages they had never learned before (Acts 2:5-11).
 - d) The special purpose of that baptism with the Holy Spirit was so the apostles could serve as inspired witnesses of Christ in revealing the truth (John 16:13; Acts 1:8).
 - e) It confirmed that these men were speaking God's word by His authority and power (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:2-4).
 - f) This was proof that Christianity was approved by God.
 - g) Thus, the apostles were speaking an authoritative message that needed to be believed and obeyed by all.
 - h) In verse 33 Peter said that Jesus was the one who poured out the Holy Spirit.
 - i) Jesus was the only one who could administer baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).
2. The Greek word translated as "poured out" (in connection with the Holy Spirit), is also found in Acts 10:45.
 - a) The pouring out of the Holy Spirit referred to the baptism with the Holy Spirit that the Gentile Cornelius and his household received.
 - b) As a result, Cornelius and his household spoke in languages they had never learned before (Acts 10:46).
 - c) The special purpose of this baptism with the Holy Spirit was to show that God had approved the Gentiles to receive the message of salvation (Acts 11:15-18; 15:7-9).

- d) It showed that the Gentiles were to be received into the church upon the same conditions as those with a Jewish background, that is, faithful and loving obedience to the gospel (Acts 15:8-9).
 - e) God made no distinction between the Gentiles and the Jews (Acts 15:9). The Gentiles were not inferior to the Jews as far as God was concerned.
- E. Thus, God had poured out His Spirit on the Jews, represented by the apostles of Christ, when He baptized them in the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2.
- F. And He poured out His Spirit on the Gentiles, represented by Cornelius and his household, when He baptized them with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 10.
- G. With those two occurrences of baptism with the Holy Spirit, God had poured out His Spirit upon "all flesh," that is the Jews and the Gentiles fulfilling the prophecy of Joel 2:28-30 completely.
- H. There is no other record of a baptism with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.
- I. Furthermore, by the time God revealed the book of Ephesians, He said there is only one baptism that is acceptable to Him (Ephesians 4:4).
- 1. That one baptism is immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins as we saw previously.
 - 2. Since the only baptism acceptable to God today is immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins, there is no baptism with the Holy Spirit today.
- J. It should be noted that baptism with the Holy Spirit never saved any person from their sins.
- 1. In Titus 3:5 Paul said to Christians at Crete that they were saved by the washing of regeneration, that is, baptism in water, NOT by baptism with the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. The same was true of Cornelius and his household in Acts chapter 10.

- a) The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, who would tell him what he "must do" (Acts 10:5-6).
 - b) Peter was sent to Cornelius to speak words to him (Acts 10:22).
 - c) He went to Cornelius to tell him "all the things commanded you by God" (Acts 10:32-33).
 - d) The angel told Cornelius that Peter would tell him "words by which you and all your household will be **SAVED**" (Acts 11:13-14).
 - e) Cornelius and his household were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46).
 - f) **AFTER** that happened, Peter told them what they **MUST DO** to be saved.
 - g) What did Peter tell Cornelius and his household to do to be saved **AFTER** they had been baptized with the Holy Spirit?
 - h) He **COMMANDED** them to be baptized in **WATER**. (Acts 10:47-48).
 - i) Thus, Cornelius and his household were not saved by baptism with the Holy Spirit.
 - j) Instead, the words that Peter spoke to them telling them what they must do to be saved were to be baptized in water.
 - k) That is entirely consistent with the scriptures we studied earlier showing that the one baptism is immersion in water for the forgiveness of our past sins.
- K. As prophesied in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, God did away with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit when He completed the revelation and confirmation of the New Testament near the end of the first century.
- L. Thus, miracles are not being worked today. [Please see the appendices - "MODERN-DAY MIRACLES, TONGUE-SPEAKING, AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM: A REFUTATION" (AP Article) for additional information.]

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES, TONGUE-SPEAKING, AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM: A REFUTATION--EXTENDED VERSION

by Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Numerous religious groups commonly claim the assistance of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Famed religious television personalities boldly announce the active influence of the Holy Spirit even as they speak. Supposedly, the Holy Spirit talks to them personally, heals viewers instantaneously, and enables them to babble uncontrollably in an “unknown tongue.” All of this is claimed to be “proof positive” of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Do miracles still happen? Can people speak in tongues today? Does God, in the 21st century, supernaturally countermand the laws of nature and heal people miraculously?

“Come now, and let us reason together.” (Isaiah 1:18). It is absolutely imperative that we examine **Scripture**—not our feelings, not what someone else says happened to them, and not our own experience. The only sure and certain approach is to ask: What does the Bible teach? The reader must ask: “Do I honestly believe the Bible to be the Word of God?” Answers to critical questions of human existence require that a person be willing to spend time in the Word, “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). One must “search the scriptures” (Acts 17:11). One must be honest and willing to go where the evidence takes him. If you had to choose between what you genuinely think you have experienced or seen firsthand and what the Bible actually says, which would you choose? You must ask yourself: “Will I honestly accept God’s written Word on the matter of miracles?” If you will, I invite you to join me in an examination of what the Bible teaches pertaining to miracles.

THE DEFINITION OF MIRACLES

First of all, what exactly is a “miracle”? How does the Bible use the word? The three central terms used in the Bible to designate a supernatural (as contrasted with a natural) manifestation are: (1) “miracle” (*dunamis*); (2) “sign” (*semeion*); and (3) “wonder” (*teras*). All three terms occur together in Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:4, and 2 Corinthians 12:12. Related terms include “work” (*ergon*) and “mighty deed” (*kratos*). The occurrence of a miracle in the Bible meant that God worked **outside** the laws of nature. W.E. Vine, whose Greek scholarship, according to F.F. Bruce, was “wide, accurate and up-to-date” (Vine, 1952, Foreword), stated that “miracle” (*dunamis*) is used in the New Testament of “works of a **supernatural** origin and character, such as could not be produced by **natural** agents and means” (1952, p. 75, emp. added). Otfried Hofius noted that a “sign” (*semeion*) “contradicts the **natural** course of things” (1976, 2:626, emp. added) and, similarly, “wonder” (*teras*) referred to events that “contradict the ordered unity of nature” (2:633, emp. added). Thus a miracle in the Bible was not merely an event that was astonishing, incredible, extraordinary, or unusual—like the the birth of a baby, or a flower, or the narrow avoidance of an accident. A miracle in the Bible was a **supernatural** act. It was an event that was contrary to the usual course of

nature (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 755). The miraculous is not to be confused with the **providential**, where God operates **within** the usual course of nature.

THE DESIGN OF MIRACLES

Second, it is absolutely imperative that one recognizes the **purpose** of the miraculous. Miracles in the New Testament served the singular function of **confirmation**. When an inspired speaker stepped forward to declare God's Word, God **validated** or **endorsed** the speaker's remarks by empowering the speaker to perform a miracle. Many New Testament passages articulate this fact quite plainly. For example, the apostles "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and **confirming** the word by the **signs** that followed" (Mark 16:20, emp. added). The Hebrews writer asked: "[H]ow shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be **spoken** by the Lord, and was **confirmed** to us by those who heard, God also **bearing witness** both with **signs and wonders**, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrews 2:3-4). Referring to the initial proclamation of the Gospel to the Samaritans, Luke stated: "And the multitudes with one accord heeded **the things spoken** by Philip, hearing and seeing the **miracles** which he did" (Acts 8:6). The apostles prayed to God: "[G]rant to Your servants that with all boldness they may **speak Your word**, by stretching out Your hand to **heal**, and that **signs and wonders** may be done" (Acts 4:29-30).

These passages, and many others (e.g., Acts 13:12; 14:3; 15:12; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; cf. Exodus 4:30), show that the purpose of miracles was to **authenticate** the oral/spoken word as God's Word. Miracles **legitimized** and **verified** the teaching of God's messengers, as over against the many false teachers (like Simon in Acts 8:9, or Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus 7:11) who attempted to mislead the people. In the late 19th century, Greek lexicographer Joseph Thayer worded this point well when he noted that "sign" (semeion) was used in the New Testament "of miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's" (1901, p. 573). Even the miracles that Jesus performed were designed to back up His claim (i.e., spoken words) to be deity. Consider two examples: (1) Using the parallel term "works" (a key word in the book of John), Jesus remarked to Philip, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the **words** that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his **works**. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very **works'** sake" (John 14:10-11, emp. added); (2) Nicodemus said to Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these **signs** that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2, emp. added). This pattern is repeated in the New Testament many times over (e.g., John 2:23; 5:36; 6:14; 7:31; 10:37-38,41-42; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22). In other words, Jesus performed signs and miracles to prove His divine identity and thereby authenticate His message. His message, in turn, generated faith in those who chose to believe His teachings (cf. Romans 10:17). Here is the consistent sequence presented in Scripture:

Signs → Word → Faith

(1) Signs confirmed the Word; (2) the Word was presented to hearers; and (3) faith was created (by the Word) in those who received it.

An excellent demonstration of this process is provided by Luke in his report of the conversion of the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus. Elymas the sorcerer attempted to thwart Paul's effort to teach Sergius the Gospel. So Paul performed a miracle by striking Elymas blind. Luke next recorded: "Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the **teaching** of the Lord" (Acts 13:12, emp. added). One might well expect the text to have said that Sergius was astonished at the **miracle** that Paul performed. But Luke was careful to report the situation with precision. The miracle that Paul performed captured Sergius' attention, causing him to recognize the divine origin of Paul's Gospel message. The Gospel message, in turn, generated faith in the proconsul—in harmony with Paul's later affirmation to Christians in Rome that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Over and over again in the New Testament, a close correlation is seen between the performance of miracles and the preaching of the Word of God (cf. Mark 6:12-13; Luke 9:2,6).

MIRACLES CONFIRM THE WORD			
PASSAGE	MESSAGE	CONFIRMATION	RESPONSE
Acts 4:29-32	"Speak Your Word with all boldness"	"by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done"	"those who believed were of one heart and soul"
Acts 8:5-12	"the things spoken by Philip;" "Philip...preached Christ"	"hearing and seeing the miracles which he did"	"they believed Philip as he preached the things...and were baptized"
Acts 13:7-12	"sought to hear the word of God"	"You shall be blind, not seeing"	"the proconsul believed...being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord"
Acts 14:2-3	"speaking boldly in the Lord"	"The Lord...was bearing witness to the word...granting signs/wonders to be done"	"a great multitude...believed"
Romans 15:18-19	"I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"	"in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God"	"to make the Gentiles obedient"

1 Corinthians 2:4-5	“my speech and my preaching”	“in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”	“that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”
1 Thessalonians 1:5-6	“our gospel did not come to you in word only”	“but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance”	“you became followers of us and the Lord, having received the word”
Hebrews 2:1-4	“so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord”	“God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit”	“give the more earnest heed”
Mark 16:15-20	“preach the gospel...they went out and preached...the word”	“the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs”	“he who believes and is baptized will be saved”
John 2:22	“He had said this...the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said”	“when he had risen from the dead”	“they believed”
John 2:23	“in His name”	“they saw the signs which He did”	“many believed”

Other Purposes: Super-Spiritual?

But some maintain that there are other reasons for divine healing and tongue-speaking. Some say tongue-speaking is a sign that the tongue-speaker is super-spiritual. Others say miraculous healing serves the purpose of making the believer well—a mere act of mercy to relieve his pain and suffering. They say God does not want us to suffer, and so He will heal us just to ease our pain in this life because we are His children.

Regarding the first claim, in Paul’s admonitions directed to the church of Christ at Corinth, he insisted that the person who possessed the ability to speak in tongues was not spiritually superior to the one who had no such ability. The tongue-speaker had a responsibility to utilize his gift appropriately, i.e., to help others (1 Corinthians 14:6,9,12,19). His gift no more placed him in a spiritually superior position than did any other gift possessed by any other member—whether the ability was miraculous or non-miraculous (1 Corinthians 12:11-27). Tongue-speaking was simply one miraculous capability among many bestowed by God without regard to a member’s spiritual status, let alone his spiritual **superiority** over another member (1 Corinthians 12:7-11,28-30).

Other Purposes: To Make Well?

Regarding the second claim, certainly, the compassion of God was evident when people received miraculous healing in New Testament times. And, surely, relief from suffering would have been a side effect of being healed. But the Bible teaches that **relieving suffering was not the purpose of miracles**. Such a purpose would contradict—even thwart—the divine intent of this created Earth as a place where hardship exists to prepare us for eternity (see Warren, 1972). Death and sin entered the world due to human choice, and God allows the circumstances caused by human decisions to take their course. God is not going to interfere with the natural order of things to show partiality to some over others. The Christian is subject to the same diseases, the same tragedies, and the same physical death that befall non-Christians: “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). The Bible, in fact, warns Christians that they can **expect** to be the recipients of all sorts of hardship, opposition, temptation, and suffering (e.g., 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-17). Commenting on the purpose of miracles, J.W. McGarvey wrote: “[T]o say that they were wrought for the single purpose of showing divine compassion toward the sick, and those oppressed by the devil, would be to ignore a purpose which is easily discerned, which is openly avowed by Christ himself, and which is of much greater importance (1910, p. 354). That purpose was “to support his proclamation...a necessary proof of the claim of Jesus” (pp. 355-356).

If God’s intention was to exempt Christians from sickness and disease, He certainly has fallen down on the job, since the vast majority of Christians throughout the last 2,000 years have experienced the exact same afflictions suffered by unbelievers. If miracles in the first century had as their object to improve the health or physical well-being of the recipient, then Jesus and the apostles were failures, because they left untouched a lot of sick and dying folk! Jesus healed the minority of the sick people of Palestine, and healed **none** outside of that tiny geographical region (with the exception of the Canaanite woman’s daughter). In fact, one would be forced to conclude that God’s compassion did not extend to **everybody**. But the Bible affirms that **God loves the entire world of humanity** (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Hence, miracles did not have as their central purpose to demonstrate God’s compassion, nor to ease pain, sickness, and suffering. Writing in 1898, McGarvey made the following observations:

[U]nlike these modern advocates of “divine healing,” the apostles were never known to go about exhorting people to come forward for the healing of the body. They effected miraculous cures in a few instances, “as a sign to the unbelievers,” but they never proclaimed, either to saints or sinners, that the healing of all diseases was a part of the gospel which they were sent to preach. These so-called faith-cure churches, therefore, and the preachers who officiate in them as “divine healers,” or what not, are not modeled after the apostolic type, but are misleading the people by humbuggery (p. 351).

Insufficient Faith?

The usual rebuttal to these observations is that the reason some people do not receive a miracle is that “they do not have sufficient faith.” But this objection is likewise unscriptural. It is true that some individuals in the New Testament were commended for the faith that they possessed **prior** to being the recipient of a miracle (e.g., Mark 5:34). It does not automatically follow, however, that faith was a **necessary** prerequisite to miraculous reception. Many people were **not** required to have faith as a prerequisite. For example, all individuals who were raised from the dead obviously were not in a position to “have faith” (e.g., John 11:44). Nor did those possessed by demons have faith before being healed, since they were not in their right mind (e.g., Luke 9:42; 11:14). The man who was blind from birth actually showed uncertainty regarding the identity of Jesus (John 9:11-12, 17, 25, 35-36). The man who was healed by Jesus as he laid beside a pool of water, in fact, did not even know who healed him (John 5:13). On one occasion, Jesus healed a paralytic after observing, not his faith, but the faith of **his companions** (Mark 2:5). Additional texts indicate that many who received the benefits of miracles were not required to have faith (Luke 13:12; 14:4; Acts 3:1-10).

The opposite was true as well. There were individuals who possessed faith, and yet were not healed of their ailments. The apostle Paul obviously had plenty of faith. He had an “infirmity” that was so painful that he called it “a thorn in the flesh” and “a messenger of Satan” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Yet his earnest prayers to God for relief did not result in his being healed. Timothy was a faithful and effective servant of the Lord. He had “frequent illnesses” and stomach trouble of such severity as to warrant Paul referring to it by inspiration. But rather than simply healing him, or telling him to “pray for healing,” Paul advised him to use a little wine as a tonic (1 Timothy 5:23). Another Christian worker and companion of Paul in his evangelistic travels, Trophimus (Acts 20:4; 21:29), had to be left at Miletus due to his sickness (2 Timothy 4:20). Epaphroditus was an extremely valuable worker in the kingdom of Christ, so much so that Paul referred to him as “my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier...and minister to my need” (Philippians 2:25). When he became sick “nigh unto death” (Philippians 2:27, 30)—likely due to his exhausting kingdom activity and service to Paul—Paul did not heal him. These examples demonstrate that personal faith was not prerequisite to the reception of a miracle in the first century. Miracles were inextricably bound to the authentication of the spoken Word of God.

But what about those verses that seem to indicate that faith **did** have something to do with whether a miracle would be forthcoming? For instance, what of Matthew’s observation that when Jesus went to His own country, He “did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58)? Notice that the text cannot be correlating the presence of the miraculous with the presence of belief. After all, “not many” implies that **some** miracles were performed—even though unbelief was rampant. The point that Matthew was making, therefore, was that when Jesus performed a few miracles to authenticate His oral claim to deity, the evidence was rejected, making it superfluous for

Christ to offer any further miraculous demonstrations. Albert Barnes explained this matter succinctly:

We are not to suppose that his [Jesus—DM] **power** was limited by the belief or unbelief of men; but they were so **prejudiced**, so set against him, that they were not in a condition to **judge of evidence** and to be convinced. ... It would have been of no use, therefore, in proving **to them** that he was from God, to have worked miracles. ... He gave sufficient proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief without excuse (1956, p. 150, emp. in orig.).

Jesus was simply doing what He instructed the Twelve to do: “whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, ...shake off the dust that is under your feet” (Mark 6:11). He also had said: “[N]either cast your pearls before the swine” (Matthew 7:6). If performing additional miracles would have confirmed the Word, Jesus would have performed them.

John actually settled this question for the unbiased searcher. He worded the thematic statement of his Gospel record in the following words: “Many other **signs** therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, **that ye may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31, emp. added). John said that belief occurs **after** the miracle—not before, in order to receive a miracle! The New Testament teaches the very opposite of those who claim that miracles occur today. They say a person must have faith **before** he or she can receive a miracle. The New Testament teaches that miracles were performed to authenticate the divine origin of the speaker’s message and/or identity. The message, in turn, generated faith in the hearer (cf. Romans 10:17). Hence, **miracles preceded faith**. Even tongue-speaking was designed to convince the unbeliever to give heed to the message (1 Corinthians 14:22).

What About Elders?

Some have suggested that James 5:14-15 indicates that elders can heal people today. But James refers to the first century phenomenon of supernatural healing that is mentioned as one of the gifts available to the first century church (1 Corinthians 12:9,30; see also Mark 6:13). Yet, as demonstrated above, all such miraculous gifts have ceased. Elders in the first century churches would have acquired the ability to heal by receiving the laying on of the apostles' hands. The olive oil, though used medicinally in the first century, was merely a symbol of Christ’s power to heal, which the elders would have applied to the sick person as they prayed for God to heal the individual. The miraculous healing was not imparted by either the oil or the elders' hands, but by “the prayer of faith” (vs. 15). Such miraculous intervention on God's part would have been immediate with complete and full recovery. Those who believe these verses apply today are inevitably stymied when the sick individual is not instantaneously healed, and then must resort to excuses and unscriptural explanations. It is obvious from the text that the

illness referred to is a **life-threatening one**, since “save” in verse 15 refers, not to spiritual salvation, but to physical salvation, i.e., he will be made well (cf. “the Lord will raise him up”). When they bring elders to pray over a person who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, does he recover? What if the elders pray over and anoint a person who lost his hand or arm in an accident? Will his arm be restored? Again, the desire to have miraculous healing in the church today fails completely to grasp why healing occurred in Bible times: not merely to make people well, but to spotlight the validity of God’s Word as conveyed by His emissaries.

SUMMARY

A good summary passage that pinpoints precisely the purpose of miracles throughout the Bible is seen in the incident concerning the widow of Zarephath to whom Elijah was sent for assistance in surviving the famine during the reign of King Ahab. When her son’s serious illness culminated in his death, Elijah brought the boy back to life, raising him from the dead. Her subsequent verbal observation summarizes succinctly the function of the miraculous: “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth” (1 Kings 17:24). The miracle fulfilled its intended purpose: to verify that, as a genuine emissary of the one true God, Elijah was a communicator of God’s Word. The restoration of the life of her son—though magnificent and thrilling in itself—was secondary to the verified realization that Elijah was a legitimate communicator of the Word of the one true God.

THE DURATION OF MIRACLES

These observations bring us to a third extremely critical realization: once God revealed the entirety of the information that He wished to make available to mankind (later contained in what we call the New Testament), the need for miraculous confirmation of the oral Word came to an end. Now, people can sit down with a New Testament, the written Word of God, and, with honest and diligent study, conclude that it is God’s Word. Many preachers and teachers today have failed to acknowledge this crucial biblical factor. They fail to face the fact that we have absolutely no need for the miraculous. Since the purpose of miracles has been achieved, the miracles, themselves, have ceased. I repeat: the Bible teaches that miracles are no longer necessary. We have everything we need to function in this life, to be pleasing to God, and to survive spiritually (2 Peter 1:3). Spiritual maturity is now within the grasp of every single individual who chooses to access the means to maturity—the written Word of God. To insist that we have need for the miraculous today is to undermine, and to cast aspersions upon, the all-sufficiency of God’s Word (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The most detailed treatment of the phenomena of miracles in the New Testament, including tongue-speaking, healing, and prophecy, is 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. These three chapters were written to Christians at Corinth because miracles were being abused and misused. Chapter 12 defines the miracles. Chapter 13 indicates their

duration. Chapter 14 explains their disposition. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul argued that the body (the church) should function harmoniously by using miraculous gifts properly. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul argued that love is a more excellent attribute than miraculous gifts. After all, miraculous gifts (i.e., prophecy, tongue-speaking, supernatural knowledge, etc.) were going to fail, cease, vanish, and be done away (13:8). These miraculous gifts are identified in the text with the expression “in part” (13:9-10). The “in part,” or miraculous, would cease and be done away when the “perfect” had come. But to what does the “perfect” refer?

The Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleios*. The term does not refer to “perfect” in the sense typically understood by the average modern English reader, i.e., to be sinless. Following this faulty notion, some have concluded that the “perfect” refers to Jesus—since He has been the only perfect person. Other interpretations apply “perfect” to heaven (the only perfect place that will be free of sin and imperfection), or Christian maturity and perfect love (the perfect condition or quality). But, in context, Paul was not contrasting qualities or places. He was contrasting quantities, i.e., those things that were incomplete and partial (miraculous gifts) with that which would be total and complete (the fully revealed Word of God). The inaccuracy of these interpretations is seen further in the Greek definition of *teleios*. The word refers to totality, that which is whole, brought to its end, finished, and lacking nothing necessary to completeness (Delling, 1972, 8:73; Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 816; Thayer, 1901, p. 618). When referring to persons, *teleios* refers to being full-grown, adult, and mature (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 817; Thayer, 1977, p. 618). Used in its neuter form, Paul was referring to a thing—not a person—something that, when completed or finished, would replace the incomplete or partial, i.e., the miraculous gifts—which clearly had only temporary significance. Commenting on the abolition of the miraculous gifts of prophecy and supernatural knowledge (mentioned in vss. 8 and 9), W.R. Nicoll observed that “these charisms are **partial** in scope, and therefore temporary: the **fragmentary** gives place to the **complete**” (1900, 2:900, emp. added). Kenneth Wuest agreed: “In 1 Corinthians 13:10, the word means ‘complete,’ and is contrasted to that which is incomplete” (1943a, pp. 117-118). Whereas James used the term *teleios* to refer to the all-sufficiency of God’s Word in its ability to achieve everything it was intended to do (James 1:25), the exegete is forced to conclude that Paul’s use of “perfect” referred to the completed revelation or totally revealed New Testament Scriptures. The revelation of God’s will was completed in its entirety when the final book of the New Testament, Revelation, was written by John prior to A.D. 100.

Paul offered a useful illustration to clarify his point. When the church possessed only bits and pieces of God’s will, as revealed through scattered miraculous gifts and the gradual production, between approximately A.D. 57 and A.D. 95, of the written documents from the inspired writers of the New Testament, it could not achieve full spiritual maturity. It therefore was like a child (13:11). It lacked the necessary constituent elements to reach spiritual adulthood. However, when the totality of God’s will, which became the New Testament, had been revealed, the church then had the means available to become “a man” (13:11). Once the church had access to all of God’s written

Word, the means by which the Word was given (i.e., miraculous gifts) would be obsolete, useless, and therefore “put away” (13:11). Notice that in this illustration, Paul likened miracles to “childish things” (13:11). In other words, miracles were the spiritual equivalents of pacifiers that were necessary while the church was in a state of infancy. Now that the church has access to “all truth” (John 16:13), the use of tongue-speaking and other miraculous enhancements in the church today would be comparable to an adult man or woman sucking on a pacifier!

Paul then explained his point by making a contrast between the initial necessity of miracles to reveal and confirm God’s Word, and the idea of looking through a clouded mirror (see Workman, 1983, p. 8). Once the entire contents of the New Testament had been revealed, the miraculous gifts no longer would be necessary. Having all of God’s revealed Word would enable one to be face to face with that Word rather than “looking through a clouded mirror,” i.e., having partial access. Paul wrote (13:11): “Now I know in part [i.e., my knowledge of God’s revelation is incomplete and partial due to limited access via the miraculous element—DM], but then [i.e., when all of God’s Word is revealed—DM] shall I know fully even as also I was fully known [i.e., I shall be made to know or taught thoroughly (which is the figure of speech known as heterosis of the verb in which the intransitive is put for the transitive—see Bullinger, 1898, p. 512)—DM].”

Paul made essentially the same point to the Ephesians that he made to the Corinthians. Miracles—the “gifts” given by Christ (Ephesians 4:8)—were to last “**till** the unity of **the** faith and **the** knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13, emp. added). Two significant observations emerge from this latter verse. First, the word translated “till” (Middle English for “until”) is *mechri*, and was used as a conjunction to indicate the terminus ad quem [finishing point] of the miraculous offices (mentioned in vs. 11) bestowed as gifts by Christ. [For treatments of the use of *mechri* in this verse, see Thayer, 1977, p. 408; Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 517; Moulton and Milligan, 1982, p. 407; Blass, et al., 1961, pp. 193-194; Robertson, 1934, pp. 974-975; Dana and Mantey, 1927, p. 281; see also the use of the term in Mark 13:30 and Galatians 4:19]. Nicoll observed: “The statement of the great object of Christ’s gifts and the provision made by Him for its fulfillment is now followed by a statement of the **time** this provision and the consequent service are to last” (1900, 3:332, emp. in orig.). Paul was “[s]pecifying the **time** up to which this ministry and impartation of gifts are to last” (Vincent, 1890, p. 390, emp. added).

Second, the phrase “the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God” often is misunderstood to refer to the eventual **unifying** of all believers in Christ. But this conclusion cannot be correct. Both Scripture and common sense dispel such a notion. Complete unity within Christendom will never occur. Those who profess affiliation with Christianity are in a hopeless state of disunity. Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism are fractured into a plethora of factions and splinter groups—literally thousands of divisions and disagreements. Besides, Protestant denominationalism did not exist in the New Testament era, and the New Testament neither countenances nor legitimizes any such “manifestation” of Christianity. Nor will unity ever be achieved even

within churches of Christ. The first-century congregations did not attain complete internal unity. Nor have the post first-century congregations achieved unity within.

In contrast with this interpretation, notice the use of the articles in the phrases: “**the** faith” and “**the** knowledge.” Contextually, Paul was referring to **the system of faith** alluded to so often in the New Testament. Jude urged his readers to “contend earnestly for **the** faith” (Jude 3). Paul referred to himself when he quoted others as saying, “He that once persecuted us now preacheth **the** faith of which he once made havoc” (Galatians 1:23). Luke reported that “a great company of the priests were obedient to **the** faith” (Acts 6:7). Elymas sought to “turn aside the proconsul from the faith” (Acts 13:8). The early disciples were exhorted to “continue in **the** faith” (Acts 14:22). Due to Paul’s repeat visits in Lycaonia, “the churches were strengthened in **the** faith” (Acts 16:5).

So “the faith” and “the knowledge” refer to the **completed body of information** that constitutes the Christian religion. Indeed, eight verses earlier (Ephesians 4:5), Paul already had referred to “the faith” as the summation and totality of Christian doctrine—now situated in the repository of the New Testament. An honest exegete is driven to conclude that once the precepts of New Testament Christianity were revealed on Earth, the miraculous element no longer was necessary. Miracles lasted until “the faith” was completely revealed. They had served their purpose, in the same way that scaffolding is useful while a building is under construction. However, once construction is complete, the scaffolding is removed and discarded as unnecessary and superfluous paraphernalia.

THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF MIRACLES IN CORINTH AND EPHESUS	
1 Corinthians 12-14	Ephesians 4
“Gifts” (12:4,9, 28,30,31)	“Gifts” (4:7-8)
“no schism in the body” (12:25)	“joined and knit together” (4:16)
“one body, many members” (12:12,14,18-20,27)	“whole body, every part” (4:16)
“apostles, prophets, teachers” (12:29)	“apostles, prophets, pastor-teachers” (4:11)
“prophecies, knowledge” (13:8)	“prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers” (4:11)
“fail, cease, vanish, done away” (13:8-10)	“until” (4:13) “we come to the unity of the faith” (4:13)
“when perfect comes” (13:10)	“the knowledge/the fullness of Christ” (4:13)
“shall know” (13:12)	“the knowledge/the fullness of Christ” (4:13)
“child” (13:11)	“children” (4:14)

“man” (13:11)	“man” (4:13)
“put away childish things” (13:11)	“grow up” (4:15)
“love” (13:1-8)	“love” (4:15-16)
“edification of the church” (14:3-5,12,17)	“edifying the body of Christ” (4:12)

THE DISPLAY AND DISPOSITION OF MIRACLES

Fourth, the actual exercise of miraculous gifts by Christians is addressed in 1 Corinthians 14. In this context, Paul used the term “gifts” (charismata, from charisma) in a technical sense (like pneumatika) to refer to miraculous abilities, designated by Thayer “**extraordinary** powers...by the Holy Spirit” (1901, p. 667, emp. added; cf. Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 887). Hans Conzelmann stated that the term indicated that “[t]he operations are **supernatural**” and of “**supernatural** potency” (1974, 9:405, emp. added). [The word is so used in the Pauline corpus in 10 of its 16 occurrences (Romans 1:11; 12:6; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). The only other occurrence of the word in the New Testament was Peter’s comparable use, i.e., to refer to supernatural ability (1 Peter 4:10)—see Moulton, et al., 1978, p. 1005]. In the Corinthian context of chapter 14, special attention was given by Paul to two of the miraculous gifts in particular: prophecy and tongue-speaking. Several relevant points occur with regard to the gift of tongue-speaking that help one to understand both the temporary nature of miracles as well as their irrelevance to a contemporary pursuit and practice of New Testament Christianity.

Tongue-Speaking

First, in 1 Corinthians 14, the term “unknown” (in regard to tongues) was italicized in the KJV because it does not appear in the original Greek text (14:2,4,13-14,19,27). By inserting this word into their translation, the translators were attempting to aid the English reader. They undoubtedly were hoping to convey the idea that the languages to which Paul referred were **unknown** to the speaker, i.e., the speaker had no prior training by which to learn or know the language. He spoke the language strictly by God’s miraculous empowerment. “Unknown” certainly was not intended to convey the idea that the tongues were unknown **to all humans** and, as such, were non-earthly, non-human languages.

Second, the events reported at the very beginning of the Christian religion (Acts 2) set the precedent for understanding that tongue-speaking entailed no more than the ability to speak a foreign human language (which the speaker had not studied) to people from a variety of geographical locales (e.g., Parthians, Medes, Arabians—Acts 2:9-11). The unbiased Bible student must conclude that what is described in detail in Acts 2 is the same phenomenon alluded to in 1 Corinthians 14. All tongue-speaking in the Bible consisted of known human languages (ideally known to the very audience being addressed) that were unknown (i.e., unstudied, unlearned) by the one who was speaking the language.

Third, there is simply no such thing as an “ecstatic utterance” in the New Testament. The tongue-speaking of 1 Corinthians 14 entailed human language—not incoherent gibberish. A simple reading of the chapter demonstrates that known human languages are under consideration. For example, Paul paralleled tongue-speaking with the use of the trumpet in warfare. If the bugler sounded meaningless noise, the military would be thrown into confusion. It was imperative for the bugler to blow the proper notes and tones, i.e., meaningful musical “language,” so that the army would understand what was being communicated (whether to charge, engage, or retreat). Sound without sense fails to achieve the very purpose of tongue-speaking. Paul then stated:

So likewise ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages **in the world**, and no kind is without signification. If then I know not the meaning of the language, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me (1 Corinthians 14:9-11, emp. added).

Obviously, Paul was referring to human languages—those that exist “in the world.” He envisioned a scenario where two individuals, who spoke different languages, are attempting to communicate with each other. If one speaks in Spanish and the other in German, as they attempt to speak to one another, each would be a “foreigner” to the other. Neither would understand what the other was attempting to say. Hence the need for tongue-speaking, i.e., the ability to speak human language unknown to the speaker but known to the recipient.

Later in the chapter, Paul quoted Isaiah 28:11-12 where God threatened the Israelites with the fact that their failure to listen to Him (by means of the words spoken by His prophets) meant that He soon would be communicating to them through the language of their Assyrian conquerors—conquerors whom God would send against them. This powerful illustration presupposes the fact that in both Isaiah and 1 Corinthians, human languages are under consideration. After quoting Isaiah, Paul drew the conclusion that tongue-speaking was intended by God to be directed to **unbelievers**. Why? Because it would prove to the unbeliever that the tongue-speaker, who did not possess the natural ability to speak that language, was being empowered by God to speak in the language spoken by the unbeliever. The unbeliever would recognize the divine origin of the tongue-speaker’s ability, and thereby be willing to consider the words being spoken as the instructions of God. Again, an examination of 1 Corinthians 14 yields the result that no contextual justification exists for drawing the conclusion that the Bible refers to, let alone endorses, the notion of “**ecstatic**” speech.

Tongues of Angels?

But what about Paul’s passing reference to the “tongues of angels” in 1 Corinthians 13:1? Would not this reference prove that tongue-speaking could involve languages

beyond those spoken by humans? In the first place, consider the role, purpose, and activity of angels described in the Bible. The word “angel” (Greek—angelos; Hebrew—malak) simply means “messenger”—one who “speaks and acts in the place of the one who has sent him” (Bietenhard, 1975, 1:101; Botterweck, et al., 1997, 8:308; Grundmann, 1964, 1:74ff; Gesenius, 1847, p. 475; Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, p. 7). It does not mean merely “to send,” but rather “to send a messenger/message” (Ringgren, 1997, 8:310). It is true that angels in both the Old and New Testaments carried out a wide range of activities beyond message-bearing, including: worshipping God (Revelation 5:11-12); comforting, aiding, and protecting (Daniel 6:22; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 5:19; Hebrews 1:14); and executing judgment and inflicting punishment and death (e.g., Matthew 13:49; Acts 12:23). But it still remains true to say that the meaning of the term “angel” is a messenger—one who communicates a spoken message. Therefore, their principal role in God’s scheme of things was to function as messengers to humans (Grundmann, 1964, 1:74). Consequently, angels always are represented in Scripture as communicating in human language.

In the second place, what logical reason exists for humans to speak in an alleged “angelic” language that is different from human language? What would be the spiritual benefit? The Bible certainly makes no provision for humans to communicate with angels in such a language, nor would there be any need for an angel to communicate to a human in a non-earthly language. The whole point of 1 Corinthians 12-13 was to stress the need to function in the church in ways that were meaningful and understandable. Since God, by His very nature, never would do anything that is superfluous, unnecessary, or frivolous, it follows that He would not bestow upon a human being the ability to speak in a non-human language. The ability would serve no purpose! The Bible simply offers no rationale nor justification for identifying the “tongues of angels” in 1 Corinthians 13:1 with some heavenly, otherworldly, non-earthly languages.

In the third place, if, in fact, the “tongues of angels” refers to known human languages, what was Paul’s point? Since angels were God’s appointed spokesmen, they naturally would perform their assignment in such a way that God would be represented as He would want to be. God’s own angelic emissaries would have complied with their responsibility in such a way and manner that they would have God’s approval. In other words, angels would naturally articulate God’s message as well as it could be expressed (i.e., perfectly). When God inspired mere humans to communicate His will, He integrated their own educational background, stylistic idiosyncrasies, and vocabulary into their oral and literary productions. No such need would have existed for angels. Their communications would have been unfiltered through human agency. Their announcements would have been the epitome and pinnacle of eloquence and oratorical skill.

Perhaps, then, Paul was not drawing a contrast between human and nonhuman languages at all. Before referring to the “tongues of angels,” he referred to “the tongues of men.” Why would Paul say, “Though I speak with the tongues of men”? After all, isn’t that precisely what all adult humans do? We humans speak at least one human

language! Paul must have been referring, then, not to the ability to speak a human language, but to the ability to speak all human languages. No tongue-speaker in the first-century church had the ability to speak all human languages. In fact, the textual evidence indicates that most tongue-speakers probably had the ability to speak only one human language—which he, himself, did not understand—thus necessitating the need for an inspired interpreter (1 Corinthians 12:30; 14:26-28). Paul could apparently speak more languages than any of the others (1 Corinthians 14:18). If the “tongues of men” referred to the number of human languages (rather than referring to the ability to speak a human language), then the “tongues of angels” would refer—not to the ability to speak an angelic language—but to the ability to speak human languages **the way angels do**.

Here, then, would have been Paul’s point: even if a tongue-speaker could speak every human language known to man, and even if that tongue-speaker could speak those human languages with the efficiency, skill, and perfection that God’s angelic messengers have spoken them in history, without love, the ability would be wasted. With this understanding of the text, Paul was not contrasting human with nonhuman language. He was encompassing both the quantity (if I could speak all human languages) and the quality (if I could speak them perfectly) of speaking human language.

One final point on the matter of the “tongues of angels” merits mention. Even if the expression actually refers to angelic tongues that are nonhuman, it still is likely that tongue-speakers were incapable of speaking such languages. Why? Paul was speaking hypothetically and hyperbolically. No human being (with the exception of perhaps Jesus) has ever been able to speak in all human languages. For Paul to suggest such was to pose a hypothetical situation. It was to exaggerate the facts. So Paul’s meaning was: “even if I were capable of speaking all human languages—which I’m not.” Likewise, no human being has ever been able to speak the tongues of angels. So Paul’s meaning was: “even if I were capable of speaking the languages of angels—which I’m not.” This conclusion is supported further by the verse that follows the reference to the “tongues of angels.” There, Paul used two additional hypothetical events when he said, “if I...know all mysteries and all knowledge” and “if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains” (1 Corinthians 13:2). But no one on the planet (with the exception of deity) has understood all mysteries and all knowledge, nor has had faith that could literally remove mountains. Again, Paul was merely saying, “even if I could do such things—which I can’t.”

Fourth, Paul stated very clearly that tongue-speaking was a sign to **unbelievers**—not believers (14:22). Tongue-speaking was to be done in **their** presence, to convince **them** of the truth being spoken, i.e., to confirm the Word. The tongue-speaking being practiced today is done in the presence of those who **already believe** that tongue-speaking is occurring and, when an unbeliever, who is skeptical of the genuineness of the activity, makes an appearance in such an assembly, the claim often is made that tongue-speaking cannot occur because of the presence of unbelief. Once again, the

New Testament teaches the very opposite of those who claim the ability to speak in tongues today.

Fifth, the recipient of a miraculous gift in the New Testament could control himself (14:32). He was not overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit so that he began to babble or flail about. Tongue-speaking today is frequently practiced in a setting where the individuals who claim to be exercising the gift are speaking uncontrollably at the very time that others are either doing the same thing or engaging in some other action. This overlapping activity is in direct violation of three of Paul's commands: (1) that each individual take their turn one at a time; (2) that no more than three tongue-speakers speak per service; and (3) that tongue-speakers remain silent if no interpreter is present (14:27-28).

The claim by many today to be able to speak in tongues is simply out of harmony with New Testament teaching. Anyone can babble, make up sounds, and claim he or she is speaking in tongues. But such conduct is no **sign** today. It is precisely the same phenomenon that pagan religions have practiced through the centuries. In the New Testament, however, no one questioned the authenticity of tongue-speaking. Why? The speaker was speaking a known human language that could be understood by those present who knew that language and knew that that particular speaker did not know that language beforehand. As McGarvey observed about Acts 2: "Not only did the apostles speak in foreign languages that were understood by the hearers, some understanding one and some another, but the fact that this was done by Galileans, who knew only their mother tongue, was the one significant fact that gave to Peter's speech which followed all of its power over the multitude" (1910, p. 318). If and when self-proclaimed tongue-speakers today demonstrate that genuine New Testament gift, their message could be accepted as being from God. But no one today has demonstrated that genuine New Testament gift.

Holy Spirit Baptism

Where does the baptism of the Holy Spirit fit into this discussion? Today's alleged practitioners typically associate the expression "Holy Spirit baptism" with the phenomenon that enables the believer to speak in tongues, heal someone, or work other miracles. In other words, Holy Spirit baptism is simply a generic reference to miraculous empowerment. Anyone who can speak in a tongue or perform any other miraculous action is said to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. He is said to be "Spirit-filled." However, it might surprise the reader to find that the Bible alludes to Holy Spirit baptism in a very narrow, specialized, even technical sense. Just because a person could speak in tongues or work miracles did not necessarily mean he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The very first allusion to Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament is John's statement: "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me...will **baptize you in the Holy Spirit**" (Matthew 3:11, emp. added). From this statement

alone, one might be tempted to assume that Christians **in general** would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. But this assumption would be a premature conclusion. John was not addressing a Christian audience. He was speaking to Jews. Nothing in the context allows the interpreter to distinguish John's intended recipients of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism—whether all humans, all Jews, all Christians, or merely some of those in one or more of these categories. Likewise, the exact recipients of the baptism of fire (i.e., hell) are not specified. However, as is often the case in the Bible, the specific recipients of this promise are clarified in later passages.

Just before His ascension, Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). In John chapters 14-16, Jesus made several specific promises to the apostles concerning the coming of the Spirit—the “Comforter” or “Helper” (parakletos)—upon them, to empower them to do the peculiar work of an apostle (i.e., to recall the words Jesus had spoken to them, to speak and write by inspiration, and to launch the Christian religion). If these verses apply to all Christians, then all Christians ought to have been personally guided “into all the truth” (John 16:13), and thus would have absolutely no need of written Scripture (John 14:26). However, in context, these verses clearly refer to **the apostolic office**.

Jesus further clarified the application of Holy Spirit baptism when He told the apostles that the earlier statement made in Luke 24:49 applied to **them**, and would come to pass “not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5). Jesus also stated that the “power” that they would receive would be from the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to witness to the world what they had experienced by being with Jesus (Acts 1:8). Notice very carefully that on this occasion Jesus made an explicit reference to the very statement that John had uttered previously in Matthew 3: “for John indeed baptized with water; but **ye** [apostles—DM] shall be **baptized in the Holy Spirit** not many days hence” (Acts 1:5, emp. added). Jesus specifically and explicitly identified the Holy Spirit baptism that He would administer (in keeping with John's prediction) would take place within a few days, and would be confined to the apostles.

All one need do is turn the page to see the promise of Holy Spirit baptism achieve dramatic and climactic fulfillment in Acts 2 when the Spirit was poured out only upon the apostles. The antecedent of “they” in Acts 2:4 is “the apostles” in Acts 1:26. The apostles were the ones who spoke in tongues and taught the people. **They** were the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as is evident from the following contextual indicators: (1) “are not all these that speak **Galileans?**” (2:7); (2) “Peter, standing up with the eleven” (2:14); (3) “they...said unto Peter and the rest of **the apostles**” (2:37); (4) Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32 and applied it to that occasion as proof that **the apostles** were not intoxicated; and (5) the text even states explicitly that the signs and wonders were “done through **the apostles**” (2:43). This pattern continues in the book of Acts: “And by the hands of **the apostles** were many signs and wonders wrought among the people” (5:12); “the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by **their hands**” (14:3); “what signs and wonders God had wrought...through **them**” (15:12).

The next direct reference to Holy Spirit baptism consisted of Peter describing the experience of the Gentiles in Acts 10. Referring to their empowerment to speak in tongues, Peter explicitly identified it as being comparable to the experience of the apostles in Acts 2. Note his explanation: “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on **us** [apostles—DM] at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us [apostles—DM]...” (Acts 11:15-17, emp. added). Peter unmistakably linked the baptism of the Holy Spirit predicted by John in Matthew 3:11, and applied by Jesus to the apostles in Acts 1:5, with the unique and exclusive bestowal of the same on the first Gentile candidates of salvation. If the baptism of the Holy Spirit had occurred between Acts 2 and Acts 10, why did Peter compare the Gentiles’ experience with the experience of the **apostles**—rather than comparing it with many other Christians who allegedly would have received it during the intervening years? The answer lies in the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur during the intervening years. Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a unique and infrequent occurrence that came directly from deity.

This understanding harmonizes with additional facts. The great prophecy of the Old Testament, which made special reference to the coming New Testament era as the dispensation of the Spirit, incorporated a most noteworthy expression. God declared, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28). Peter repeated it on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). What did God mean by the expression “**all flesh**”? Members of the charismatic community insist that “all flesh” means “all **Christians**.” They maintain that every Christian can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They claim that to narrow the application of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism to a select group of individuals would deprive all other Christians of the opportunity to receive miraculous power. However, upon what **biblical** basis may such a claim be made?

Those who claim the presence of miraculous gifts are guilty of the very thing they condemn—narrowing the expression “all flesh.” Surely no one would take the position that it means all **animal** flesh—since animals are not the recipients of God’s spiritual provisions. Nor would anyone contend that it means all **human** flesh—since all wicked, disobedient, unbelieving people would hardly expect, let alone desire, to receive God’s Spirit. Those who agree that the expression “all flesh” must undoubtedly be qualified to exclude the animals and the unbelieving will nonetheless insist that narrowing the meaning to less than “all Christians” is unjustifiable.

To understand the proper meaning and application of the expression “all flesh,” one must examine the **biblical** use of the expression. “All flesh” often is used in the Bible to refer to the bulk of humanity (e.g., Genesis 6:12-13). It also can include all animal flesh (e.g., Genesis 6:17,19). However, with God’s special utilization of the descendants of Abraham in His scheme of redemption, “all flesh” often has the more technical meaning of “all **nationalities**.” The primary reason for this specialized use of the expression was due to the fact that most of the Old Testament was written against the backdrop of the

presence of the nation of Israel. God is certainly “no respecter of persons” (Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17; Acts 10:34-35). He does not favor one ethnic group over another. However, since His redemptive intention included bringing Jesus into the world for the benefit of all, someone had to be selected through whom Jesus’ arrival might be achieved. That man was Abraham (Galatians 3:8,16) and, consequently, his descendents.

As a result of this circumstance, the Jewish writers of the Bible frequently divided humanity into **only two** racial groupings, i.e., Jew and non-Jew (Gentile). For example, in what is obviously a strongly Messianic passage, Isaiah (the “Messianic prophet”) predicted the coming of John the baptizer who would prepare the way for Jesus. He exclaimed: “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (40:5). The reference to “all flesh” was an unmistakable reference to the availability of salvation to both Jew and Gentile in the Christian era, as evinced by Luke’s quotation of the passage (Luke 3:6). The same is true in another prophecy that Isaiah uttered pertaining to the coming Christian era: “All flesh shall come to worship before Me” (Isaiah 66:23). The Jews of Isaiah’s day would not have been very pleased with Isaiah’s declarations, since they most certainly would have understood him to be predicting the incorporation of Gentiles into God’s favor—which the Jews felt they alone enjoyed.

Paul cinched the meaning of “all flesh” in his premiere treatise on justification by faith. He drew a clear distinction between the two ethnic categories by first declaring the sins of the Gentiles (Romans 1:18-32) and then declaring the sins of the Jews (Romans 2:1-3:8). Notice carefully his concluding remarks as he brought the first section of the book to its climax: “What then? are **we** [the Jews—DM] better than **they** [the Gentiles—DM]? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge **both** of Jews and Greeks, that they are **all** under sin” (Romans 3:9, emp. added). He then quoted a series of Old Testament verses, which verified his emphasis upon the two (and only two) categories of human flesh, using two significant terms: “none” and “all.” “None” means neither Jew nor Gentile. “All” means both Jew and Gentile. Then he articulated his grand and climactic conclusion: “because by the works of the law shall **no flesh** be justified” (Romans 3:20, emp. added). “No flesh” referred to Jew and Gentile. In other words, neither Jew nor Gentile could be justified by law alone. “No flesh” and “all flesh” were technical allusions to the two **categories** of human flesh, i.e., Jew and non-Jew (cf. John 17:2).

Observe, then, that the first recipients of Holy Spirit baptism, as we have seen, were the **Jewish** apostles on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It equipped them to establish the church and to write, speak, and confirm inspired truth. The second recipients of Holy Spirit baptism were the **Gentile** members of the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. It convinced Jewish Christians that Gentiles were fit prospects for the reception of the Gospel, and valid candidates for entrance into the kingdom (Acts 10:34-35,45; 11:18). So Joel’s statement, that God would pour out His Spirit on “all flesh,” applied to the outpouring on **Jews** in Acts 2 and on **Gentiles** in Acts 10. The only other conceivable occurrence of Holy Spirit baptism would have been Paul, who would have received direct miraculous ability from God as well. His reception was obviously unique because

(1) he was not an apostle when the Twelve received the Spirit, and (2) he was “one born out of due time” (1 Corinthians 15:8). Holy Spirit baptism, then, filled two unique and exclusive purposes: (1) to prepare the apostles for their apostolic (not Christian) roles, and (2) to provide divine demonstration that Gentiles were to be allowed to become Christians.

One additional consideration deserves comment regarding Joel’s prophecy. If “all flesh” referred exclusively to the Jewish apostles and the first Gentile converts, why did Joel include “sons, daughters, old men, young men, servants, and handmaids” in the reception of God’s Spirit (Joel 2:28-29)? As was typical of Hebrew prophecy, progressive, sequential, and complete fulfillment would be forthcoming. A prophecy could possess several features that found fulfillment in a variety of circumstances. It is apparent, on the basis of the references already discussed (e.g., Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; 11:15-17), that only the **first part** of Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The “last days” (Acts 2:17) referred to the **entire** Christian dispensation from Pentecost to the Judgment. The outpouring of the Spirit, therefore, would include more than just the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was confined to the Jewish apostles on Pentecost and the Gentiles a few years later. Though the peculiar phenomenon of Holy Spirit baptism was limited to those two specific ethnic groups (i.e., the twelve apostles and the household of Cornelius), **additional** activity of the Spirit would include the impartation of miraculous gifts through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (discussed below). This conclusion is evident from the fact that no “**daughters**” or “**handmaids**” received Holy Spirit baptism on Pentecost. Nor is there any evidence of the occurrence of “**dreams**” or “**visions**” on Pentecost. With the Holy Spirit’s expanded presence in the instigation of Christianity in the first century came the eventual impartation of miraculous ability separate and apart from Holy Spirit baptism. The broadened fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (subsequent to Acts 2) is seen in the references to Philip’s **daughters** who prophesied (Acts 21:9) and in the occurrence of **visions** (Acts 9:10; 10:3,10; 16:9). However, these miraculous manifestations, though included in Joel’s prophecy, were not instances of Holy Spirit baptism. The common link in the Holy Spirit’s outpouring on Pentecost and the manifestations of the Spirit thereafter was the baptism of the Holy Spirit on **the apostles**—who were the keys to the further distribution of miraculous power in the early years of Christianity.

1 Corinthians 12:13

But what about Paul’s statement to the Corinthians? He wrote: “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body...and were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Some have insisted that this verse teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is imparted to **all Christians**. Careful analysis of the verse, however, demonstrates that Paul was not referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was received only twice in the New Testament (if you omit Paul). If the Corinthians had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, Paul likely would have worded the verse: “We were all baptized in one Spirit into one body.” This wording would have made it plain that their baptism was Holy Spirit baptism. However, Paul connected “baptized” with “into one body,” and placed “in one

Spirit” **before** both “baptized” and “into one body.” Did he mean to say that their baptism entailed being indwelt with the Spirit, or having the Spirit overwhelm (i.e., immerse) them, or come upon them, i.e., that the Holy Spirit, **Himself**, was what the Corinthians had received or been baptized in?

The grammar of the passage provides a decisive and definitive answer. The word “Spirit” is in the instrumental case in Greek, indicating personal agency. The personal agent in the passage who did the baptizing is the Holy Spirit. His baptizing resulted in the placement of the individuals into the one body of Christ. The verb is aorist, showing that Paul was referring to a once-for-all act in the past. Wuest explained: “It is not the baptism with the Spirit or **of** the Spirit, in the sense that the Holy Spirit is the element which is applied to us. It is the baptism **by** the Spirit. This baptism does not bring the Spirit to us in the sense that God places the Spirit **upon** or **in** us. Rather, this baptism brings the believer into vital union with Jesus Christ” (1943b, p. 86, emp. added). The Corinthians were the beneficiaries—not of the Spirit—but of the Spirit’s guidance or assistance. They were baptized **by** the Spirit (cf. KJV, NKJV, NASV, RSV, NIV).

Further grammatical evidence in the context supports this conclusion. Earlier in the chapter, Paul said that no person could say that Jesus is Lord “but in the Holy Spirit” (vs. 3). A person could say Jesus is Lord without being **in** the Spirit or having the Holy Spirit **in** or **on** him. But a person could not say Jesus is Lord if the Holy Spirit had not revealed such information about Jesus—as He did by empowering the apostles to produce written revelation. A few verses later, Paul pinpointed several gifts that were given “through the Spirit,” “according to the same Spirit,” and “in the same Spirit” (vss. 8-9, ASV). All three phrases are equivalent, and refer to the Holy Spirit’s **action**, not the **state of being** in the Holy Spirit. Paul’s summary of the section verifies that this meaning is intended: “But one and the same Spirit **works** all these things, **distributing to** each one individually as He wills” (vs. 11).

In view of these contextual details, one is forced to conclude that in verse 13, Paul could be referring to no other baptism than the baptism enjoined by Christ in the Great Commission, i.e., the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5, the baptism which Paul, himself, administered to the Corinthians (Acts 18:8)—**water** baptism. The Holy Spirit was the agent through Whom Christ enjoined water baptism by means of the preached message. When a person complies with the instruction to be baptized in water, that person is baptized into the one body of Christ. Other verses in the New Testament confirm this understanding. Jesus announced: “[U]nless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Jesus meant what Paul meant, that when one obeys the teaching of the Spirit to be baptized in water, he is granted entrance into the kingdom. Paul reiterated this same teaching on two other occasions. To the Ephesian church, he pointed out that Jesus gave His life for the church “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26). He meant that an individual is permitted to be a part of the cleansed church of Christ when he submits to water baptism in accordance with the Holy Spirit’s inspired Word. Likewise, Paul told young Titus that Jesus “saved us, through the washing of regenera-

tion and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). Again, he meant that one is saved (and hence added to the body) at the point of water immersion, in which spiritual renewal is extended by the Holy Spirit.

We are forced to conclude that 1 Corinthians 12:13 does not refer to Holy Spirit baptism (see also McGarvey, 1910, pp. 254-256, and Reese, 1976, p. 76). The two instances of Holy Spirit baptism previously discussed (i.e., in Acts 2 and 10) stand unmistakably in stark contrast with the baptism alluded to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13. The Corinthian baptism placed the Corinthians into the body of Christ, i.e., at their conversion. But when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were **already** saved. When the household of Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit, they were not yet saved and were inducted into the body of Christ only **after** Peter called for “water” (Acts 10:47-48).

Laying on of Hands

If Acts 2 and Acts 10 are the only instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament, how then do we account for the fact that many others in the New Testament performed miracles or spoke in tongues? If they were not recipients of Holy Spirit baptism, how did they get the ability? The New Testament dictates only one other way to receive miraculous capability: through the laying on of the apostles’ hands. Only the apostles possessed the ability to transfer miraculous capability to others. This phenomenon is described succinctly by Luke:

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that **through the laying on of the apostles’ hands** the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God” (Acts 8:17-21, emp. added).

This description establishes two important facts: (1) only the apostles had the ability to impart to others the ability to perform miracles; and (2) those other than the apostles who could perform miracles received their ability **indirectly** through the **apostles**—not **directly from God via Holy Spirit baptism**.

This fascinating feature of the existence of the miraculous in the first century makes it possible to understand how other individuals received their supernatural powers. For example, Philip, who was not an apostle, possessed the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:6,13). If he was not an apostle, and he did not receive direct ability from God via baptism of the Holy Spirit, where, then, did he derive his ability? Luke informs us that Philip previously received the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 6:5-6). Likewise, the first Christians in Ephesus were enabled to speak in tongues when the apostle Paul

laid his hands on them (Acts 19:6). Even Timothy received his gift from the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1:6).

Some have challenged the exclusivity of the role of the apostles in their unique ability to impart the miraculous element by calling attention to the admonition given by Paul to Timothy: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands **of the presbytery**" (1 Timothy 4:14, emp. added). Even though Paul plainly declared that the "gift of God" which Timothy possessed was conferred "through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6), how does one explain the fact that Paul also stated that Timothy's gift came through the presbytery (i.e., the eldership) as well? Once again, the grammar of the text provides the answer. In 2 Timothy 1:6, where Paul claimed sole credit for imparting the gift to Timothy, he employed the Greek preposition *dia* with the genitive, which means "through" or "by means of" (Machen, 1923, p. 41; Dana and Mantey, 1927, p. 101). However, in 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul included the eldership in the action of impartation, he employed a completely different Greek preposition—*meta*. The root meaning of *meta* is "in the midst of" (Dana and Mantey, p. 107). It denotes the **attendant circumstances** of something that takes place—the **accompanying** phenomena (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, pp. 510-511). It means "in association with" or "accompanied by" (Moule, 1959, p. 61; Thayer, 1901, p. 404; cf. Robertson, 1934, p. 611). In other words, Paul—as an apostle—imparted the miraculous gift to Timothy. It came from God through Paul. However, on that occasion, the local eldership of the church was present and participated with Paul in the event, lending their simultaneous support and accompanying commendation. After examining the grammatical data on the matter, Nicoll concluded: "[I]t was the imposition of hands by St. Paul that was the instrument used by God in the communication of the charisma to Timothy" (1900, 4:127; cf. Jamieson, et al., n.d., 2:414; Williams, 1960, p. 956). Consequently, 1 Timothy 4:14 provides no proof that miraculous capability could be received through other means in addition to apostolic imposition of hands and the two clear instances of Holy Spirit baptism.

CONCLUSION

In light of all the biblical data set forth in this study, certain conclusions are quite evident. Since there are no apostles living today, and since Holy Spirit baptism was unique to the apostles (Acts 2) and the first Gentile converts (Acts 10), there is no Holy Spirit baptism today. Likewise, there is no miraculous healing today. There are no tongue-speakers today. The miraculous element in the Christian religion was terminated by God near the close of the first century. Once the last apostle died, the means by which miraculous capability was made available was dissolved. With the completion of God's revelation to humanity, now available in the Bible, people living today have all that is needed to be complete and to enjoy the fullness of Christian existence (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 4:14).

The alleged miracles and tongue-speaking of today simply do not measure up to the Bible's description of the miraculous. They are unverifiable, ambiguous, and counterfeit.

Today's "divine healing" consists of vague, unseen, non-quantifiable aches and pains like arthritis and headaches. But in the New Testament, people were raised from the dead—even days after death (e.g., John 11:17). Severed body parts were instantly restored (e.g., Luke 22:50-51). People who had been **born** blind had their sight restored (e.g., John 9:1). Those lame **from birth** were empowered to walk (Acts 3:2). First-century miracles were not limited only to certain ailments and psychosomatic illnesses that could be cured through natural means, or by mental adjustments on the part of the infirm. Jesus healed "**all** kinds of sickness and **all** kinds of disease" (Matthew 4:23, emp. added). No disease or sickness was exempt in the New Testament (cf. Acts 28:8-9). Where are these instances today? When has anyone restored a severed limb lost in an accident? When has a self-proclaimed "faith-healer" raised anyone from the dead? Where are the miracle workers who have healed the blind, the crippled, the paralyzed, and those whose infirmities have been documented as having been in existence for many years (John 5:3,5)? Where are the televangelists who will go to the children's hospitals and rectify birth defects and childhood diseases? Where are those who have ingested poison or been bitten by a venomous snake and remained unharmed (Mark 16:18; Acts 28:3-5)? An honest searcher for the truth is forced to conclude that the miraculous age has passed.

But human beings always are looking for something new, something exciting, and something flashy. They grasp for the attractive and the appealing, they want the easy way out, and they want something that makes them **feel** religious and secure—without having to face up to personal responsibilities. Hence, there will always be those who, instead of searching the Scriptures to find out whether these things are so (Acts 17:11), will simply disengage their minds, their spiritual sense, and their ability to assess "the words of truth and reason" (Acts 26:25).

Genuine Christianity today consists of simply taking the written Word of God, and studying it carefully in order to learn what God expects of us: simple meditation and reflection upon the Word of God—no brass bands or circus theatrics, no flash of light, or dream, or vision, no sudden rush attributable to the Holy Spirit. The pathway to heaven consists of honest, intensive investigation of written revelation, and a life of diligent self-discipline and self-denial that strives to incorporate spiritual attributes into one's life—attributes like patience, compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, honesty, integrity, peace of soul, joy, and clean, moral living. There are no short cuts to spirituality. **The miraculous is no answer.** Even in the first century, miracles were not designed to develop these spiritual attributes.

Certainly, God loves us and has promised to care for us (e.g., Matthew 6:33). But His workings in the Universe and in our lives are undertaken today providentially through the natural laws that He set into motion. After the first century, He has not—and will not—violate His own purposes by interfering with these laws in order to perform a miracle. In the final analysis, we are under obligation to seek His assistance by listening to the instructions found in His written Word. Only words from God, then and now, will equip us and prepare us for eternity. As Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we

go? thou hast the **words** of eternal life” (John 6:68, emp. added). Jesus said to the Father, “Sanctify them in the truth: thy **word** is truth” (John 17:17, emp. added). When Satan attempted to prod Jesus into performing a miracle, Jesus said to him, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, emp. added).

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