

The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

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The Seven Churches of the Apostle Paul

In The Beginning

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.—2 Corinthians 11:28

Near the end of the first century of the common era, the apostle John saw the visions that formed the prophecy of The Revelation, the last book of the Bible. The opening chapters of that book deal with prophetic letters to seven churches in Asia Minor—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Most Christian students of The Revelation apply these to seven successive time periods in the Christian (or Gospel) age.

The apostle Paul, similarly, wrote a number of letters to seven churches in the early Christian establishment. His letters, however, were very real epistles meant to be read to the ecclesias involved, and dealt with real problems of that day. His group of churches was in both Asia Minor and in Europe: Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus (or Laodicea—see article for details), Philippi, Colossae, and Thessalonica. Both sets of epistles, however, contained messages for the church in general and are preserved in the canon of Holy Writ.

In these letters we read not only the words of the great apostle, but get an insight into his heart and his love and care for these seven churches, many of which he had personally founded. It is the epistles to these seven churches of the apostle Paul that form the theme for this issue of The Herald magazine.

The authors of the various articles in this series have tried to accomplish three goals: to give a brief outline of the city in which the recipient church existed, to shed light on the church itself and the problems it faced, and to recap the message which Paul sent to that particular church.

We hope that our readers will be able to grasp not only a better picture of the early Christian church, but how its problems are mirrored in the church of our day, and thus - appreciate the care of the apostle for **all** the churches, throughout the age. And thus we are pleased to present these articles on “The Seven Churches of the Apostle Paul.”

Rome

The Righteousness of God

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.—Romans 1:16

Carl Hagensick

First century Rome had a motley population of some 800,000. The vast majority were plebeians, descendants of the slave class. These lived in crowded hovels with no plumbing facilities, indoor or outdoor. Garbage was thrown untreated into the streets and the smell of stench hung heavily over their living quarters. Since Caesar Augustus had granted the right to members of this class to become members of the senate, many of them were ambitiously upward mobile.

The upper middle class came from the equestrian, or soldier class. The males of this class were largely transient since the empire's aggressive program of acquisition involved frequent military campaigns; soldiers' wives formed an affluent but idle group, with military salaries augmented by the rich spoils of war.

The patricians, or descendants of Rome's founding fathers, were the elite upper crust. It was from their midst that the majority of the senators were chosen and who provided the succession of emperors. Octavian, or Caesar Augustus, did not descend from this Roman nobility but from a middle class tradesman in one of the eastern provincial towns. He was, however, a distant relative of Julius Caesar, and his father had been one of the first members of the senate elected from that province.

As the capital of a thriving and growing empire, Rome was a magnet, attracting foreigners from its far-flung dominions. Not the least of this flood of immigrants, were Jews from throughout the empire. While largely despised by Pompey from the time of their mass immigration because of their religion, they were largely traders and among the financially upper middle class and had gained the favor of Caesar Augustus who established a daily offering of a lamb and two bulls to the temple in Jerusalem. They were exempt from military service and from appearing in court on the Sabbath.

Succeeding emperors were not so gracious. Tiberias repressed Jewish rites in Rome in 19 A.D. Claudius temporarily expelled the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D. Nevertheless, an active campaign of proselytism occurred and not all proselytes were required to carry out every feature of Jewish law. The "proselytes of the gate" were only required to renounce idolatry, serious moral abuses, and refrain from eating either the blood or meat of suffocated animals.

Despite their increasing numbers and relative affluence, the Jews were forced to live in isolation in the poorest parts of the city across the Tiber and near the Circus Maximus.

Their seven neighborhoods each had its own synagogue and council of elders. Five Jewish cemeteries have been discovered with many Greek, a few Latin, but no Hebrew inscriptions.

Nero

Nero was the Caesar of the Pauline captivity. He reigned for 15 years beginning in 54 A.D. His reign can be divided into three periods. It was in the first of these periods, 54-58 A.D. that Paul's letter to Rome was penned. This period was called the "golden quinquennium" for it was marked by five years of good government and peace, and popularity with the provinces. During the next five years, Nero fell under the influence of Poppaea Sabina, who ambitiously usurped the role of queen. This five-year period was marked by unrestrained debauchery. Poppaea feigned to be a Jewish proselyte and championed Jewish causes. Jewish hatred for Christianity found her a ready tool to persecute the growing Christian religion.

The final five years of Nero's rule found him facing the cost of his licentious living. To avoid bankruptcy Nero sought to replenish the treasuries by confiscating the estates of the wealthy, many of them senators, which turned the senate against him. This period began with the notorious fire of 64 A.D. which the emperor was falsely accused of setting as a means of clearing the poverty-ridden districts around the Circus Maximus for a glorious but affordable urban renewal program.

While Nero was favorable to Christianity in his first five years, he turned virulently against it in the last five. It was during these years that Paul was ordered killed. This change of mind was not just because Nero used Christians as scapegoats for the great fire, but because they were winning converts in ever-increasing numbers, and would not submit to Roman laws which they found to be against their conscience.

The Church in Rome

The church in Rome was probably founded in 33 A.D. when the "strangers [sojourners] of Rome" (Acts 2:10) returned from the Pentecost feast in Jerusalem where they heard the word of Christ from Peter or one of his fellow-apostles miraculously speaking in their own tongue. Being Jews by nationality, they probably resided in the run-down areas of Rome where the Jewish community had been isolated.

Being the crossroads of the Roman Empire, many immigrants from the provinces heard the word and the church rapidly grew.

No letter of Paul carries personal greetings to as many brethren by name as the epistle to the Romans. No less than 26 are mentioned in Romans 16:3-15. Only the name of Mary (Romans 16:6) is distinctly Jewish. She had evidently been with Paul before moving to Rome for he mentions that she had "bestowed much labor on us."

Three others, Andronicus, Junia, and Herodion, are mentioned as “my kinsman.” That expression may mean they were relatives of Paul or, more likely, were fellow-kinsmen, fellow-Israelites. If the Rufus of verse 13 is the same as that of Mark 15:21, he was probably a Jew who was raised in Cyrenia in Africa and whose father helped Jesus carry his cross. Paul's reference to Rufus' mother as “his mother and mine” implies a close spiritual relationship which preceded the writing of the epistle. Paul's close fellow-laborers, Aquila and Priscilla, were a part of this church.

The other names in Romans 16 are either of Greek or Latin origin and indicate a large percentage of Gentiles in the church at Rome. Having such an admixture of nationalities, especially in a city with such rampant immorality and corruption, brought unique problems to the Roman ecclesia. It is to such an ecclesia that Paul addresses his weighty epistle.

Decadent Rome

The opening chapter deals with the decadence into which Rome had fallen and its causes. The infusion of Greek philosophies comes under attack in Romans 1:22, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” Their guilt for this came not from their ignorance of God for they should have “understood the things that are made” (Romans 1:20). Their problem was “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God” (Romans 1:21). In other words, acknowledging the existence of a higher intelligence, they were unwilling to accept his rules and laws for their lives—they failed to acknowledge the proper place of such a higher being in their lives.

This cause-and-effect relationship is shown further in Romans 1:28: “even as they **did not like to retain God** in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” God's rules, while known by their own conscience, were too restrictive for the licentious lives they wished to live. The phrase “reprobate mind” is translated “degenerate minds” by Phillips and “depraved reason” in the New English Bible. Degenerate and depraved are the best fitting adjectives for the perverse sexual acts, including homosexuality, which are described in this chapter.

Jewish Guilt

The conduct of the Jews in Rome was as reprehensible as, or worse than, the conduct of the Gentiles. In Romans 2:17-25 Paul delivers this stunning denunciation of the hypocrisy of his fellow-Jews: “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and . . . art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? . . . For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.”

If such were indeed the conduct of the Jews in Rome, it is no surprise that the Romans held them in contempt. Instead of being a light in the world, they had been overwhelmed by the darkness that surrounded them. Paul concludes by saying, “we have proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written; There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:9,10).

However Paul's epistle does not lack hope; indeed, it contains great hope. Although the law could not bring about righteousness, justification (or righteousness) was available through the exercise of faith. “Therefore,” writes Paul, “we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also” (Romans 3:28,29).

Justification—Obtaining the Righteousness of God

After illustrating the acquisition of righteousness through faith by the example of Abraham in Romans 4, the next chapter distinguishes between such justification and the further step of justification through the blood of Christ. Although justification by faith produces “peace with God (Romans 5:1), Paul writes, “**Much more then, being now** justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Romans 5:9).

This justification is brought about by receiving “the atonement” (Romans 5:11), that efficacy which comes from the application of the blood of Christ. In Romans 5:16-20 Paul summarizes this phase of his argument: “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification [*dikaioma*, *Dikaioma* is, so to speak, the material substratum, the foundation of *dikaiosis*, justification; obedience, righteousness fulfilled. It may be called justificament . . . the ground and material of justification.”— *Gnomon of the Greek New Testament*, J. A. Bengel, vol. 3, p. 74.> a basis for justification, the blood of Christ made available at the first advent]. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they [the church during the Gospel age] which receive **abundance** of grace and of the gift of righteousness [*dikaioma*, the basis for righteousness] shall **reign** in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness [*dikaioma*] of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification [*dikaiosis*, the result of the application of *dikaioma* of life when mankind is raised from the dead]. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous [during Christ's Mediatorial kingdom]. Moreover [in addition to the above—during the Jewish age] the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Sanctification—Maintaining the Righteousness of God

A good practical and working definition of sanctification is furnished in Romans 6:16,22: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But now

being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

Under the Mosaic Law, man had never been able to become free from sin and therefore could not bear such fruit unto holiness, resulting in everlasting life. Paul arrives at this conclusion in the following chapter where he writes: “The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death” (Romans 7:10). It was this fact that led to the frustrated conclusion expressed in Romans 7:22-24, “For I delight in the law of God after 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 shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

This is in stark contrast to the sanctification Paul saw possible after the law of the spirit: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1). This freedom from condemnation (justification) is not an end in itself, but only a Christian's first step. It is only “as many as are led by the spirit of God” who “are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Only if we follow the spirit's leadings will it be true of us that “the spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16).

God's Election

In the ninth chapter Paul establishes the elective sovereignty of God. He uses the illustration of the potter: “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?” (Romans 9:21-24).

Thus natural Israel, which sought righteousness through the works of the law, could not obtain it (Romans 9:31). Therefore, “they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3). Though Christ was “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4), Israel could not call upon him because they believed not on him (Romans 10:14).

But the righteousness of God is shown in his long-range plans to rescue even the unbeliever: “Hath God cast away his people? God forbid!” (Romans 11:1). Though Israel was cast away to reconcile the Gentile world, eventually she will be received back again, marking the onset of the resurrection—“life from the dead” (Romans 11:15). When “the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” and the Gentile election is complete, then “all Israel shall be saved” by the Deliverer who turns away ungodliness from Jacob through the new covenant which shall “take away their sins” (Romans 11:24-27). Thus God's righteousness is ultimately vindicated because “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Romans 11:29).

Fruitage—The Results of Sanctification

“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God [in the long patient exercise of his righteousness], that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1). With this urgent opening, the apostle proceeds to admonish his readers in the copying of God's righteousness by their upright and just dealings toward God, society, government, and neighbors. The admonitions of the twelfth and thirteenth chapters are most specific and not cloaked in polite generalities. A meditative reading of these chapters in a good paraphrase version, such as Phillips, makes them even more relevant to everyday living.

No admonitions come through more forcefully than those addressing inter-personal relationships. These require the recognition of differences of thought, expression, and action present in any social relationship, particularly in one with such diverse cultures as were present in the cosmopolitan church at Rome.

Chapters 14 and 15 are devoted to the subject of Christian liberty. Chapter 14 deals with “him that is weak in the flesh,” particularly in matters regarding the law—the observance of Sabbath days, the eating of meats considered unclean, etc. Romans 14:13 is an apt summation of this subject: “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.”

It is the duty of the strong, Paul continues in chapter 15, “to bear the infirmities of the weak.” The responsibility of each member of the church is to “please his neighbor for his good to edification” (Romans 15:1,2).

Paul's Travel Plans

Evidently Paul, the great missionary apostle, held the hope for a long time that he would personally visit his brethren in Rome. He did so not as he anticipated on a trip that would continue to the westernmost limits of the Roman empire, to Spain (Romans 15:28), but in bonds to be tried and, after a few years of house arrest and then a temporary release, to be martyred. Several of the names to whom Paul sent greetings in the last chapter of his epistle have been uncovered in the catacombs of Rome.

It was just such ministries as those of all the apostles to the far-flung ecclesias of the rapidly growing Christian church, that strengthened the brethren for a life that frequently ended in martyrdom. Their ministry continues to strengthen us some two thousand years later.

Corinth

Practical Problems with Modern Relevance

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men: clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the spirit of the living God.—2 Corinthians 3:2,3, NKJV

Richard Doctor

In the judgment of polite pagan society, Corinth was an embarrassment. In spite of this, the city was ancient, with an honorable history, and strategically positioned for greatness. In Greek times, Corinth became the center of Hellenic collective cultural life every four years as all warfare was put aside so the Olympic games could be held on the sacred Isthmian land that Corinth commanded.

The need for Corinth was obvious. It lay at the narrow neck of land that permitted the convenient portage of merchandise on sailing vessels between the Ionian and Aegean seas avoiding the lengthy and dangerous transit of the southernmost tip of Greece at Laconia. Typically, the ships were unloaded and goods transferred to ships on the other side of the isthmus. During Roman times, the engineering had advanced so that small ships could be dragged over land on the “diolkos,” a dedicated track. There was always a large transient population of sailors, merchants, and travelers, coming and going through Corinth.

Corinth in Roman Times

At first Corinth fared disastrously at the hands of the Roman advance. It came to an ignoble end in 146 B.C. when the Roman general Lucius Mummius conquered it, razed the city, and slaughtered all its inhabitants. It lay in ruins for nearly a century. Later, Julius Caesar, recognizing the value and history of Corinth, commanded that the ancient city be generously rebuilt and populated by veterans and freedmen. He wished that special care be taken in restoring the ancient temple of Aphrodite, his purported illustrious ancestor. This decision was of importance for the character of the city in Paul's day.

Knowing the ancient associations of Corinth is vital to understanding Corinth's character, for this city was more ancient than most. The first hint of this comes from its name. Corinth is not a Greek name; it is from the ancient settlement of the site by the curious matriarchal Minoan civilization of Crete.

Undoubtedly, it was Minoan colonists who set up the Corinthian worship of the “Great Mother” as there are evidences both in Corinth and elsewhere of their spreading her worship throughout the territory that would later become the Hellas. In Paul's day, more than two millennia later, the Corinthian cult grew to fame, prestige, and fortune. It had

undergone a gradual transformation into that of “Aphrodite Pandemos” or loosely, “Venus of the whole people.” Through Caesar’s generosity the temple of the newly reinvigorated city reopened, maintaining one thousand “sacred” prostitutes in Aphrodite’s service.

Corinth's Character

The city was a commercial success, attracting trade from throughout the civilized world. But soon to call someone a “Corinthian” was to cast aspersion on a debauched and loose life-style. Corinth bred every type of vice. It was a small thing that in the low comedy of the age, “Corinthians” were brought on stage and stereotyped as drunks. No fewer than four Roman-era authors—Juvenal, Horace, Strabo, and Athenaeus—use “Corinthians” as a derogatory term in their letters. None of this was lost on Paul. In his writings, Paul makes frequent allusions to the tapestry of life in Corinth. He writes of the popular sports, the Olympic games, the vanity, the folly, and the pageant of life that unfolded before him. Under the watchful gaze of this earnest apostle, we learn something of the rich and confused culture of Corinth in the theatre [1 Corinthians 4:9], foot races [9:24], the fading victor’s garland of Isthmian pine [9:25], boxing [9:26], the long hair of the openly effeminate community [11:14], and gladiatorial fights with wild beasts [15:32].

There is also an allusion to the vanity of the Roman Triumphal March where at its conclusion as the incense altars were approached, the vanquished met either death or pardon [2 Corinthians 2:14-16]. The prospect of finding Christ’s sheep here might have discouraged a lesser man trusting in his own wisdom, but Paul spent two active years in Corinth preaching Christ with the special blessing of the refreshing support from two of his most beloved brethren: Aquila and Priscilla.

How different was Paul’s approach to witnessing in Corinth when contrasted with his witnessing in Athens. Here Paul’s appeal was direct. In Athens Paul exhibited his knowledge of the Hellenistic poet Aratus of Cilicia (Acts 17:28); the Corinthians were to hear no such quotes from Greek poets. Paul had learned the lesson of Mars Hill (Acts 17:15-34). When he addressed the Corinthians, he wrote: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1,2).

Along with an eagerness to receive the gospel came difficulties. The church in Corinth had practical problems. Living a sanctified life in Christ was a daunting task. It would be an impossible task without the holy spirit. If Paul’s desire was to discourse on some deep spiritual insight and so feed his brethren, he was frustrated: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Corinthians 3:1,2).

Paul does underscore his points with precious lessons that are theological meat, but these are to support his points of discussion on Christ-oriented living. In writing to Corinth, the practical lessons are always the focus.

What Paul Heard

To begin, Paul had received reports about conditions at Corinth and his first epistle starts with a series of essays to briefly address his concerns about the issues affecting the spiritual life of his brethren.

Most serious in his mind were the schisms within the church that had set in conflict the followers of Paul, Apollos, and Judiazers preaching in Peter's name (1 Corinthians 3:4-23). To these Paul advises that while there are different ministries, they needed to recognize that Apollos served the Lord's work well, and Paul also served well, though in a different ministry: "Now he [God] who plants and he who waters are one: and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:8,9,11, NKJV).

To those continuing to practice the sins of Corinth (1 Corinthians 3:12-17), we find a simple and stern warning: "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:17, NKJV). To those dubious of Paul's ministry and apostleship (1 Corinthians 4:1-16) there is a spirited defense of Paul's service for Christ.

Paul recounts his zeal and the zeal of all the apostles, their sufferings, and their constant pouring themselves out in Christ's service—all preceded with the warning that all judgment of Christ's ministers is in God's hands. He ends with a personal appeal: "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. Therefore I urge you, imitate me" (1 Corinthians 4:15,16, NKJV).

Further, Paul observes that both the apostles and all the church are a spectacle for men and angels (1 Corinthians 4:9). This is a theme that Paul will return to throughout this epistle. Paul had a loving pastoral concern for those caught up in the whirlwinds of lust. But, to the Corinthians who were tolerant if not boastful of their liberality towards the open sexual liaison between a woman who was either a widow or divorcee and her stepson, the rebuke is direct. At least the stepson was a member of the church (1 Corinthians 5:1-13); and now Paul calls the whole church to task for not understanding that tolerating such sin would mean collective moral decay. Collective sin affects all, even those seemingly not directly involved. Paul asks if the church realizes the consequences: "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6, NKJV).

This concept of collective sin seems a quaint and archaic notion to our age where, "Don't ask, don't tell," are the modern watchwords. Paul's counsel here could be greatly enlarged

and linked to the principles taught in the law; they deserve the highest consideration in our day. This very delicate issue in Corinth needed wisdom. We learn from the second Corinthian epistle that Paul needed to admonish the Corinthian brethren to forbear in their judgment of the erring brother. They had swung zealously from complete liberality and tolerance, to a complete cutting off of the brother. This latter course was not wise in that it was not ministering to the need of the brother: “Comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him”(2 Corinthians 2:7,8). Strait is the gate and narrow is the way of mature Christian judgment.

To those brethren suing other brethren in court (1 Corinthians 6:1-20), Paul observes that all shall someday stand in the court of absolute divine justice. He asks: “Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?” (1 Corinthians 6:7, NKJV).

Paul Answers the Corinthian Questions

We learn more about the Corinthian church's character as Paul addresses the root issues prompting the entire epistle, namely the questions that the Corinthians had sent him in correspondence. The first question concerns the propriety of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1); Paul answers (1 Corinthians 7:1-40): “It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband” (1 Corinthians 7:1-3, NKJV).

To address those concerned that purchasing meat offered to idols might be construed as tacit support for idolatry—and certainly this was an issue that would have deeply concerned the Judiazers (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)—Paul writes that on the one hand, “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one” (1 Corinthians 8:4, NKJV). On the other hand, we need to recognize how our actions affect others, lest we sin against Christ. For we are a spectacle to men and angels: “But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble” (1 Corinthians 8:12,13, NKJV). When he finally closes out his thoughts later in the epistle he adds: “Put no stumbling-block in the way of Jews or Greeks or the church of God” (1 Corinthians 10:32, Moffatt).

Clearly we should strive to conduct ourselves so that even in appearances the Lord's work maintains a blameless reputation. To those who challenged Paul's apostleship using the obtuse argument that a real apostle would seek financial support from the church while Paul did not (1 Corinthians 9:1-27), Paul answers that while he would be perfectly within his rights to receive monetary support, as had other elders at Corinth (verse 12), “Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:12, NKJV). Paul's wisdom in this respect is very apparent.

Consider the circumstances of paid ministry in churches today. Some who are board members at their churches or synagogues have been perplexed as they wrestled with the issue of dismissing paid clergy not to the liking of the congregation, and trying to find a suitable replacement. With payment comes power and control. Paul wisely recognized that the church in Corinth was unready for such responsibility.

To those whose faith seriously wavered, another blunt warning was needful: “Wherefore my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry”(1 Corinthians 10:14). Paul draws lessons from the experiences of the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Though Jehovah revealed himself to them in signs and wonders, those who murmured and were rebellious were destroyed.

Paul continues, treading on the ground for which he is particularly controversial today. He considers the role of women in the church. Again, he reminds them that men and angels were watching. Women are to keep their heads covered while men are to keep their heads uncovered. For the men, an uncovered head was a departure from Jewish custom that marked one as a Christian. Greek and Hebrew fashion for respectable women who managed the house was to have a covered head. For the fashion imitators of the “Porneia” or prostitutes who kept their heads uncovered, this was a reminder of the need for sobriety. Furthermore, “nature teaches” that men are to have short hair and women are to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:14,15). But more importantly than any of these outward appearances, the brothers are to take the leadership roles in the church.

Much harm has been done to the essential ministry of sisters in the church using these words of Paul for justification. When we recognize that the entire church is being developed for a place as the ideal wife, the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-32), we can see that in addition to being submissive to the head, the ideal wife shows considerable energy and initiative. This is what Christ expects of the church.

In Proverbs 31:10-31 we meet a woman who would move in today's society with assurance: “She considers the field and buys it.” In this acrostic passage of Lemuel, where each new line begins with the next letter of the alphabet, we find 21 characteristics attributable to this energetic ideal wife. Drawing some practical guidelines on the sisters' conduct in the church, Brother Russell wisely observes: “We suggest that the most liberal interpretation possible should be given to the inspired apostle's words respecting the scope of the liberty of the sisters in the affairs of the Church” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 6, p. 272).

The importance of spiritual gifts and love, rather than the apostolic gifts and tongues, are the concern of chapters 12 to 14, where we learn: “Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:8, NKJV). Practical guidelines are given for the conduct of meetings in which the now departed apostolic gift of tongues found employment. Paul points out that “love” is a “more excellent way” than any of these gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31, NKJV). For all gifts, all prophecy, the understanding of all mysteries, and all knowledge are temporary, not eternal conditions: “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13, NKJV).

This all leads up to chapter 15 which now holds the rapt attention of an audience prepared in heart for a review of the basics of the gospel: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Yet, even as Paul moves back to the soil of theology and preaching Christ—Christ crucified, and Christ arisen—an additional admonition is needed before he closes this epistle: “Do not be deceived: `Evil company corrupts good habits.’ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin, for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame” (1 Corinthians 15:33,34, NKJV).

Concluding Thoughts

In sum, what can we learn about the church of Corinth from the first of Paul's epistles to them? In the end, Paul's counsel was heeded, and Titus personally brought a reply to Paul at a providential time when it gave him a great boost of morale: “For I got no relief from the strain of things, even when I reached Macedonia; it was trouble at every turn, wrangling all around me, fears in my own mind. But God, who comforts the dejected, comforted me with the coming of Titus. Yes, and by more than his arrival, by the comfort which you have been to him; for he gave me a report of how you longed for me, how sorry you were, how eagerly you took my part, that it added to my delight” (2 Corinthians 7:5-7, Moffatt).

Through Paul's personal ministry and his letters, a foundation in Christ had been laid for a much beloved, if wayward, church. Because it was a culture obsessed with wine, women, sports, entertainment, song, and moneymaking, Corinth is one of the most accessible bridges between the Roman world of the first century and our day. We do well to refrain from being critical of Corinth lest we feel self-satisfied and in “need of nothing.” We should ponder the practical lessons of Corinth, for in it we see a distant mirror of our own troubled days.

Galatia

The Law Covenant and the Promise Covenant

The law [covenant] . . . doth not disannul, so as to make the promise [covenant] of none effect.—Galatians 3:17

James Parkinson

That faith is more important than the law is the main theme of the epistle of Paul to the Galatians. So why was a contrast of covenants emphasized in this letter?

Galatia was a region, rather than a city, including much of the Anatolian Plateau and the central Halys River in modern Turkey. However, the dominant people were ethnically foreign to the region. Gaul was the Roman name for the ethnic Tarshish of Genesis 10, who in modern times are called the Celts of westernmost Europe. From their migrations we have the Gaels of the British Isles, the region of Galicia in modern Poland (among whom also red hair is not uncommon), and the Galatians, to the Christians of which Paul wrote this epistle.

The Law, or a Redeemer?

From early times, Tarshish had colonized from the Tartessian region of modern Portugal, to the city of Tarsus in southeastern coastal Turkey where Saul (Paul) was born. Thus, Saul of Tarsus had been acquainted with the Galatian culture, so remote from that of Israel. The Galatians learned of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, once for all, from the apostle Paul. They had no background in the law God gave Israel through Moses, so they were particularly impressed when Judaizers proclaimed that law to them.

Who could, after all, find fault with the ten commandments? Are not the dietary and sanitary laws a good prescription for health? Circumcision on the 8th day of life (Leviticus 12:3) when the prothrombin concentration is temporarily maximum, minimizes an infant's liability to infection. And the sacrifices of the Passover lamb and the Atonement Day bullock certainly pointed to the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Messiah (Christ) once for all (Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Leviticus 16; Hebrews 10:5-10).

But could the law give life? Paul reasons that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:10,11).

Was Abraham justified by the law? No, the law had not as yet been given. And even before circumcision, Abraham exercised faith, and he was justified by that faith. So, are you justified by faith, or by the law?

Paul had been zealous for traditional Judaism. He had urged his fellows to stone Stephen, the first Christian martyr after Jesus, whose last words were, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” But it was not the law that converted Paul, it was our Lord Jesus Christ himself who converted him. He revealed himself directly to Paul. He did not tell Paul to go to Jerusalem to be taught of the apostles. In fact, Paul spent three years restudying the word before he even set foot in Jerusalem again.

After just two weeks with Peter, it was another 14 years before Paul came to Jerusalem again, not for his spiritual education, but to get an agreement that God does not require circumcision of Christians who were Gentiles (Acts 15). James, Peter, and John did not require circumcision of the Greek brother who came with him. Instead, they encouraged the missionaries to continue bringing the gospel to the uncircumcised, to the nations. The only thing they required of them is that they help the poor.

When one of the chief apostles from Jerusalem needed correction, Paul did it. The word of God carries more weight than even the best of men. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema” (Galatians 1:8). And he repeated it for emphasis!

There is only one seed promised to Abraham. Is it through the law [covenant] or through the promise [covenant]? The seed of Abraham is Jesus Christ: “If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to [the] promise [covenant]. Now ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of [the] promise [covenant]” (Galatians 3:16,29; 4:28). Coming under the law cannot make us a part of the one seed of blessing, but only coming into Christ.

Two Condemnations

The law promised life to anyone to whom it was given, and who would keep it perfectly. Conversely, he who was under the law and broke it was under its curse. He who was not under the law was condemned to death in Adam, but he who was under the law was additionally cursed during his life (Deuteronomy 27:15-26; 28:15-68).

The sacrifice of the perfect man Jesus Christ was sufficient to ransom Adam from death (and the race descended from him). The means of death could be used to redeem Israel (the people under the law) from their lifelong curse as exemplified in the Diaspora (dispersion of Jews throughout the world). “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,” was the Lord's prescription for taking the curse of the law (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13). Jesus took the curse of the law upon himself when he was crucified on a wooden cross, as it is written, “God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law [covenant], that he might redeem them that were under the law [covenant]”

(Galatians 4:4,5, ASV). Thus, the sacrifice of Christ on a cross was sufficient to redeem Israel from both curses.

A Type: Hagar and Sarah

Along with the promise to Abraham, there was also given an allegory, or type, of two covenants (Galatians 4:21-31). The mothers of Abraham's two first, and most prominent, sons typified God's first two covenants which nurture both the natural and spiritual Israel of God—the twelve tribes of Israel according to the flesh, and the church from the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. Sarah was the mother of the seed of promise, and thus she pictured the promise covenant. Hagar had been a handmaid (to Sarah, not to Abraham). She was the mother of those who are in bondage (to the law covenant). Hagar's son mocked Isaac and was cast away from Abraham. The nation of Israel mocked Jesus, had him slain, and then mocked those who have followed Christ; fleshly Israel was then cast away from God (for nearly nineteen centuries).

There is nothing wrong with the law; it is perfect, but we are not. The law promised life, but only to the one who keeps it perfectly (Leviticus 18:5; Romans 7:10). The law was given so that we might recognize that we are sinful, that we need a Redeemer. Thus, the law was a school-guide *Lit.* A body-guard (Greek: pedagogue) who led boys to and from school. Once this body-guard brought the boys to school, he turned them over to the teacher—in this case, Jesus Christ.> to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Now that we have been brought to Christ, let us turn our attention to the Teacher.

Today neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters. It is the new creation of God in Christ Jesus that matters, developing the bride of Christ; that is our work, that is everything to us.

Adoption or Sonship?

So long as an heir is a child, he is not treated differently than the child of a bondservant, even though he is to be master of all. He is under guardians and stewards of the house until the day appointed of the father, the time when he will be placed in a position of responsibility for the family estate. Jesus Christ redeemed us all from the condemnation of original sin, and redeemed Israel from the curse of the law, that the faithful might receive the placement-as-sons *Lit.* placing as sons, whether by adoption, or by the promotion suggested in verse 2.> (Galatians 4:5).

Is this placement-as-sons an adoption or a sonship? If we are begotten of God, then we are not adopted (1 John 5:18). On the other hand, the placement-as-sons is declared to be future; we have now only the spirit of it (Romans 8:15,23). But if we are already sons of God (Romans 8:14; 1 John 3:2), then sonship also poorly fits the thought. The practicing Christian should remember that he is still immature, not yet ready for his placement or installation into his ultimate position of responsibility in the divine family. He is still being trained for future work with Christ for the blessing of all the families of the earth in the Millennial Resurrection Kingdom (Galatians 4:5,6).

Which Fruit?

For freedom did Christ set us free: “Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh. Walk by the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:1,13,16). There are two kinds of fruit: choose the one that causes good growth:

Works of the Flesh	Fruits of the Spirit
Fornication	Love
Uncleanness	Joy
Lasciviousness	Peace
Idolatry	Longsuffering
Sorcery	Kindness
Enmities	Goodness
Strife	Faithfulness
Jealousies	Meekness
Wrath	Self-Control
Factions	
Divisions	
Parties	
Envyings	
Drunkenness	
Revelings	

We have a check list in Galatians 5:19-23. There are more ways to go wrong than to do right. Let us note the evil works against which we have made progress, and especially take note of, and resolve to stamp out, those with which we are tempted. If we willingly compromise on even one, we shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21).

How well are we developing the fruit of the spirit? Strengthen the good fruit, and it will help choke out the evil weeds. “Walk by the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). He that soweth unto the spirit shall of the spirit reap eternal life.

But beware of new leaven, beware of pride: “Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Galatians 5:26; 6:3, ASV).

“And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:9,10, ASV).

Ephesus

A Prisoner's Exhortations

I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.—Ephesians 3:1; 4:1

David Rice

The aged apostle Paul was within a few years of completing his ministry when he dictated those words. Ever since his third missionary journey, when he returned to Jerusalem for Pentecost to join his Jewish brethren, report the prospering work of the gospel among the Gentiles, and build a spirit of unity between the two, Paul had been in bonds.

It had not surprised Paul. As he had approached Jerusalem, “the holy spirit witness[ed] in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me” (Acts 20:23), as he told the Ephesian elders gathered for some last exhortations from him. He believed he would see Rome—“after I have been there [Jerusalem], I must also see Rome” (Acts 19:21)—and this was later confirmed by the Lord himself. “Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome” (Acts 23:11). Now he was in Rome where he was under house arrest, dwelling “two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him” (Acts 28:30).

None of his experiences swayed him from his consecrated goals. “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy” (Acts 20:24). Though in bonds, he was still using his strength, opportunities, and abilities to minister spiritually, and wrote several epistles, among them the one titled “Ephesians.”

There is some question about those to whom this epistle was addressed. Verse 1 says “the saints which are at Ephesus,” but the city designation is absent in the Sinaitic and Vatican 1209 manuscripts. This opens the possibility that the epistle was intended as an encyclical letter to a number of churches, or that it may be the otherwise missing letter to the Laodiceans mentioned in Colossians 4:16. “When this epistle [to the Colossians] is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”

Colosse and Laodicea were only a few miles apart. “Colossians” and “Ephesians” are similar epistles, covering similar topics. They were both written from Rome, and were both conveyed by Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7). If it were generally supposed that this epistle was originally addressed to the Laodiceans, it is not unlikely that it would absorb the attention of today's brethren, of the Laodicean stage of the church, even more than it has.

The Authority of His Position

Paul repeatedly referred to his special charge for the brethren, perhaps not so much in defense as to focus the minds of the brethren on the godly counsel he gives them. “Ye have ten thousand instructors” he told the Corinthians, “yet have ye not many fathers” (1 Corinthians 4:15). Though there were many helpful instructors, Paul probably observed that their teachings were not all equally effective as his ministry in instilling the truth and its principles among the brethren. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God . . . for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward . . . I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God . . . that I should preach among the Gentiles . . . to make all men to see what is the fellowship of the mystery . . . I am an ambassador in bonds . . . I ought to speak” (Ephesians 1:1; 3:1,2,7-9; 6:20).

In verse 2 Paul opened in his usual style: “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” He repeated this greeting in all his ecclesia epistles, but never added “and from the holy spirit,” as he surely would have done had he supposed the latter to be a person, equal with the others, in some kind of trinity. Further, he expressly affirmed in verse three that God is superior, “the God . . . of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This he repeats in verse 17, “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father” (NIV).

God's Foreordained Plan

The next three verses express God's predestination of the great privileges we have in Christ, including the adoption as sons which we will secure if we prove faithful. In verse 7 the “redemption through his blood” is equated with “the forgiveness of sins,” which is consistent with Paul's affirmation in Romans 5:9 that we are “justified by his blood.”

Verse 8 includes among the blessings “lavished on us,” “wisdom and prudence.” The latter word is really another term to express a form of wisdom, “prudent, sensible, practically wise” (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*). These terms refer not to our grasp of the facts of the divine plan, but our ability, something like philosophers, to evaluate, distinguish and apply the sense of the spiritual information we have. These fruits of the spirit are noble qualities which all of the Lord's people have to some extent, and should cultivate by continued use.

Verse 9 does refer to our grasp of the facts of the divine plan: “He made known to us the mystery” (NIV). Mysteries, as used in the New Testament, do not mean incomprehensible ideas too high for us to appreciate (a claim sometimes made for the trinity). They refer to things unknown to the world but revealed to us through the influence of the holy spirit, who “Holding . . . the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Timothy 3:9).

The majesty of Paul's expression is elegantly rendered in the Weymouth translation. The mystery we see is “God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it—the purpose which he has cherished in his own mind of restoring the

whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in him.”

In verses 11-13 Paul continues the thought of the church being “predestined according to the purpose of him,” and then introduces a subject he will raise a number of times, namely that Gentiles now had an equal standing with Jews in the gospel. “We [Jews], who were the first to hope in Christ . . . and you [Gentiles] also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (NIV). These also were sealed by Christ with the holy spirit.

This thought continues into verse 14, “which is the earnest of our inheritance.” Rotherham changes this only in the article, “an” rather than “the.” The NIV and some others succumb to bias by using “who” rather than “which,” supposing the holy spirit to be a person. The pronoun is in the neuter gender (to agree with the gender of “spirit”), rather than the masculine which one might find if the reference were to a person.

The remainder of verse 14 reads “until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory” (NIV). This is a paraphrase (the word “God” is not in the Greek), but it probably captures the thought. The King James version uses “purchased possession.” These two words come from the one Greek word *peripoyeesis*, which appears also in 1 Peter 2:9, “chosen” people (NIV) or “peculiar [special]” people (KJV). Literally it means that which is acquired (as through purchase for example). In the latter text it clearly refers to the church, and evidently does in Ephesians 1:14 as well. The holy spirit is an earnest, or guarantee, of our inheritance until our deliverance comes.

The Grandeur of our Call

In the next few verses Paul expressed joy and thanks to God for the reported faith of the brethren to whom Paul was writing. Paul's whole life was so consumed with his calling, his very emotions were excited by the fruitage God gave through his and others' labors. Paul's urgent desire was for them to be more and more filled with “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him [God]” (verse 17).

He wished them to grasp the remarkable nature of their call, so grand, so lofty, that even with somber reflection we may not fully appreciate it. “I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.” It was not that they had no idea, but that they might appreciate the magnificence of it, “the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe” (verse 18, NIV). To comprehend the splendor of our hope would magnify our praise, encourage our participation in the Lord's work, and help us abandon earthly trifles.

Verse 23 says the church, “which is his body,” is “the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” There are two expressions in this verse which engage our attention. The first is “the fullness of him.” Paul means that the church is the “fullness” of Christ. This probably means we are an expression of the character and likeness of Christ, our head, master, and

pattern. This helps us grasp Paul's meaning elsewhere when he says of Christ, "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead [deity] bodily" (Colossians 2:9). This is not some mumbo-jumbo for an incomprehensible allusion to a trinity. It merely states that in Christ dwell the qualities of God, just as in the church dwell the qualities of Christ.

The second expression is "that filleth all in all." That this refers to Christ is supported by Ephesians 4:10, "He who descended [into the grave] is himself also he who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things" (NASB). In what sense does he "fill all things"? Does it mean, as in the NIV and Weymouth, "to fill the whole universe"? Is he that large? It is difficult to get a sensible view from this rendering. Even on a literal level, he would not "fill the universe" if he ascended "far above all the heavens."

The word "fill" is from the Greek verb *pleroo* which often means "accomplish, fulfill" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*, meaning II). It is the word used numerous times by Matthew when he says a Scripture was "fulfilled" by this or that episode of Christ's experiences. It also appears in Luke 9:31, "his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Thus Christ is the one in whom all of God's purposes are fulfilled, or accomplished.

Chapter 2

In verses 1 through 7 Paul repeats some of the thoughts expressed in chapter 1. "You" (Gentiles) who were dead in sin, in the sway of Satan, "by nature children of wrath," have received God's mercy and grace, and been quickened "together with Christ." (See also Colossians 2:13.) The Greek says, literally, "raised us with" and "seated us with" Christ. The word "with" is the Greek prefix *sun* in each case. We are raised "with" Christ in the same experience, though separated by many years.

It is significant to note how Paul uses this term "with" because he uses it later where it is sometimes misapprehended, namely 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "caught up together with [sun] them." We share with them the same experience, but not at the same time. The saints of past ages are resurrected "first" and we gathered to be with them "after that" (NIV).

The quickening Paul spoke of in Ephesians is our present experience, walking in "newness of life" (Romans 6:4). But this is only the prelude to the glories beyond. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (verse 7). Here again Paul expressed the grandeur of our call which is beyond our full appreciation.

Verse 8 affirms again that our salvation is by God's grace, though secured through faith, "and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." It may be wondered, from the English versions, whether the "gift of God" means "grace" or "faith." It is neither. The "it" refers to our salvation. The word "grace" is *chariti*, the word "faith" is *pistews*. Both are feminine nouns. But the word "it" is masculine as is the verb "having been saved" (Greek: *seswsmenoi*). This is "not of works" (verse 9), as for example the works of the

law, but “through faith” (verse 8). We are to be engaged in good works as a result of our standing (verse 10), but it is not the cause of our standing.

The Twain Made One

Verses 11-19 assure these brethren, “Gentiles in the flesh,” formerly aliens “from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,” that Christ’s death has put an end to this estrangement. “Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Paul likens the removal of the barrier against the Gentiles to the breaking down of the “middle wall of partition” in the temple, beyond which Gentiles could not proceed.

Thus by his death Christ made “in himself of twain [Jew and Gentile] one new man [the body of Christ], so making peace [between these two parts, and between them and God] . . . that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross . . . and preached peace to you which were afar off [Gentiles], and to them that were nigh [Jews].” Thus “through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father”—a kind of access not previously available to either.

Paul continues this theme into chapter 3. This joint inheritance of Jew and Gentile into one body in Christ is a mystery, “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and [New Testament] prophets [*cf.* Revelation 18:20] by the spirit: that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (verses 5, 6).

Chapter 4

Paul has now covered the doctrinal points of his letter, and proceeds to the more purely admonitional portions in the last three chapters. He seems primarily concerned about the spirit among them in their worship and ecclesia. In light of the lofty call they have graciously received, they should “walk worthy” of this vocation “with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (verse 2). What better qualities to mark our disposition one to another?

The endeavor always is to “keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” (verse 3). There is, after all, but one body, and one spirit, and one hope: one calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. Should not our fellowship reflect this spirit, always? Or do impatience, unkindness, insistence, even indignation, intrude to separate the bonds of fraternal appreciation? Let it not be so with us. Let us demonstrate fidelity to the principles Paul admonishes. By this means let us show our respect for this apostle’s life work and counsel.

One of the benefits Christ has endowed us with are the various servants in the ecclesia, apostles [sent out ones], prophets [expounders], evangelists [those who witness], pastors, and teachers. Paul says these are among the “gifts” from our Lord, which he gave us after he “ascended on high,” as prophesied in Psalm 68:18. Let us then cooperate with these

dear laborers. Let us shun a sullen spirit, a rancorous tone, a hostile inflection, and instead cooperate with the great shepherd by cooperating with the under-shepherds (verses 7-13).

Paul further advises us to avoid the immorality of the world (verses 17-24), which are “deceitful lusts.” The vices of the world today are more accessible than they have ever been. They can come into our homes through the airwaves, and even to our desktops through our computers. Let us resolve that chastity of thought and conduct will be a bedrock of our walk in Christ. We are to “put on the new man,” which is righteous and holy.

Paul details other sins to avoid: lying, unbridled anger, giving place to the devil, stealing. These are fundamental issues of Christian conduct, but Paul deemed it wise to mention them, and it is wise for us to be resolute about them. “Labor, working with [our] hands the thing which is good, that [we] may have to give to him that needeth.” Let us forbid ourselves from corrupt communication, but rather speak words of grace and edification. Do we speak of mundane, earthly things at our meetings? Let us endeavor to concentrate on edifying things (verses 25-29).

“Grieve not the holy spirit of God.” Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice—these should be eliminated. Do we harbor some bitterness toward sanctified brethren? Let us root it out. Instead, be “kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,” as Christ left us an example (verses 30-32).

Chapter 5

Paul reminds us of Christ's “sweet-smelling savor” of sacrifice, a term which in the Old Testament usually applies to burnt offerings, and to portions of the sin-offering burnt on the brazen altar. The love he showed in sacrifice should be the love exhibited among ourselves. It almost goes without saying that the impure deeds of the flesh are incompatible with this, but Paul does list them: fornication, uncleanness, covetousness. These are things which should “not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (verse 3). He adds also filthiness, foolish speech, and jesting, to be substituted with thanksgiving (verse 4).

The fruit of light should engage us, the fruit of darkness should be repulsed (verses 5-13). Verse 14, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,” may be a reference to Jesus' words in John 5:25. We are to walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, be filled with the spirit, encouraging one another with the noble sentiments of psalms and hymns, always thankful, and always humble (verses 15-21). There seems to be very little of practical conduct that Paul did not itemize for us, as he meditated during his house arrest, what would be of value to the saints in living a consecrated life. These words were intended to be read in the churches, reviewed, considered, and imbibed. Let us, along with the original recipients, live these exhortations also.

In verses 22-33 Paul turns his attention to some needful domestic concerns. What a treasure of advice for the humbly minded are in these few verses. If all wives were respectful of their husbands, after the manner we wish to show respect for the headship of Christ, how much of the wrangling in marriage would cease? What would a husband not do for a wife who faithfully exhibited this spirit? If you are a wife, troubled by conflicts in marriage, what may be the results of following this advice? Would it soften the heart of your spouse?

Husbands are also to take a lesson from Christ's example. He loved the church so much as to give his life for them. Do we exhibit this kind of care for our wives? If husbands cared for their wives "as their own bodies," would not our wives be all the more careful to respect our leadership in the affairs of home and family? If you are a husband, troubled by conflicts in marriage, what might result from making it apparent to your wife, in thoughtful and constant ways which would be meaningful to her, that your heart's affections are with her? Would this soften the heart of your spouse?

Chapter 6

In the final chapter Paul extends his family counsel to children and fathers, servants and masters, advising respect and faithfulness by those under authority, and temperance and fairness by those exercising authority. Children should honor their fathers; fathers should raise their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (verses 1-4). Servants should render their service as unto Christ, and masters should remember "your Master also is in heaven" (verses 1-9).

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (verse 10). This is the introduction to an examination of the Christian armor, reminding us that the enemies in our warfare are wicked spirits of great potency (verse 12). Against such enemies we need the girdle of Truth, breastplate of Righteousness, sandals of Peace, shield of Faith, helmet of Salvation, and sword of the Spirit, "which [neuter, referring to Spirit, see *Marshall's Diaglott* footnote] is the word of God" (verse 17).

This is our equipment. But beyond this proper attire, we must conduct ourselves with "prayer and supplication in the spirit," watchfulness, and perseverance (verse 18).

Paul concludes by asking prayers on his behalf, not for a lessening of his burden, but for faithfulness in his opportunities, that "I may speak boldly" (verse 20). Tychicus, his assistant and messenger, would fill them in on his various other circumstances when he arrived. Then Paul closed as he opened, wishing on his readers "peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all . . . Amen."

Philippi

Paul's "Thank-You" Letter

But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 3:13,14, NIV

Leonard Griehs

The book of Acts describes how Paul was entreated to go to Macedonia to preach the gospel. The main city there was Philippi, named after Macedonian king Philip 2nd, father of Alexander the Great. A famous Roman highway, Via Egnatia, divided Philippi as it approached the Thracian border eleven miles north of the seaport of Neopolis. There was an ancient fortress perched on a steep hill in the upper portion, overlooking the plain of Dram and the Angites River. The more ancient name of the city, Crenides (Little Fountains), was so named because of the numerous springs in the area. Philip 2nd recognized its strategic importance and captured the entire territory to protect Macedon from Thrace. In 358 B.C., enlarged and fortified, it was renamed Philippi.

In 42 B.C., 90 years prior to Paul's visit, a bloody battle between leaders of opposing Roman parties occurred on this site. Cassius was one of the conspirators who, along with Marcus Brutus, murdered Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. He was a supporter of the Pompeian party and the Roman Republic. He and the other conspirators believed that Caesar intended to do away with the Republic and rule by the Senate, setting up a kingdom with himself as king. Their bitter enemies were the men of the Second Triumvirate, Marc Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus. Matters soon came to a crisis and the forces of the Second Triumvirate defeated Cassius and Brutus at the Battle of Philippi. Both Cassius and Brutus committed suicide after the battle. Of far greater importance to us is the fact that here was planted the first Christian ecclesia to appear on European soil.

Paul was first led to Europe while on his second missionary journey in 50 A.D. through a vision he received at Troas. After landing at the Neopolis seaport, he made the short - journey to Philippi, "the chief city of the port of Macedonia." The city was by then a Roman colony (Acts 16:12). Originally Roman colonies were military outposts since the senate knew the importance of Roman citizens living in settlements throughout its empire. For the town, it made life different, as there was no Roman provincial governor and no property tax. Philippi was a miniature reproduction of Rome.

Officially the language of the city was Latin, but most residents had to know Greek as well. Archaeological digs reveal tablets and documents in both languages. With its close access to the sea and the border, the population grew quite diverse, although there were three main elements. The first group, Roman colonists, constituted the dominant ruling class. The second, which was the largest in number, was a Macedonian group descended

from its historical stock. Finally, there was an Oriental group of migrants from the East as the popularity of the Egnatian Way brought strangers from many lands.

Because Philippi was not a commercial city, Paul found few Jews and no synagogue—only a small “place of prayer” outside the city by the riverside. Ten years later Paul wrote this tenderhearted letter while a prisoner at Rome. His greetings to a beloved and well-established church has many beautiful lessons for us. Their generosity in aiding Paul and his fellow missionaries is a constant theme in the letter, as is the necessity for unity.

The Church

It is probable that most of the brethren in Philippi were Gentile. The city abounded in idolatry and there was little tolerance for Paul's preaching. Paul conducted his first meetings in the home of Lydia, a wealthy merchant of expensive dyed cloth who became an early follower (Acts 16). Another follower was the once demon-possessed, fortune-telling slave girl exorcised by Paul and Silas. Later Paul baptized the local jailer who had held them captive for preaching the gospel.

Tertullian, a third century teacher and historian, wrote that the Roman leaders were greatly disturbed to find Christians among Philippi's local authorities, and even to find them in the emperor's own household (Philippians 4:22). Despite this movement into Roman circles of authority, the church apparently held its purity since Paul referred to them as “my joy and my crown” (Philippians 4:1).

On his third missionary trip, Paul visited the church twice—on his way out and on his return. It is not surprising that when they learned of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, the Philippian brethren sent a delegation led by Epaphroditus with a personal gift and wishes of encouragement. The epistle to the Philippians is Paul's “thank you” letter.

Outline of the Book

Paul wrote the book while under house arrest in Rome, chained to a guard day and night, and waiting for a trial that might cost him his life. He was not anxious about his situation as evidenced by his words in Philippians 4:11, “Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am.”

1. Experiences (chapter 1). Paul's first expressions of joy reflect the mutual love he shared with these brethren. While others sometimes questioned Paul's position and authority, the Philippians supported him generously, both spiritually and physically.

A. Partnership (verses 1-11). Paul's greeting shows evidence of his intimacy with the church, as he addresses all the “saints,” the overseers, the deacons and the leaders. Many, if not most of these, he must have trained personally, and they in turn helped him spread the word early in Europe, as he says “in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now” (verse 5, NASV). Paul expresses his confidence that even though he is

absent from them, God will continue to work with them and give them a deeper spiritual understanding (verses 6-10).

B. Preaching (verses 12-30). When Paul talks of his confident joy in the midst of trying situations, at least one of those hearing the letter when it arrived at Philippi must have nodded silently. The jailer knew that intimidation, beating, and even being locked in chains could not deter Paul's joy in the Lord. Perhaps an elder or deacon now in the church, he dated his own rebirth from that night when Paul and Silas began to sing hymns as they awaited trial in the Philippian city jail. More than others, he may have understood the inner conviction of the apostle when he heard verse 21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

2. Examples (chapter 2). The chapter begins with "If therefore" and so should be read as a continuation of the thought concluding chapter one. After admonishing each one to "conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" Paul explains that true unity reveals itself in the same selfless servitude demonstrated by Jesus.

A. Christ (verses 1-18). Paul uses Jesus' example of foregoing his position with God as a member of the divine family to become human as the basis for true service in the body of Christ. The King James version reads awkwardly when it implies that Jesus "did not consider it robbery to be equal to God" in his pre-human existence. Is Paul telling Christians that they should be of the same mind as Christ in not thinking it robbery to be equal to God as they contemplate a heavenly inheritance? Theologian Henry Cadbury called Philippians 2:5-7 one of the most difficult passages to translate, but credits the New English Bible with an admirable attempt at clarifying it: "Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at (Greek: *harpagmos*) equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave." Was "equality with God" something Jesus perceived himself to have while in the "form of God" or was he promised it as something future for his work as a redeemer? Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott* helps to resolve the thought with its rendering: "Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who though being in God's form, did not meditate a usurpation (*harpagmos*) to be like God." Jesus never contemplated that his position as the one through whom all things were made (John 1:3) set him on a par with God, but instead, became a servant to all those below him.

B. Co-workers (verses 19-30). Paul especially commends two who were fine examples of the kind of service he cherished, Timothy and Epaphroditus. Timothy's service to Paul is one of our greatest examples of tested and total commitment, the same kind of commitment we ought to have in our service to one another and to Christ. Timothy was uprooted frequently to help Paul in furthering the gospel, but he was always ready and willing to go. Epaphroditus had brought the offering of the brethren to

Paul and must have been one of Paul's personal friends. He is cited for his steadfastness and faithfulness in carrying out his duties even when he was “sick to the point of death.”

3. Exhortations (chapter 3). Paul recaps his previous points to remind the brethren that relying on legalistic standards rather than God's grace brings great danger. Since most members of this ecclesia were Gentile by birth, Paul's words suggest that some of the leaders who were Hebrew were trying to teach that converting to Judaism was first necessary before one could be spirit begotten.

A. Legalism (verses 1-16). Judaizer was a common term used to describe one who argued that because Jesus was Jewish and born under the law, that meant circumcision (coming under the law covenant) was first necessary for Gentiles before receiving the gospel. Paul calls those brethren evil workers. As a trained rabbi and member of the Sanhedrin, he understood Judaism better than many who were teaching it in Philippi and elsewhere. True circumcision, he says, comes in the heart, not the flesh, and rises out of faith in Jesus. Paul uses himself as an example of one who had trusted in human works rather than the grace of God to justify. Now, like a runner who wastes no time looking back, Paul expends his energy in seeking a heavenly prize that comes from developing the fruits of the spirit, not from keeping the works of the flesh.

B. Lawlessness (verses 17-21). Their idolatrous surroundings were a constant threat and temptation for the brethren at Philippi. As a miniature of Rome, sensuous living undoubtedly was accepted by the citizenry. Notorious for its debauchery, Rome created an atmosphere not always conducive to Christian living. It was expected that Romans welcomed this opportunity for celebration. A famous epitaph in Rome read, “I was not, I am, I shall not be.” Roman citizens lived for the day. Paul reminds his brethren that they have a hope built on citizenship (“conversation” in the KJV) in heaven, which far surpasses any pleasures of the flesh in this lifetime.

4. Enablement (chapter 4). Paul expands on the results of practicing the Christ-like attitude that he introduced in chapter two. This attitude when put into practice should produce unity among the brethren. He reflects on how God's presence should result in a peaceful end to any situation.

A. Peace with others (verses 1-3). Paul must have spent a great deal of time talking with Epaphroditus about the ecclesia when the latter visited him in Rome. As a result, Paul's epistle is filled with references to particular brethren and particular circumstances. Euodias (feminine) and Syntyche (feminine) were two deaconesses (“those women who labored with me in the gospel”) in the ecclesia who had some difference of

opinion. Paul requests Clement (not the same as the historical writer) and others to intervene to restore harmony in the class there.

B. Peace with self (verses 4-9). Inner peace comes from having a right attitude. Just as Paul was content in any state in which he found himself, he encouraged all the brethren to consider the things of God—truth, honesty, justice, purity, loveliness, virtue—in their thoughts. No circumstance, no matter how difficult, should cause a true believer to lose his joy in Christ. Positive thinking breeds right actions.

C. Peace with circumstances (verses 10-23). Paul ends his letter rejoicing and giving thanks for the Philippians' generosity and care for him in time of affliction. Assuring them not to worry since his joy produces contentment with any circumstance, Paul has peace knowing that God cares for him and the brethren at Philippi.

Subsequent History

With this epistle, the Philippian church fades from the biblical record. Later, in second century church history, it is mentioned in connection with the martyrdom of Ignatius, an early church bishop in Antioch. Ignatius was being taken to Rome in chains along the famous Egnatian Way. As the entourage of soldiers stopped at Philippi, the church there ministered greatly to Ignatius. Portions of a letter from Polycarp, another early leader of the second century and co-worker with Ignatius, to the church at Philippi have been discovered among early Christian writings, containing a commendation for this tender act of mercy. The church Paul so loved apparently continued its devotion after his death.

Sometime between the second and fourth centuries, the church at Philippi likely changed. It is rarely mentioned in the records of the councils of the fourth and fifth centuries. Today, the former city lies in ruins. Sometime during that 200 years between Ignatius' death and the councils, the fervent dedication and service so noted and cherished by Paul, perhaps led to persecution and deliverance. Perhaps when Christianity became the official religion of Rome, the church in the city called the miniature Rome was engulfed by those not knowing of its history and diligence. Perhaps its light of faith and charity no longer shown. We do not know for sure. We only know that the church there in Paul's day was one of his most loved and cherished—the only one who communicated with him concerning “giving and receiving” (Philippians 4:15). May that church remain our shining example of the true Christian spirit.

Colossae

Things in Earth and Things in Heaven

Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.—Colossians 1:20

Jeff Mezera

Colossae was a city of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia, located in the south west of Asia Minor. It was situated on a hill about twelve miles north of Laodicea, near a great trading route from Ephesus to the Euphrates. Another neighboring city, Hierapolis, was also important to travelers on the trade route, but paled in comparison to the importance of Colossae's reputation as a textile center. The area was renowned for the “*collossinus*,” a peculiar wool which was probably purple or red in color.

While Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia, Colossae was known as one of Phrygia's most opulent cities until both, along with several other cities, were destroyed by an earthquake in the tenth year of Nero (65 A.D.).

Although all recovered from the earthquake, and the neighboring cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea increased in importance, Colossae declined until the 7th and 8th centuries when it was overrun by the Saracens. The church in Colossae was destroyed by the Turks in the 12th century and eventually the city simply disappeared.

When?

Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians near the end of his first imprisonment in Rome. It is for this reason that these two letters are generally called the “twin” letters. There is a similarity between the Colossians and Ephesians epistles. It probably was not only due to their closeness in the time of composition, but possibly there were parallel circumstances in both cities that needed to be addressed individually by Paul.

It is also evident that a letter to Philemon and another to Laodicea were written contemporaneously because Tychicus and Onesimus delivered the letters to Colossae, Laodicea, and Philemon at the same time (Colossians 4:7-9; Philemon 10-12; Ephesians 6:21,22). Colossians 4:16 states that this letter to Colossae was to be shared with the brethren in Laodicea and the letter to Laodicea was to go to the brethren in Colossae.

Although Paul visited Ephesus in some of his missionary journeys, no record is mentioned of his visiting Colossae. Paul does make a request of Philemon (Philemon 22) to prepare a lodging for him when he was to be released from prison, but it is not an event which is recorded in Scripture or known to have occurred. Colossians 4:3 and Ephesians

6:19 suggest that in fact his imprisonment ended in death. Others suggest that he was released from prison and that his prayers for deliverance were answered. Still no mention is made of a visit by Paul to Colossae in any of his letters or in any known historical record. This shows Paul's confidence that his prayers would be answered. We too should pray believing that our prayers will be answered if they are in harmony with the will of God, accepting the fact that they may not (Matthew 21:22).

Paul had some personal contact with most of the churches to which he wrote but not this one. In his letter to the Colossians, he wrote that he had only heard of their great faith and love for the saints through his friend Epaphras. It was Epaphras, one of Paul's fellow prisoners (Philemon 23), who spoke to Paul about the church in Colossae. Perhaps it was Epaphras himself who started the church there (4:12).

The church in Colossae was composed of mostly Gentiles, but there were Judaizing elements which attempted to mix the Christian faith with certain Jewish mysticism. Cicero (*Pro Flacco 68*) estimates there were over ten thousand Jewish males living in the area of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae.

Introduction

From the first verse of Colossians until verse nine, Paul speaks about himself and Timothy. Other epistles also show that Timothy was then helping Paul. He is named six times in the address of Paul's letters to the churches: here and in the first verse of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

Chapter 1

Paul calls himself an "apostle" (the "sent out one") and Timothy is described as a brother. In almost all of his letters, except Thessalonians and Philemon, he used the title "apostle." He uses this title to emphasize his authority, that what he says is from God, and they should take notice of his words (1:1,2). In Colossians 1:1 and 1:25 he says that even though he is an apostle, it is not because of his own doing, but because it was the will of God. Paul's earnest desire for the Colossians was that they should be filled with the knowledge of the Father's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (1:3-12). He wanted them to walk worthy of the Lord (1:9-11).

The next verses are transition passages to show how Jesus has accomplished the plan for the Father's kingdom. This was all accomplished through the blood of Christ on the cross and is the reason we also have forgiveness of sins (1:12-14).

The Father's will is for the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth (1:20). These are the same all things (1:16,17) in heaven and earth which were created through the son (1:15-20).

Selah

We should pause for a moment and consider the wonder of the reconciliation.

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (1:20). How are all things in earth **and** heaven reconciled by the blood?

We were all born into sin and are all condemned because of the condemnation of Adam. “By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (Romans 5:18). Like David, we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5).

The earth also was cursed because of Adam's transgression. God says to Adam, “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake” (Genesis 3:17). This is why Romans 8:22 says that we “know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.”

Reconciliation is a bringing back into a former state of harmony (Strongs #604). The entire human race and all things in earth will be reconciled to God because of the blood of Christ on the cross. The passage in Colossians 1:20 is comparable to a similar statement in Ephesians: “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Ephesians 1:9,10).

Romans 5:19 states: “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” While this explains how all things in earth are reconciled, how are all things in heaven reconciled? Let us review Colossians 1:20 again: “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile . . . things in **heaven**.” How does the blood reconcile things in heaven?

Paul continues to explain this in the next few verses: “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (1:21-23).

We are tentatively reconciled now because we have accepted the gospel of the atonement of Christ and **IF** we continue in the faith and do not remove ourselves from the hope of the gospel. Our promise if we remain faithful is that we will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). We shall be kings and priests and “we shall reign on [Greek: *epi*, over] the earth” (Revelation 5:10). We will “take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Daniel 7:18, 27).

Jesus created all things in heaven and earth, as well as thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers that are in heaven and earth (1:16). They all will serve and obey him. But, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2,3). We who serve Christ now, who are not removed from the hope of the gospel and who are found faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10) will reign with Christ; we will judge men and angels with Christ, and with Christ we shall “crush Satan under [foot] shortly” (Romans 16:20; Genesis 3:15). This is how even the heavens will be reconciled at the end when Jesus delivers the kingdom to the Father, when all enemies are under his feet, including the last enemy death (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Paul continues to explain that the Colossians should understand what Jesus did for us and recognize their responsibility. Like the church of Colossae, we know what condition we came from, and we also know our present condition in Christ. We should continue in the faith grounded and settled, and “not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (1:21-23).

Earlier in the chapter Paul explained that he was an apostle; here he describes what it is that he is ministering. He explains his role in the mystery of Christ and describes the role of all believers in that mystery and why he preaches this mystery to every man (1:23 to 2:3).

Chapter 2

Paul gives the Colossians a warning to keep close to Christ and away from the world. He reminds them that they took on Christ, and that they should continue in him, and that together they can give praise to God as they remain rooted and strong in the faith (2:4-8). The advice the apostle gives to the Colossians should also be taken into our hearts. We should “take care” that we do not go after “the beliefs of men and the theories of the world instead of Christ” (2:8, *Bible in Basic English*).

“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:9,10). We are reminded just as the Colossians were, that Jesus is now exalted to the divine nature. Jesus was “raised from the dead” to this position and now our trespasses condemning us are forgiven because he took the condemnation that was written against us and nailed it to the cross (Colossians 2:14). Jesus was given this power and authority from God (Matthew 28:18). As the son of God is complete in the Father, we are only complete in Jesus (2:9-14).

The next portion of the epistle examines how belief in the doctrine of Christ changes our lives, that rituals are no longer important, and that we should let no man judge us in respect to how we live our lives. This is because the laws, feasts, festivals, rituals, holidays, and the sabbath were all shadows of the things to come (2:15-17).

The church of Colossae was involved with certain worldly philosophies and wisdom (2:18, 19). There was some sort of heresy in Colossae which Paul addressed at this point

in his letter. This heresy probably evolved from the amalgamation of the Jewish and Greek cultures. Whatever this heresy was, it was most likely one of the reasons that Paul wrote this letter and why he stressed the superiority of Christ (1:15-18), rebuked “angel worship” (2:18), and wrote against the commandments and doctrines of men (2:20-23).

There is no reason to believe that the Christians of Colossae worshipped angels for there is no evidence that any Jew or Gentile ever worshipped angels. Paul's focus in this portion of his letter was to bring an answer to certain ideas that the Colossian church had. We do not have enough information to determine what these ideas were except for what Paul wrote in this letter. “While some have ascribed these teachings to Gnostic or Essene sources, they more likely derive from a form of Jewish Christianity modified by influences from Hellenistic astrology and perhaps from the pagan mystery cults.” (*Harper's Bible Dictionary*)

“This does not mean, as it seems to me, that they would themselves worship angels, or that they would teach others to do it—for there is no reason to believe this. Certainly the Jewish teachers, whom the apostle seems to have had particularly in his eye, would not do it; nor is there any evidence that any class of false teachers would deliberately teach that angels were to be worshipped.” (*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*)

The “worshipping of angels” has been a difficult phrase for many translators and Bible scholars to interpret. It would be strange for Christians with a certain Judaizing influence to worship angels since that was forbidden by Jewish law and customs. Perhaps the Colossians were emulating the reverential attitude of angels.

“The word rendered **worship** . . . occurs in the New Testament only here, in Acts 26:5, and James 1:26, 27, in each of which places it is rendered **religion**. It means here the religion, or the spirit of humble reverence and devotion which is evinced by the angels; and this accords well with the meaning in James 1:26, 27. . . . Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” (*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*)

We must fight against worldly “wisdom.” Paul asks a rhetorical question: If you be dead with Christ from this world, then why as though you were still living in the world do you subject yourselves to ordinances? These things seem to be wise in a sort of wisdom, but in reality they focus our attention on the things of this earth rather than the heavenly things to which we should be giving our attention (2:20-23).

Chapter 3

We are to seek heavenly things and set our goals to be with him in glory, not on the things of this earth. When Christ appears, then we shall appear with him in glory (3:1-4). In these verses Paul gives us practical ways of how to put off the old man and how we can put him to death (3:5-9). The apostle then details what our life in Christ is about. Instead of the “Thou shalt not” list he gave us in verses 5-9 he here gives us a list of “Thou shalt” (3:10-15).

Paul reminds us that as Christians we are all a part of the body of Christ and he admonishes us in the ways of how we are to interact with other brethren and how to edify each other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Whatever we do we should do in the name of Jesus and give thanks to the Father because of what Jesus has done in our lives (3:15-17).

In the next portion of the epistle, Paul continues to give us practical ways to live this life in Christ, as well as the spiritual things we should do and not do. He reminds us again that we should not live after the commandments and doctrines of men (3:17-25).

Continuing his list of practical ways to live our lives in Christ, Paul admonishes ways to live Christian lives in the family as husbands, wives, parents, and children. He describes how we should encourage each other in the most holy faith and try not to discourage each other by the ways in which we may act in the family (3:17-21).

Next he admonishes servants to obey their masters. In our work place today we should do the same. We should work for our employers not as if we were working for mere men, but as if we were working for the Lord himself (3:21-25). Paul explains to masters how they are to treat their servants. If we are employers, we should keep Paul's advice in mind because we too have a Master in heaven (4:1).

Chapter 4

Chapter four concludes this epistle with general greetings to those of whom Paul was acquainted, and also to those who Paul had heard of within the Colossian church. He encourages them to share their letter with the church of Laodicea (4:16) and that the Laodicean church should share its letter with the Colossians. Perhaps the things that Paul writes to the Colossians were similar to the experiences Laodicea was having (4:7-18).

How can we accomplish the things Paul writes about in this letter to the Colossians? We should devote ourselves to prayer. He gave us a list of "thou shalt nots" and "thou shalt" earlier in the third chapter, but in this chapter he reminds us that we should also watch and pray for those who are preaching the gospel, that we should thank God for all his mercies toward us (4:2-4).

We, like the Colossians, should conduct ourselves in wisdom with those who are not Christians (4:4-6). We should let our speech always be with grace, giving to every man the reason of the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

Thessalonica

Struggles of an Infant Church

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.—Acts 17:1,2

Michael Brann

The distance from Philippi to Amphipolis was thirty-three miles; from Amphipolis to Apollonia, thirty miles; and from Apollonia to Thessalonica, thirty-seven miles; in all one hundred miles. The whole of this distance was over one of the celebrated military roads built by the Romans, and elegantly paved with flagstones, called the Egnatian Way. Running east and west, it served as a natural path over which to carry the gospel.

Having found no synagogue in either Amphipolis or Apollonia, these faithful proclaimers of the good news rejoiced to find one in Thessalonica, a thriving metropolis on the seacoast.

The Jewish synagogues were ostensibly conducted on a liberal basis, most often in the nature of a dialogue, anyone of reasonable ability being free to show what he could of the teaching of the Scriptures. The apostle's manner of presentation as a logical and connected reasoner appealed to many in the audience, composed of both Jews and Greek converts to Judaism.

As usual Paul began his work in the synagogue. His great success was not so much among the Jews as among the Gentiles attached to the synagogue. This infuriated the Jews. They regarded Paul as robbing them before their very eyes of those who lent strong financial and social support. The Jews stooped to the lowest methods to hinder Paul. First they stirred up the rabble. Then, when they had dragged Jason and his friends before the magistrates, they charged the Christian missionaries with preaching political insurrection. They knew their charge to be a lie and yet it was couched in very suggestive terms. "Those," they said, "who are upsetting the civilized world have arrived here" (KJV: "these that have turned the world upside down").

As a result, Paul and Silas were whisked away from further trouble by the brethren and sent on their way to Berea where they again immediately resorted to the synagogue to start their usual process once again.

Conditions in the Thessalonica Church

What is known about this church indicates that conditions were ripe for opportunities for expressions of love and patience and a sense of community on the one hand, or for intolerance, impatience, and division on the other. Apparently both were exercised. There

were both Greek and Jew, male and female, prominent and ordinary, wealthy and poor, lovers of light and lovers of tradition. Nearly all its members were new Christians, mere babes in Christ.

On the positive side, this infant church had gained a reputation throughout the region in two important areas of Christian character: suffering as Christians and brotherly love. Paul writes: “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, **having received the word in much affliction**, with joy of the holy spirit: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. But as touching **brotherly love** ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia” (1 Thessalonians 1:6,7; 4:9,10).

On the negative side, Paul's accusers apparently suggested that he was a deceiver (1 Thessalonians 2:3), a money-making schemer (1 Thessalonians 2:9; Philippians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 9:14,15) and a flatterer (1 Thessalonians 2:5).

Apparently, there was also a tendency toward old heathen practices of fornication (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8), habitual laziness (4:10-12), doctrinal error regarding the resurrection (4:13-18), and social cliques (5:13,15,20,26, 27).

Paul's 1st Letter to the Thessalonians

Despite the problems in the church at Thessalonica and without regard to his own life, Paul was very intense and anxious to re-visit the brethren there. Here are his emotionally charged words on the subject: “But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:7,8, NAS).

Further on he adds, “But we, brethren, having been bereft of you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan thwarted us. For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? For you are our glory and joy.”—1 Thessalonians 2:17-20, NAS

We do not know precisely how Satan hindered Paul from his visit. Perhaps it was unduly jeopardizing Jason and the others who had been taken (see Acts 17:6-9). We do know it was not from lack of care or concern. What an example this is for those who serve as shepherds of the Lord's flock!

In his absence, he sent his first epistle to them. It was apparently the first letter Paul sent to any church. It is dated around A.D. 50 or early A.D. 51 during his second missionary journey while he was in Corinth.

The tone of the letter is warm, loving, and instructive. Having been impressed with their love, zeal, hospitality, and reception of the truth, he affirms these fine qualities in them first before imparting needful criticism and suggestions.

Halfway through chapter 4 and into chapter 5, Paul teaches them about the resurrection of the dead. Being new Christians and not fully instructed in many details regarding the divine plans and purposes, they apparently had the idea (or else were being led to believe) that Christians who died prior to the Lord's second advent would not be resurrected.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 has been the subject of much discussion in the Christian world for the last two centuries. Many commonly refer to Paul's description as the "rapture" of the church. In the second epistle Paul corrects their erroneous thinking that the Lord's second presence would happen in their day. Here he puts the resurrection in the appropriate sequential order for them (and us). He says those faithful Christians who have fallen asleep shall rise at our Lord's second advent, prior to those then living at that time. These others in turn, as they die, will not need to sleep in death but will be raised immediately (caught up) to be with the Lord. Here are a few related Scriptures showing the necessity of dying before a resurrection would take place: Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Psalm 82:7; 2 Timothy 4:7,8.

The Thessalonians were not the only ones needing instruction about the resurrection. The entire 15th chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is devoted to this subject. Here again, the sounding of the last trump(et), the return of the Lord, the raising of the dead in Christ, and the necessity for the living (corruptible) to put on incorruption through the means of death are detailed. How happy we are that the Thessalonians and Corinthians communicated their doubts and questions on this subject for the great apostle Paul to answer. Now, two thousand years later, we have a correct understanding of these issues as well. (See also our Lord's word on this subject in Matthew 24:29-31.)

This first letter closes with several pithy admonitions worthy of our attention: "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."—1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Paul's 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians

The brethren at Thessalonica began to receive great persecutions shortly after Paul's first letter arrived. Because of this, some in the church began to teach that the Lord had indeed invisibly returned and that the great judgment day had begun. Again, the tender and fatherly apostle begins a second letter with affirmation of them and thanksgiving for them before launching into the major intent of his second letter which was to correct their erroneous thinking.

Believing that the great judgment day had begun would, of necessity, have caused much alarm and agitation in the church. "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord **has come**" (2 Thessalonians 2:1,2, NASB).

The Thessalonians' expectations were half-right and half-wrong. They expected the right thing but at the wrong time! They were correct in their expectation that the Lord would indeed return **invisibly** so Paul did not need to address that issue. He did not have to ask them if they had literally seen Jesus on the street or in the air or in their midst. They, like the apostles in Matthew 24:3, were looking at the **signs** which would indicate his **presence**. They simply misread the time this was to occur.

Once again this erroneous belief led to a fuller explanation by the apostle of another facet of the manner and events associated with our Lord's return. Not only does Paul indicate that the Lord would return invisibly, he clearly stated that some time would pass and circumstances fulfilled before the Lord would return. He writes: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8).

Two important events must occur before the Lord would return. First, there must be a great "falling away" from the faith once delivered to the saints; second, it would develop into the "Man of Sin" which would eventually be revealed or understood and then destroyed. This, of course, necessitates a lengthy period of time for a false religious system to grow, develop, and temporarily overwhelm the true saints of God. Our Lord mentions this same process of events in Matthew 13:24-30 in the parable of the wheat and the tares: the wheat field is overrun with tares (false Christians) after "men" (the apostles) fell asleep in death. The field would be left to grow unhindered until the harvest at the end of the age when once again, the Lord of the harvest (Jesus) would be present.

It is not our object here to thoroughly inquire into the Scriptural and historical identification of the "Man of Sin," but we agree with most Protestant Bible students of the past who saw this fulfilled in the Papacy. *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 2, ppg. 267-361.>

There are many lessons we can gain from studying Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. We appreciate Paul's unyielding love for the brethren whom he brought to the Lord. Twice he returned to visit his "children" whom he nurtured in the faith. No doubt they reciprocated their love to him and to the truth to which he pledged his life to serve.

In common with all the little congregations of the Lord's people, whether established by Paul or any of the other evangelizing disciples, they were soon to be tested. As he stated in Acts 20:29, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Hence, Paul's closing salutation is: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (2 Thessalonians 3:18).

Visions Of Eden

God, in His infinite wisdom, above,
Has promised a world that is based on His love.
Mankind, though fallen, sick, and depraved,
Shall arise from the sin that has kept them enslaved.

A world filled with hope ... could it be true?
Blessings for all -- both Gentile and Jew?
Yes, it is so, for in His Word He has said,
The billions of earth shall awake from the dead.

All who have died, asleep in the grave,
Shall arise at His call -- the "Mighty to Save."
Then, one by one, a new world they'll greet,
And all shall rejoice to bow at His feet.

Loved ones with loved ones, stand hand in hand,
As visions of Eden encompass the land.
Tears of the past, replaced by a song,
Sing loud the praises that right every wrong.

And those who were called from the legions of earth,
Shall be changed in a moment and witness a birth
To heavenly realms, a prize rich indeed,
And dispense all the blessings of Abraham's seed.

--Robert Brand

What Must It Be to Be There?

We speak of the land of the blest,
A country so bright and so fair,
And oft are its glories confessed,
But what must it be to be there?

We speak of the pathways of gold,
Its walls decked with jewels so rare,
Its wonders and pleasures untold,
But what must it be to be there?

We speak of its peace and its love,
The robes which the glorified wear,
The songs of the blessed above,
But what must it be to be there?

We speak of its freedom of sin,
From sorrow, temptation, and care,
From trials without and within,
But what must it be to be there?

Walter Sargent,
Poems of the Way, page 161

Bound By Invisible Bonds

Across our native land and beyond the distant sea,
A humble, longing people, would lift up their hearts to Thee
O Father, how were scattered, how our tents are pitched apart,
But we long to be together, with the loved ones of our heart.

But, Father, in our scattered state, we thank thee for the chain
That binds our hearts in unison, while we on earth remain;
The bond which makes it possible, though scattered far and wide,
To love so close and love so dear each member of that Bride.

Were glad, e'en though the flesh is bound unto a certain place,
The spirit's free in thought to be with every child of grace.
We're with each brother in his work, no matter where he be:
In prayer, in love, in daily thought, to wish him victory.

And even where a saint may be whom we have never met,
Some isolated gem, perchance, no brother's seen as yet,
Sweet waves of love go from that heart to each devoted soul,
Unintroduced by earthly form, we've reached communion's goal.

So, loved ones, while we miss your face, we know your heart is here.
We've felt the power of your prayers, effectual and sincere.
The many miles that intervene may keep the flesh apart,
But with it there' a closeness naught of earth can e'er impart.

Benjamin Barton, "Pilgrim Echoes," page 503

NEWS AND VIEWS

Pastoral Bible Institute News

www.heraldmag.org

We are pleased to announce an improvement to our web site. Pointing and clicking on a new “View Booklet” icon next to each publication listed on our literature page causes the text of that publication to be displayed. This will be appreciated by those who want to read a booklet immediately. Of course we will continue to mail booklets to those who request them.

Letters

The world has changed in the last few days and we are now in perilous times as evil seems to be rampant (global) and there is no way out except the kingdom; we pray it will come soon and bring peace to a fear-filled world. I did not realize how much hate there was in the world and man's inhumanity to man. Our Lord only can bring peace and settle all the problems confronting all nations. We have to trust in him and I think he is letting mankind see the exceeding sinfulness of sin and what it brings.

The truth has been a blessing and may we continue to pray, Thy Kingdom Come. I love my Heralds and look forward to each issue. May the Lord bless you in his service.

—A reader in Louisiana

World News

Religious

Editor's Note: Since 1999, we have consistently selected clippings describing the harsh rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan. With the war being waged by the U.S. there, it is interesting in hindsight to note the early signals to trouble almost two years ago by some observers such as the one following. While great effort has been made to avoid an attack on Islam, this and subsequent clippings suggest the difficulty of confining the war to Afghanistan, identifying all the enemies, and resolving the issue quickly. We may be seeing a permanent change in the religious environment of the world.

Robert Kaplan visited the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and painted a disturbing picture of a region dominated by tribalism, ignorance, violence, and rampant religious fanaticism. The region's fundamentalist religious fervor crystallized in 1994 with the emergence of the Taliban, a militant group devoted to an extremely inflexible version of Islam. In 1996, the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan's government, and, as Kaplan observed during

his April 2000 trip, it now continues to exert a powerful, destabilizing influence on the border regions of Pakistan. The Taliban embody a lethal combination: a primitive tribal creed, a fierce religious ideology, and the sheer incompetence, naiveté, and cruelty that are begot by isolation from the outside world and growing up amid war without parents. They are also an example of globalization, influenced by imported pan-Islamic ideologies and supported economically by both Osama bin Laden's worldwide terrorist network (for whom they provide a base) and a multibillion-dollar smuggling industry in which ships and trucks bring consumer goods from the wealthy Arabian Gulf emirate of Dubai through Iran and Afghanistan and on to Quetta and Karachi.

—Atlantic Monthly, September 2000

There are some 7 million Muslims in the U.S. That's more than the number of Jews and more than twice the number of Episcopalians. Thirty years ago, the Islamic count was a mere 500,000. The number of American-born Muslims now far exceeds the count of immigrants. African Americans are among American's most observant Muslims. (The two other major American Muslim ethnic groups are South Asian Americans and Arab Americans.)

—Time, 10/1/2001

The population of France stands at about 60 million; of whom six million are Muslims and 600,000 are Jews, the third largest Jewish community in the world. About 30,000 children are studying in 40 Jewish schools scattered around Paris. Only the number of new mosques can compete with the number of synagogues and kosher butcher shops. There is no other place outside of Israel where tension between Jews and Arabs runs so high. The Jewish community in France is also undergoing a process of religious and national radicalization. The weekly sermon of the chief rabbi, Joseph Sifruk, a penitent who became a “popular leader,” attracts hundreds of new admirers every time. What did the rabbi have to say after the terrorist attacks in New York (he spoke in fluent Hebrew)? “What happened there is part of Gog and Magog between Esau and Ishmael. We know the cause of the war—who takes Jerusalem.” President of the Representative Council of Jewish institutions in France, Roger Cukieman, said that everyone [in France] is against Israel now and things could easily take the form of anti-Semitism. Since the period of de Gaulle, he says, there has not been a foreign minister who was sympathetic to Israel.

—Ha'Aretz, 9/26/2001

Social

Afghanistan is poised to become the site of the worst humanitarian disaster ever, with 100,000 children likely to die this winter unless new aid gets into the country immediately, the UN said. The United Nations issued the warning as U.S. missile strikes and actions by the ruling Taliban have combined to endanger aid workers and children in the nation of 26 million, UN spokeswoman Stephanie Bunker said. Six million Afghan citizens depend on aid. Today the UN said that it is also under pressure to get aid into the

country before next month's onset of winter weather in the landlocked country. Snow will cut off many Afghan valleys from the outside world. "We are going to need to deploy one of the largest operations ever," to prevent those people from starving over the winter, said Eric Falt, another UN spokesman.

—Bloomberg News, 10/15/2001

In China, few of the increasing number of people infected with the AIDS virus identify themselves publicly. If word leaks out that a person has contracted the virus, whether or not AIDS symptoms are apparent, dire consequences follow. School officials bar infected students from classes. Supervisors summarily fire infected employees. Close friends and neighbors join with local officials to expel the infected person and his or her family from the community. To add injury to monumental insult, physicians and nurses at many hospitals refuse to treat AIDS patients. This situation is a public health powder keg, says epidemiologist Konglai Zhang of China's Peking Union Medical College. The social vilification of AIDS sufferers and their kin amplifies the suffering caused by the disease while discouraging any large-scale efforts to prevent its spread, he asserts. Perhaps the most visibly stigmatized illness in the world today, AIDS is only one of a variety of health problems that turn people into social untouchables. In India, public health officials have until recently accepted the view of many citizens that only prostitutes, homosexuals, or intravenous drug users could contract AIDS. At the same time, officials largely ignored a dramatic rise in new AIDS cases among monogamous, married women.

—Science News, 10/27/2001

Earlier this year, a giant solar flare ejected about ten billion tons of plasma (hot, electrically charged gas) in an earthward direction at an unfriendly speed of 700-800km a second. The full force of the storm arrived over the Atlantic, and so did no damage. If it had hit an inhabited area, though, it could have wrecked local power supplies. In 1989, a similar event blacked out much of Quebec's power grid. Such flares are symptoms of greater than average solar activity. Indeed, at the recent peak of its 11-year cycle, the sun's battering of the earth's protective magnetic boundaries with smaller versions of such flares caused the aurora borealis (northern lights) to appear as far south as the border between Texas and Mexico.

—Economist.com, 9/13/200

For generations, lumbering, long-necked dinosaurs came to the flood plain of a river in what is now Argentina, laid eggs in shallow dirt nests, spread leaves over them and left. The dinosaur style of parenthood worked for millions of years—except when the river flooded, says Luis Chiappe, a Los Angeles dinosaur expert. The floods drowned the unhatched dinosaurs in their shells and buried them in mud. The mud then preserved and fossilized the embryos. Chiappe, lead author of a study in *Science*, says that at least six eggs contain nearly intact baby dinos and are providing the most detailed look yet at a dinosaur from the last and most massive of long-necked plant-eaters, the titanosaur

family. Chiappe says the embryos are from a previously unknown species that lived 80 million years ago.

—USA Today, 10/1/2001

Financial

So far in 2001 there have been 32 bankruptcies of companies with liabilities of over \$1 billion. This is more than the whole period of 1989-91, the low point of the previous business cycle, calculates Edward Altman of New York University's Stern School, which compiles a well-watched list of corporate debt defaults. About 7% of outstanding issues of junk bonds are in default. The all-time peak of 10.3%, which was set in 1991, may soon be topped. There are other differences between this bad-debt crisis and previous ones in the late 1970s, late 1980s and early 1990s, says Barry Ridings, managing director of the restructuring business of Lazard Frères, an investment bank. The problems are more widespread, not confined to particular firms that took on too much debt. Entire industries are in trouble, including movie theatres, nursing homes, steel and anything that ever came into contact with asbestos. In the past, firms that went bankrupt were often given years to try to work out their problems before liquidation was seriously considered. This year's model is Midway Airlines which, following the attacks on September 11th, declared bankruptcy and closed for good on the same day.

—The Economist, 10/18/2001

The financial crisis that mushroomed in the wake of September 11 will have a lasting effect on political, social, and economic relationships globally. At the World Economic Forum's East Asia Summit 2001, business leaders and government representatives focused their discussions on ways to revive the Asian economies and restore stability to the region. Fiscally, Asia is in trouble. The export-lead Asian economies are largely dependent on the US market. After the 1997 financial crisis, Asian economies were able to recover largely due to the booming American economy, and not through much needed structural reforms. But as Simon S.C. Tay, an Associate Professor from the National University of Singapore, said, this repair mechanism has all but disappeared. No longer can Asian countries depend on the US market as a driver of the industrializing export based system. And this could spell trouble for political stability. "It is essential to see that our conception of security in the region is a comprehensive security that depends on the government being able to deliver forms of growth and basically of hope for people to come up from a very low base," said Tat. While the Asian countries have officially expressed their support for the US, there are growing domestic tensions within some countries with large Muslim populations that threaten the stability of their governments.

—The Earth Times, 10/29/2001

Civil

The global rash of bioterrorism alerts has tended to obscure the fact that natural anthrax is still a health hazard around the world, infecting around 2,000 people a year. The disease occurs mainly in herbivores and spreads to humans who are exposed occupationally to cattle, sheep, and goats. Turkey is a hot spot with about 400 human cases a year, according to figures from the World Health Organization. However, worldwide incidence of anthrax has declined steadily over the past century as a result of campaigns to eradicate infection from animal herds. One hundred years ago there were several hundred thousand anthrax cases a year and thousands of deaths. Civil unrest can lead to upsurges in anthrax. By the end of the civil war in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, there had been some 10,000 human cases, compared with the previous normal annual rate of a dozen cases. The most sinister outbreak was in Sverdlovsk in the former Soviet Union in 1979, when 66 people died of inhalation anthrax—the most serious form of the disease—as a result of an accident at a secret biological weapons research center.

—Financial Times, 10/23/2001

Number of anthrax-related deaths [USA] in 2001 **5**

Number of West Nile virus-related deaths in 1999:**7**

Number of people missing or dead in the World Trade Center attacks as of Nov. 21 according to city officials: **3,682**

—Time, 11/12 and 12/5/2001

At an annual security conference in eastern Saudi Arabia, Interior Minister Prince Nayef warned security forces against sympathizing with Islamists opposed to the regime. Nayef's remarks—unusually public for the notoriously secretive government—suggest that Riyadh doubts the loyalty of security forces. The government has reason for suspicion. Dissatisfaction with the royal family's extravagant spending has simmered just beneath the surface of Saudi society for years. In the southwest several seemingly unrelated incidents suggest growing unhappiness with the government in Riyadh and its relationship with the United States. Although a popular uprising in Saudi Arabia is unlikely, rebellion from within the security forces or organized Islamic militants from the southwest is possible. The government's strict control over all aspects of society has so far kept organized political opposition in check. But growing animosity among citizens toward Riyadh's relationship with Washington—evidenced by recent protests—has prompted the royal family to reconsider the basing of U.S. troops on Saudi soil. Splits within the royal family pose a political problem for the United States. But the emergence of radical Islamic opposition could force Riyadh's hand, resulting in the expulsion of U.S. troops and a drawdown in ties with Washington.

—Stratford Intelligence Group report, 10/23/2001

The number of potential suppliers of weapons technology has expanded over the past decade. More than two dozen countries are thought to have built weapons of mass destruction, or else are trying to do so. Countries that were once dependent on outside help, mostly from Russia and China, are now going into business themselves. North Korea, for example, has created a thriving missile and technology export business with Iran, Pakistan, Syria and others in the Middle East. But there is no evidence that any of these governments has helped terrorist groups to acquire such weapons. Nevertheless, the prospect that some state could help a terrorist group overcome the significant hurdles to deploying a biological, chemical or nuclear weapon is frightening. Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against his own Kurdish subjects, but was too afraid to do so against American troops during the Gulf war because America had promised massive retaliation if he did. It is not clear whether states such as Iraq and North Korea, which operate largely outside international law, can be deterred from lending a secret helping hand to a group such as Osama bin Laden's if they believe they can do so undetected.

—The Economist.com, 10/3/2001

Saddam Hussein has directed his top scientists to work exclusively on expanding his chemical and biological weapons arsenal, one of the regime's former senior scientists has told *The Telegraph*. He said Saddam has ordered the nuclear weapons program to be shelved because it had proved too expensive. The disclosures by the nuclear physicist, a recent Iraqi defector, will add to the alarm of Western leaders who last week issued a warning of the prospect of chemical attacks on European and American targets. Military experts said Saddam's decision could have been linked to the attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, which investigators believe were planned years in advance. Over the past six months about 3,000 physicists and chemists have been working flat out on secret programs to develop both toxins and the means of deploying them for lethal effect, according to Dr. al Sabiri (not his real name). The scientist formerly worked at the Atomic Energy Organization in Baghdad, but defected because of his growing horror of the regime.

—IMRA, The Telegraph, 10/1/2001

Critics view genetically modified foods as potential health hazards, arguing that not enough research has been done to determine whether they are really safe. But such food could be the answer to feeding the world's hungry, according to the UN's 11th annual Human Development Report. Crops altered to produce higher yields could revolutionize farming in Africa, Latin America and across the underdeveloped world, and the prolonged debate in the U.S. and Europe over safety "ignores the concerns of the developing world," the report says. The report ranks 162 countries based on income, education, life expectancy and health care. Norway ranks first and the U.S. is in sixth place as the world's best country in which to live. But if you are poor, you live longer in Sweden and Japan, according to the report.

—Wall Street Journal, 7/10/2001

Vandals raided a Jewish cemetery in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, painting swastikas and epithets on the tombstones of 31 graves, police said. The vandalism is being investigated said Irina Uzhetskaya, a police spokeswoman in Krasnoyarsk, 2,100 miles east of Moscow. Several shots were fired at tombstones of the same cemetery about two years ago, according to the Russian news agency ITAR-Tass. Concerns about anti-Semitism in Russia have risen in recent years, with repeated cases of bombings and vandalism at synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, as well as attacks on Jews.

—Associated Press, 8/22/2001

The number of state prisoners in the US fell during the second half of 2000, the first decline since 1972, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics said in a report. At the end of 2000, there were 6,243 fewer people in state prisons than after the first six months of the year. The total number of people in state and federal prison rose 1.3 percent last year, the smallest annual increase since 1972. At the end of 2000, one in every 143 US residents was incarcerated, either in state or federal prison or in a local jail, the report said.

—Bloomberg News, 8/12/2001

“The reality in the German Democratic Republic is that people of a different skin color, of a different faith, or of a different nationality cannot feel safe anywhere in this country,” said Paul Spiegel, chairman of the Central Council of German Jews. He said that it is “open season” on minorities and foreigners in Germany's streets. Spiegel blames all German political bodies for their minimizing the seriousness of the threat posed by rising xenophobic violence, a threat, he says, which is greater than any posed by Nazism since the end of World War II. Xenophobic violence in Germany has increased during the past year after a drop through the 1990s. There were 16,000 hate crimes committed in 2000, as opposed to 10,000 in 1999.

—Arutz 7, 8/22/2001

Israel

A Kiryat Gat factory that manufactures gas masks that only months ago was contemplating laying off employees is now working increased shifts and will soon be working round the clock. An additional 150 persons will be hired in the hope of reaching the new short-term goal of producing 1,000 masks daily. Factory officials explain European countries and the U.S. are ordering the masks. In the meantime, factory managers explain the first priority will remain local, explaining no masks will be sent abroad until the increasing local demands are met.

—Arutz-7, 10/1/2001

Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein announced that there are over seven million volunteers, men, women, and children, ready to march towards the border of Israel. He stated they were all members of the Jerusalem Army for the Liberation of Palestine.

—Israel National News, 10/1/2001

“A Palestinian state already exists—across the River Jordan, where three million Palestinians live,” National Union MK Benny Elon told a mass right-wing rally in downtown Jerusalem in October. “There will never be a Palestinian state in Israel!” The statement summarized the mood of the largest rally since Ariel Sharon was elected Prime Minister eight months ago, with an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 demonstrators gathering under the slogan “Throw out Arafat and Fight Terror.” Carrying posters with the pictures of the Palestinian leader and wanted arch-terrorist Osama bin Laden, with the words “The twins” written underneath, the rally included a conference call with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. “New York and Jerusalem are closer than ever before,” the mayor said. “Both the US and Israel are seeking to defend and perpetuate the same values of democracy, freedom, respect for the law and human life.”

—Jerusalem Post, 10/22/2001

American support for close US ties with Israel is stronger than ever following the September 11 attacks, a poll conducted by International Communications Research (ICR) shows. ICR, a leading American polling firm which does work for ABC News, The Washington Post, and the Associated Press, found that 92 percent of Americans endorse full cooperation between the US and Israel in combating terrorism, while 4% oppose such cooperation. Seventy-four percent of Americans favor either strengthening ties with Israel or maintaining the current, close relationship. Only 10% favor distancing the US from Israel. The poll was conducted under the auspices of the Institute for Jewish and Community research and the Center for Middle Eastern studies at the Hudson Institute. According to the sponsors of the poll, which was conducted between September 14 and September 18, “If one purpose of the attacks in New York and Washington was to drive a wedge between the American public and Israel, the results indicate the terrorists failed to diminish American public support for Israel.”

—Jerusalem Post, 10/3/2001.