

# TREASURE OF WISDOM

**Exhaustive  
Enlightenment  
Ephesians 1:18**

**Living in Him  
Ephesians 1:5**

**Ways of Wisdom  
Ephesians 3:10**



**Heavenly  
Citizenship  
Ephesians 2:19**

**Keys of  
Knowledge  
Ephesians 1:17**

**Sinful Sons of God  
Galatians 3:26**

**Dwelling Place of God  
Ephesians 2:22**

**Unfathomable Riches  
Ephesians 3:8**

**Ultimate  
Understanding  
Colossians 1:9**

"... in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Colossians 2: 2-3

## TRIBUTE

We are all shaped and refined by our failures and our successes. As a husband, father, and parent I have experienced many failures and successes. As a preacher of the gospel and an elder in the Lord's church I have experienced both successes and failures. A great many people have influenced, shaped and improved me through the years but not a single person has impacted my life more than my wonderful wife of 56 years. She has been my greatest critic, supporter and helpmeet throughout all these years. The love of my life has supported me as we traveled from place to place to preach. Some were very difficult while others very rewarding, regardless, she never wavered in love, care and support for me.

Without her support, encouragement and determination to serve the Lord, my service to Him would have been hindered greatly.

A THANK YOU is not nearly enough.



The word wisdom is used 154 times in the Old Testament and 54 times in the New Testament. We will focus on the New Testament passages in this lesson however, many Old Testament passages will be included at the end of the lesson for further study. Synonyms for wisdom are *discernment or perception* [1 Corinthians 11:29, Philippians 1:9] and *Insight* [Ephesians 1:8, 3:4]. Webster's Dictionary gives an extended definition as *sense, judgement and wisdom*. **Sense** is the reliable ability to judge and decide with soundness, prudence and intelligence. **Judgement** implies *sense* tempered and refined by experience, training and maturity. **Wisdom** implies sense and judgement that is above average. The necessary ingredients to have wisdom, according to Webster, is to have the *ability to make sound judgements using intelligence that is shaped and refined by experience, training and maturity*.

There are two kinds of wisdom spoken of in the New Testament. Wisdom of the world, man's wisdom, is fleshly and only has the appearance of wisdom [Colossians 2:23]. James 1:5 refers to man's lack of wisdom. However, most of the passages speak of the wisdom **of** God or wisdom **from** God making Him the source of all spiritual wisdom [Colossians 1 1:9].

But to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the **wisdom of God**, 1 Corinthians 1:24 (NAS95). The true seeker of God sees that Christ is the power and wisdom of God. It was through Christ that God chose to display His wisdom in whom His son came to provide salvation to mankind. The obedient sees the wisdom of God's plan, sees that it is suitable to provide pardon, sanctification and eternal life. They can see the beauty of God's character, the excellency of His doctrines and the effectiveness of the plan to secure their salvation. When that judgement is made, they will change their lives. Changes could radical, from following the wisdom of men or their own [Philippians 3:9] to following God's wisdom. They may have had some knowledge OF God [Romans 1:19-22] but they didn't know of God's wisdom that brings salvation [Titus 2:11-14]. When the decision is made, after learning about the wisdom of God and the salvation it will provides, the seeker will be stirred from a state of denial and sin to obey the gospel of Christ which is the revealed wisdom of God.

1 Cor. 2:1-13 gives insight into Paul's explanation of God's wisdom. He came NOT with superiority of speech or wisdom but with the testimony of God (*man's vs. God's*). Not in persuasive words of wisdom but a demonstration of the Spirit (*wisdom of God*). **Reason** -so your faith would not rest on wisdom of men, but on the power of God. Verse 13- the things Paul taught was not human wisdom but by the Spirit (*wisdom from God*) combining spiritual thought with spiritual words. The spiritual thoughts came from God delivered by the Spirit to Paul and others to speak and write, to put into spiritual words for our knowledge and understanding.

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Corinthians 1:30 (NAS95). Paul addresses Christians, "you are in Christ because of the work of Christ, the mercy and grace of Christ, whom God appointed to be our wisdom." God had a plan before the foundation of the world to make us wise. He wanted us to be acquainted with the His character and nature. He chose Christ as the channel to bring that wisdom to earth. Christ is eminently wise and the source of all true wisdom to His people [Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 13:54; Luke 2:40,52; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 3:10]. Many scholars assign the beautiful description of wisdom in Proverbs 8:1-36 to the Messiah.

James 1:13 asks if there is any wise among you? Let him prove it! How? By showing his works with meekness and wisdom. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic, James 3:15 (NAS95).

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy, James 3:1 (NAS95). We must realize that James is speaking of Christ, the embodiment of all spiritual wisdom that came from God, through Christ to all those who seek Him.

Since Christ is the very essence of purity, [1 John 3:3] He came down from heaven to influence mankind to be upright, sincere and holy. His mission was to change the hearts of men. Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 1 Peter 1:22 (NAS95).

When the heart has been changed, a string of blessings follows. *Peaceable* - the effects of purity [Romans 14:19], *gentle*- mild, not offensive, mannerly (we get our word gentleman from this word). *Reasonable* - under the influence of wisdom and purity, *full of mercy and good fruits* - without partiality or hypocrisy.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God, Colossians 3:16 (NAS95). Focus on the first phrase, "*word richly dwell within*" meaning to take up residence, His constant presence. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you, John 14:25 (NAS95). Jesus spoke about His physical presence, but the principle is the same concerning His spiritual presence. He is in their midst, abiding with them. With Christ present in our hearts we should sing with thanksgiving to God for His wonderful gift of grace and mercy and be eager to teach and edify one another.

And to man He said, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is **wisdom**; And to depart from evil is understanding,” Job 28:28 (NAS95).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever, Psalms 111:10 (NAS95).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise **wisdom** and instruction, Proverbs 1:7 (NAS95).

For to a person who is good in His sight He has given **wisdom** and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind, Ecclesiastes 2:26 (NAS95).

## ??? Questions ???

- (1) Describe, in your own words, “wisdom” using Webster as a reference.
  
- (2) What does the seeker of God see when he is exposed to God’s plan?
  
- (3) What effect can God’s plan have on the seeker?
  
- (4) List the things that the seeker can learn about God.
  
- (5) Describe Paul’s explanation of God’s wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:1-13.
  
- (6) What is the correlation between Isaiah 11:1, Matthew 13:54, Luke 2:40, 1 Cor.1: 24, and 3:10?

(7) Where can we go if we lack wisdom?

(8) What was the mission of Christ in coming to earth?

(9) What is the lesson from the first phrase of Colossians 3:16?

(10) Analyze the 5 Old Testament passages. What principle did you learn?



Knowledge applies to facts or ideas acquired through study, investigation, observation or experience (Webster). This general definition applies to almost every discipline or study, including the study of spiritual matters.

Regardless of the amount of knowledge one acquires, if it is misused the result is a disaster. Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the **key of knowledge**; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering, Luke 11:52 (NAS95). Many of the religious leaders of the day had failed! The Scribes and Pharisees had replaced the Priests as teachers of the Law and changed, replaced or altered the Law given by God with their manmade traditions. Jesus denounced them for their unauthorized actions in Matthew 23:13 so they sought to kill Him. Many religious leaders today have taken away the “keys” in much the same manner.

When elders allow preachers and teachers to provide “junk food” sermons and lessons the result will be the same - lost “**Keys of knowledge.**” This allows a variety of problems into the church. Many local congregations are experiencing huge drop off in attendance between A.M and P.M. worship services while others have discontinued P.M. services. There can be many reasons for the decrease in attendance. However, sometimes the group gets their “sugar high” during the morning service. Then they are good until next Sunday because this type of sermon does not require the hearer to make any changes in their life. There is a long list of other things that plague congregations when the “Keys” get taken away by leaders.

Awake to a righteous life and cease to sin, 1 Corinthians 15:34. There are some who have **no true knowledge of God.** “I speak in this way to shame you” (TCNT). Paul is writing to Christians, warning them of the result of losing the “true knowledge of God,” and it is shameful. They have abundant opportunities to have the true knowledge of God. However, leaders have lost the “keys of knowledge” and as in the days of Jesus, many will be hindered from learning that true knowledge thus remaining ignorant.

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge** of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the **knowledge** of God, Colossians 1:9-10 (NAS95). Paul’s



desire for them is to be, “**filled with knowledge.**” He is not referring to accumulating information but knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and understanding. If we are filled up with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of spiritual things there will be no room for the knowledge of fleshly things and false teachers will be defeated. Notice Paul’s warning, Men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some, 2 Timothy 2:18 (NAS95). The present-day false teaching referred to as A.D. 70 doctrine could be part of this, Paul refers to such teachings in 1Cor. 15:34 and calls it shameful!

Accumulating a real and true knowledge of God, His character, and His nature will make us useful in His kingdom. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be **neither barren nor unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 1:8 (NKJV). Peter provides a roadmap to properly equip us to be useful, fit, and suitable for work in the Lord’s kingdom.

But grow in the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen, 2 Peter 3:18 (NAS95). This is a command to every Christian- GROW- then he adds the specific field – in the knowledge of Christ. Now apply the definition of knowledge: study [2 Timothy 2:15], investigate [Acts 17:11], observe [Acts 4:13], and experience [Matthew 9:6].

Take pains with these things; **be absorbed** in them, so that your **progress will be evident to all,** 1 Timothy 4:15 (NAS95.) Knowledge of any subject is useless if it is not put into practice. **Habitually practice** these duties and **be absorbed** in them; so that your **growing proficiency** in them may be evident to all, 1 Timothy 4:15 (WNT). Paul encourages Timothy to be absorbed, with the word of God which includes study, investigation and observation. WHY? So, others can see your progress as you grow toward proficiency. Why is it important for others to see our progress in learning the will of God? Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; **persevere** in these things, for as you do this you will **ensure** salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you, 1 Timothy 4:16 (NAS95). Paul supplies the answer in verse 16, “we can ensure salvation for ourselves and those that become hearers.”

Where did Timothy gain the knowledge to teach and practice God’s will? He had *studied* the “sacred writings” from childhood, *investigated* [become convinced], *observed* [his mother and grandmother], and *experienced* [their example]. This knowledge led him to know that salvation is through faith in Christ. That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work, 2 Timothy 3:17 (NKJV). Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and **useful for the Master,** prepared for every good work, 2 Timothy 2:21 (NKJV).

## Personal Study

**1Corinthians 1:8 – knowledge makes arrogant**

**2 Corinthians 4:6 - light of knowledge**

**Acts 24:22- more exact knowledge**

## ??? Questions ???

- (1) Explain how the Scribes and Pharisees had taken away the keys of knowledge.
- (2) What were the results of their actions?
- (3) How is it possible for the Keys to be taken away today?
- (4) List the various ways knowledge is accumulated.
- (5) How can we be filled with the true knowledge of God?
- (6) What does Paul mean to be “absorbed” in them?
- (7) Explain what it means to “ensure” salvation.
- (8) Can a learned person be unprepared [unfit] to serve in the kingdom? Explain.
- (9) What did you learn from this lesson?



We generally consider understanding to mean comprehending or mutual agreement. In the scriptures “accord” and “covenant” are used to convey the same idea. This does not include 1<sup>st</sup> year Algebra class for me. Jesus said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also?” Matthew 15:16 (NAS95). This could have been a quote from my teacher back in the day, but it still holds true today for Algebra.

The writings of Solomon in the book of Proverbs is filled with teachings on wisdom and understanding. Incline your heart to understanding, Proverbs 2:2, 5:1 (NAS95). Proceed in the way of understanding, Proverbs 9:6 (NAS95). Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it, but the discipline of fools is folly, Probers 16:22 (NAS95).

Paul used the same thought in II Corinthians, for we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding, (NAS95). Not everyone has understanding, it is a learning process. It begins with  $2 + 2 = 4$  and continues to higher levels of thinking. Over and over Jesus admonished His disciples concerning **their lack of understanding** (Mark 7:14,18; Matthew 15:10,16). All these and other passages establish their **lack of understanding**.

Jesus used parables to teach the truth of God, Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand, Matthew 13:13 (NAS95). He used natural illustrations they understood to reach spiritual lessons however, often His disciples did not understand the deeper meaning (Mark 7:8). In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled which says, “You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing but will not perceive; for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal

them.” Matthew 13:14-15 (NAS95). Jesus uses this passage to explain why they did not understand who He was or why He was there. But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear, Matthew 13:16 (NAS95).

Jesus continues to teach His disciples and the crowds mostly in parables such as “The Sower,” When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and **does not understand** it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road, Matthew 13:19 (NAS95). After multiples lessons taught through parables Jesus asks, “Have you **understood** all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes,” Matthew 13:51 (NAS95). Jesus, the great teacher, demonstrates that understanding occurs after teaching.

Perhaps the most striking case of misunderstanding is given in Luke 18:34, But the disciples **understood none** of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said, (NAS95). Their prejudice and preconceived ideas about the Messiah to be an earthly prince and Savior could not be reconciled with what Jesus had just told them. It was beyond their comprehension that He was going to die and be raised on the third day. They missed the declaration of resurrection, the most important part of the message. Why? Because they did not listen to the end (communication 101).

These things His disciples **did not understand** at the first; but then Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him, John 12:16 (NAS95). Jesus answered and said to him, “What I do you do not realize now, but you will **understand** hereafter.” John 13:7 (NAS95).

In Romans 1 Paul listed twenty-one sins that came about from refusing the authority of God, *without understanding* is in the list worthy of death. They knew the ordinances of God but would not acknowledge Him, instead practiced and gave approval to these twenty-one sins. God **is** the source of understanding in all spiritual things. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life, I John 5:20 (NAS95).

So this I say and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their **understanding**, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, Ephesians 4:17-18 (NAS95). How did this happen? This letter was written to the church at Ephesus, these were Christians to whom Paul is writing. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13 (NAS95). What happened to darken their ability to understand? They had excluded the will of God from their lives because of ignorance. Although their hearts were hardened, they may have remained part of the local church. Satan will certainly allow us to assemble with the saints while still walking as the Gentiles. He can use us in His service in that way.

That their hearts may be encourage, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, Colossian 2:2 (NAS95). Paul desired that the Christians in Colossae would have an abundant **understanding** of the main principles of the gospel. Focus should be given to the fact that true knowledge of God **is** the embodiment of Jesus Christ Himself. This shows that faith is not blind but came by intelligent persuasion, not just the opinions of men.

There is ample testimony given in John 6:69, we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God, (NAS95).

... and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform, Romans 4:21 (NAS95).

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake, I Thessalonians 1:5 (NAS95). Men of all types and places came to an understanding of the gospel of Christ and obeyed that message to the saving of their souls. The greatest example is Acts 2:38 when 3,000 were obedient on the day of Pentecost and 1,000s more in the following days.

## ??? Questions ???

- (10) What event in your life illustrates your lack of understanding?
- (11) What later event demonstrates a gaining of understanding?
- (12) Examine Mark 7:4, 18 and Matthew 15:19, 16. What lesson can be learned from these passages?
- (13) How can a Christian lose their understanding?
- (14) How will Satan allow a person to be part of a local congregation and continue to walk as a Gentile?
- (15) What is the worst sin listed in Romans 1? Explain
- (16) What supporting reason for our faith comes from Colossians 2:2?
- (17) List the valuable characteristics from John 6:69, Romans 4:21, and 1 Thessalonians 1:5.
- (18) What positive example can be found in Acts 2:37-41?



I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened**, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, Ephesians 1:18 (NAS95).

What the eye is to the body, understanding is to the soul [Matthew 6:22]. The eye receives light[*images*] or information while through understanding the soul receives knowledge. Paul prays that the eyes of the heart [*mind*] will be illuminated so they can perceive truth. It is Paul's desire that their hearts and understanding be right. Sin blinds the mind, dimming understanding and perverting the practice of sin. The result - the inability to fully comprehend the great truths of God's word. One of the first effects of God's word on hearts is understanding. It expands the view of truth and it provides a fuller view of the nature and character of God. Nowhere are the effects of God's word more apparent than shedding light on the intellect which restores the weak and perverted minds that have been damaged by sin.

In the natural eye, cataracts reduce the quality of vision as the lens become cloudy and eyesight becomes fuzzy. There is a strong correlation between the cataract in the natural eye and the effects of sin on the eye of understanding, both need illumination. This is exactly what Paul is praying for in Ephesians 1:18.

Then God said, "Let there be **light**"; and there was **light**. God saw that the **light** was **good**; and God *separated the light from the darkness*, Genesis 1:3-4 (NAS95). God separated the light from the dark and they have remained apart throughout history. God said the "light was good" and from that time until now "light" has represented good while darkness has represented evil.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it, John 1:1-4 (NAS95). Christ came to the earth to bring life, eternal life, and salvation to mankind. It is only through light that we can see physical things with the eye and spiritual things with understanding. Take notice: *there is no in between—light or dark*. Darkness represents ignorance, misery and spiritual death. The contrast of Light verses darkness is a thread that runs through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

John the baptizer was a witness to testify about the **Light** [John 1:7]. There was the true **Light** which, coming into the world, enlightens every man, John 1:9 (NAS95). This enlightenment is available to all mankind, IF you are a seeker [Titus 2:11-14].

This is the judgment, that the **Light** has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the **Light**, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the **Light** and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the **Light**, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God, John 3:19-21 (NAS95).

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the **Light** of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the **Light** of life, John 8:12 (NAS95). He is the source of spiritual light and understanding. If we become His child, follow Him, and take up the cross daily, we will have NO darkness. We will be removed from ignorance, error, sin and spiritual death. There is a direct connection between **Light** and life, the **Light** is Christ who is the *source of life*, God breathed in Adam the breath of life [Genesis 2:7] and the Light [Christ] provided spiritual life.

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him," John 11:9-10 (NAS95). Jesus illustrates how important light is in everyday activities and difficulty of travel by night. Now make the spiritual comparison of walking with Light [Christ] and walking in darkness [Satan]. So, Jesus said to them, For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. "While you have the **Light**, believe in the **Light**, so that you may become sons of **Light**." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them, John 12:35-36) (NAS95). Christ [the Light] is in the present, walk with Him at every opportunity because darkness will overtake you without Him. By believing in Him we can become sons of **Light**, joint heirs with Christ the Light.

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are **Light** in the Lord; walk as children of **Light** (for the fruit of the **Light** consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, Ephesians 5:8-10 (NAS95). They had been in darkness but now they had been illuminated by the light of the Lord. Walk as children of light, reflecting Jesus Christ in your life. Because of enlightenment they could see the evils of sin and the beauty of virtue, goodness, righteousness and truth. By walking in the light, under the dictates of the gospel, they made every effort to please the Lord. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, [enlightened] and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, Romans 12:2 (ASV). The renewed mind is prepared to appreciate and understand His precepts, willing to study His word, willing to accept that God's word is good, acceptable and perfect. The *good* referred to here is that which promotes honor to God. *Perfect* is free from defect, or stains, clean by His word. *Acceptable* means the gospel regulates our conduct and behavior and our will [*intellect*] will be acceptable to God.



But if we walk in the **Light** as He Himself is in the **Light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin, 1 John 1:7 (NAS95). We walk with Christ, [the Light] by living holy and pure lives, walking in truth as He is truth, opposing error, lukewarm feel good doctrine, and having joy in our service to God. Using every opportunity to preserve and progress to spiritual maturity.

... to **open their eyes** so that they may turn from **darkness to light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me, Acts 26:18 (NAS95). Paul's commission from Christ was to open their eyes, change darkness to light, taking the dominion of Satan to God. For those who truly seek God there is forgiveness of sins and the eternal inheritance promised by God. For those who will not seek the Lord, darkness is all that remains; ignorance, misery and spiritual death.

## ??? Questions ???

- (1) What was Paul praying for in Ephesians 1:18?
- (2) Explain what sin does to the eyes of understanding.
- (3) In your own words, contrast light and darkness.
- (4) What is the light of life in John 8:12?
- (5) List things that are represented by darkness,
- (6) What was Paul's commission from Christ?
- (7) Explain how we can prove what is good, acceptable and perfect.
- (8) How can we have joy in serving God?
- (9) Analyze Hebrews 6:4. How does this verse fit into this discussion?



To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the **unfathomable riches** of Christ, Ephesians 3:8 (NAS95). The letter to the Ephesians is an essay on the riches and treasures of God. Paul uses a wide range of expressions to explain his understanding of incomprehensible riches of God's grace.

That He would grant you, according to the **riches of His glory**, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, Ephesians 3:16-20 (NAS95). This prayer by Paul contains his grandest expressions of the grace and mercy of God and the great effort He has made to provide salvation for mankind. Paul labors to convey how extremely important God's plan is to mankind. He strains to show the force and meaning of all that God is willing to provide, "*according to the riches of His glory.*" God's infinite goodness and mercy is unrestricted and unlimited in reaching out to man. Paul begins to describe these riches, "to be strengthen with His might by His Spirit." Paul is asking God to provide this strength to help us overcome temptations and carry out our duties; being fortified against all the obstacles Satan places between us and God. Some Christians never access this great source of strength and are unhappy, cannot get along with others, some cannot keep a job, and many are filled with doubt and anxiety. Unfortunately, some turn to drugs and alcohol as a solution to all their problems. **Turn to God for strength!** [Galatians 15:16]

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me, Philippians 4:13) (NAS95). What do you think when you read this verse? Do you think it applies to you? Are you convinced that it is a true statement? How can we access this source of strength?

Every person is made up of two parts, body and soul. The outward man is the carrying case of the soul which is the inner man. We feed, bath, exercise and care for the body, as well we should. Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our **outer man** is decaying, yet our **inner man** is being renewed day by day, 2 Corinthians 4:16 (NAS95). Paul contrasts the striking difference

between the two parts, outward and inner man. The outward man is decaying, becoming feebler under the wear and tear of everyday life. Regardless of how well the body is cared for it is dying a little each day. The inner man will also die a little each day UNLESS it is renewed, invigorated or strengthened by spiritual influence. Knowledge, love, peace and holiness are food for the inner man, Jesus called Himself the bread of life and all who eat it will be strengthened. The soul is strengthened and nourished by spiritual food like the outward man is strengthened by physical food.

There are some conditions to receiving this strengthening such as given in Ephesians 3:1, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. We must make the heart a proper and suitable place for Christ to reside. Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him," John 14:23 (NAS95). Christ is to be comfortable; going where we go, doing what we do, having the thoughts we have and loving what He loves. This provides the opportunity to be *rooted and grounded*. Providing a secure, firm and solid foundation on which to build a life dedicated to God's service, not able to be moved away from the gospel [Colossians 1:23]. Now we are ready to, "**comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth," (Ephesians 3:18).

Yes, the scriptures reveal the facts about God's indescribable love. He has given us the ability to understand and appreciate the vastness of His love for mankind. Paul gives the dimensions of God's love for us and yes, it is personal. **The breadth** (width) is big enough to reach ALL mankind [John 3:16] Jew, Gentile and heathen. **Height**, ... raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6 (NAS95). **Length**, reaching from His eternal purpose Christ's mission throughout all eternity, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. in love, Ephesians 1:4 (NAS95). **Depth** and you were dead in your trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1 (NAS95). He made alive those who were spiritually dead (that would include us in time past). No sinner is beyond the reaches of His love, no matter how bad, low or deplorable. And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God, Ephesians 3:19 (NAS95). When the heart is properly prepared as a dwelling place for Christ then and only then can we be *filled up* with that which may surpass our working knowledge. We can comprehend what God desires - *that all mankind be saved* - and we can understand His instructions on how to access His great love. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, Ephesians 3:20 (NAS95). Consider this verse- God can do *far more abundantly* beyond anything we ask or even think. God knows what we think but that is okay because Christ knows also. He is living in our hearts [1John 3:22, 5:14]. How does this happen? It is very progressive in nature, consider the context of Ephesians 3:16-20. There is an interdependence on each step of the progression. God has done His part; the remainder is for me to complete my part. Verse 20 says it all takes place according to the *power working in me*.

To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:21 (NAS95). Paul concludes his prayer by expressing that Christ should be given glory, honor and praise for His eternal purpose.

For further personal study: Romans 2:4 and Philippians 4:19.

## ??? Questions ???

- (1) Describe your understanding of “unfathomable riches.”
  
- (2) What is the purpose of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians?
  
- (3) Are there any limits to God’s efforts to save mankind? What has He done?
  
- (4) List things people turn to instead of God when life is difficult.
  
- (5) How important is caring for the physical body?
  
- (6) Can we prevent decay of the physical body? Why is this important?
  
- (7) Contrast caring for the physical body vs. the inner man.
  
- (8) Describe in your own words the size of God’s love for mankind?
  
- (9) Look at how you answered question #1. Has your understanding changed?



He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are **His children.**' "Being then the **children of God**, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man, Acts 17:26-29 (NAS95).

Paul, speaking to the Athenians, expounds on the design of God for mankind. He created man and placed him on the earth for the sole purpose of **seeking** Him. God, the Creator, gives us the opportunity to learn about His character, nature and existence, [Rom. 1:19-20]. The fact that the nation did not get acquainted with God is evidenced in their folly and wickedness. Paul then states that mankind must diligently seek God. He describes the effort man must put forth to find God and understand His existence, qualities and perfection. Luke 24:39 uses the sense of touch and sight to illustrate Christ. All of this is to **find Him**, to find proof of His existence because He is not far away. The proof of His existence is all around us; heaven and earth are filled with His presence [Psalms 19:1; 139:7-10]. He then shows just how personal our relationship with God really is; only through our dependence on Him can we live. The very air we breathe is the perfect mixture that allows us to exist. The body is designed and constructed in the perfect manner that allows us to walk, talk, eat and live. This causes us to have a greater understanding of how totally dependent we are on God the Father. The human body truly is marvelously made to carry out the design of God. Why did God do all these things for man? Answer: to provide mankind the opportunity to learn about, seek and find Him. This should lead us to becoming His children, His offspring.

Christ provided access to heaven because we could not find it or walk in even if we did locate it without Him leading us [John 10:7,9, 14:6]. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are **children of God**, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him, Romans 8:14-17 (NAS95).

Paul illustrates the benefits of the gospel that comes to those who become sons of God through adoption. Proof of the adoption can be seen because all those are led by the Spirit. Their lives are enlightened, influenced, guided and controlled by the Spirit. The willingness to submit to the Spirit produces a Christian who has the hope of heaven. Rejection produces a sinner, grieving and rejecting the Spirit which leads to destruction. Paul simply states: “all those that are led by the Spirit are the **sons of God.**” Adopted into His family we are supported, sustained by Him and made part of the family of the redeemed. The sons of God are drawn away from the corruption of the world. We should have a desire to yield to the influence of the Spirit, not resisting the Spirit but cheerfully following His influence.

In Romans 8:15 Paul explains the attitude of one who is adopted. Children should have the feeling of affection, love and confidence as contrasted to a slave who lives in fear with no rights or privileges.” We cry, “Abba Father,” repeating the name for emphasis, [Mark 14:36 and Galatians 4:5-6]. One commentary reads, “By which we call the Father our Father.” In verse 16 of Romans 8 Paul states that His Spirit bears witness with our spirit and furnishes evidence that we are adopted into the family of God. By freely accepting the influence of the Spirit the effects are clearly seen as explained in Galatians 5:22-23, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance.” This fruit is produced by the influence in our lives, producing a state of mind that is calm and peaceable, even while living in this sinful world. Perhaps we should be more like Lot whose, “soul was vexed by the lawless deeds,” of the world in which we live [2 Peter 2:8]. We are the children of God, confirmed by the Spirit and testified to by the results, fruits of the Spirit.

Romans 8:17 - Paul has established that as children, adopted into the family of God, we have become heirs, [rightful partakers of an inheritance, Numbers 27:1-23] and joint-heirs with Christ [Galatians 4:7]. **United** with Christ [Romans 6 and Philippians 2:2] is a concept of being part of the inheritance provided by Christ through His sacrifice. The sacrifice which demonstrated God’s love for mankind and was witnessed by the Spirit. However, as we enjoy the glory of Christ, we must also be ready to suffer for His sake [Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; 2 Tim 2:11-12].

Romans 8:18-25 gives us insight into how the power of the gospel sustains us through difficult times: trials, persecution, illness, death of a loved one, or whatever adverse situation comes our way. This is another benefit of being adopted sons of God. The early Christians were relatively few and lacked support of fellow Christians close by, so they were more dependent on God. This could serve as a lesson for us. Paul makes the comparison of present suffering vs future glory of spending eternity with the Lord. Not comparable!

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God,  
Romans 8:19 (NAS95).

For all creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched neck, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God, Romans 8:19 (WNT). This verse expresses a feeling almost every Christian has had and especially as you get older, “how much longer are we going to have to put up with this stuff” [Revelation 6:10]. But as Christians we have a promise of a final rescue and of an eternal inheritance far beyond the suffering, we have the full benefits of adoption. Paul concludes this thought in Romans 8:25, But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it, (NAS95).



*HOPE*

*IS THE*

*ANCHOR*

*OF THE*

*SOUL*

### ??? Questions ???

- (1) In your own words, what does it mean to be led by the Spirit?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (2) What is the common thread in these passages: John 1:12; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2; Matthew 5:9, 45; Luke 6:35?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (3) List the benefits a person receives from the Spirit when willingly accepting leadership of the Spirit.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (4) What 3 things are evidence that we are the sons of God?



5. Explain how we are joint heirs with Christ.
6. List the results of living by the fruits of the Spirit.
7. How was Lot affected by the world he lived in? [2 Peter 2:8]
8. How are we affected as Lot was?
9. Describe the relationship between sharing glory and suffering.
10. Use your own words to explain Romans 8:19.



So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit, Ephesians 2:19-22 (NAS95). As Paul addresses the Ephesian Christians, he states that they once were strangers and foreigners. Jews considered foreigners to be of the lower class. However, now they are part of the family, not guests in the home but holding the rights and privileges of a family member. They are now fellow citizens with the saints and the **household of God**. Paul has established the relationship and the kindship of the people involved. He continues by using the metaphor of a building, probably referring to the temple, the former dwelling place of God.

The foundation of all buildings is the most critical aspect of any structure [Matthew 7:24] and the cornerstone is the most critical part of the foundation. It must be straight and true, or the foundation will be untrue. Christ who was rejected by the Jews and many today, was chosen by God to be that chief cornerstone. He occupies the most prominent location which supports the building. The current construction methods do not depend on a cornerstone as in the time of Paul, but the principles are still the same. The foundation must be straight, true and solid or the building will never stand the test of time. The apostles and prophets built on the foundation laid by Christ [1Corinthians 3:11]. The Old Testament prophets foretold of the coming Messiah as we see God's plan unfold throughout the Old Testament. More than 300 prophecies provide details specific to Christ's role and mission while on earth.

Jesus taught His disciples the truth and commissioned them to teach that doctrine of Christ to the world [2 Timothy 2:19]. Christ became the cornerstone for the foundation through His great sacrifice; His death, burial and triumphant resurrection and ascension to Heaven. The apostles then began to build on the foundation He had laid as recorded in Acts 2. Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 3:9, For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, **God's building**, (NAS95). Paul now includes the Ephesians, and us, as fellow workers in God's kingdom which is the church [Matthew 9:37-38 and Luke 10:2]. God served as the architect for the structure of

His church. The man who dug the stone, the hewer who cut and squared them, nor the mason who laid them are not seen but the architect who planned and supervised the building by His design. Paul, Apollos and others are just workers in God's field.

In whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, Ephesians 2:21 (NAS95). With Christ's foundation the whole building is fitly framed and joined with faith. Growing is continual, made up of living stones [1 Pet 2:5] until it reaches maturity. Just as the materials of a temple are properly placed to form a complete building for the purpose of providing a habitation for the Deity to be worshipped. Likewise, Christians make up the church in which God is worshipped. The church is made true and strong with proper preparation, following the doctrine of Christ which is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, and guided by the Spirit.

From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love, Ephesians 4:16 (NAS95).

*As the human body is formed by the union of all its members to each other, under one head, and by the fitness of each member for its own office and place in the body, so the church is formed by the union of its members under Christ, the Head. Farther, as the human body increases till it arrives at maturity by the energy of every part in performing its proper function, and by the symphony of every part with the whole, so the body or Church grows to maturity by the proper exercise of the gifts and graces of individuals for the benefit of the whole. McKnight*

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a **spiritual house** for a holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 2:4-5 (NAS95).

Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE, 2 Corinthians 6:16 (NAS95.)

Consider the magnitude of the thoughts put forth by Paul and Peter: God the creator and sovereign of the universe will DWELL AMONG THEM! They are referring to us, Christians, who form the Lord's church. God will walk among us; be our God and we will be His people. Ponder that relationship, make a mental picture of what is said in these verses. They are speaking directly to you and me about the present. The proclamation by Jehovah God, that He will dwell among His people, is a thread that runs throughout the scriptures [Exodus 29:45; Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezra 11:20 and 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19]. God has used the entire existence of mankind to prepare His people to be capable of receiving Him into their midst.

The sun is just rising this morning and God is there. We see the sun set and remember He is there. Use these as reminders to recall that God is among us. This should give greater emphasis to 2 Peter 3:11, Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be **in holy conduct and godliness,** (NAS95). God will be there also.

## ??? Questions ???

- (1) Describe the household of God.
- (2) What is the purpose of a foundation in constructing a building?
- (3) Illustrate the value of the cornerstone.
- (4) What is the meaning of Matthew 9:37-38?
- (5) Define habitation.
- (6) How is the body edified as described in Ephesians 4:16?
- (7) Analyze McKnight's statement and explain his meaning.

(8) What is God's message, "I will dwell among them?"

(9) List other passages that show God is dwelling with His people.

(10) What is your understanding of 2 Peter 3:11-13?



**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:2 (NAS95)**

The Apostle Paul expounds on the concept that although we live on the earth physically, everything else about a Christian is heavenly. He speaks of a contrasting view of life; **citizens** of the heavenly world vs **citizens** of the worldly community. We live in the world however; our allegiance is to the heavenly. Sometimes Christians misunderstand and try to be **citizens** of both communities but our affection, the object of our contemplation, **MUST** be heavenly [Colossians 3:2]. Peter further explains in 1 Peter 2:11, Beloved, I urge you as **aliens and strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul, (NAS95). Don't regard the earth as our home. Don't allow attachments or arrangements to hinder the journey to heaven. As we are engaged in everyday life involving school and work, our desires must be on heaven. As strangers, aliens, and sojourners our residence in this world is temporary. We are not **citizens** of this world.

The second part of the verse speaks of how fleshly appetites hinder our progress toward heaven [Galatians 5:24; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:14]. They war against the soul, conscience, understanding, and discernment, changing the direction of our journey and destroying the objection of our contemplation [Philippians 1:27]. Returning to Philippians 3:20, because our **citizenship** is in heaven, we should eagerly be waiting for our Savior to return. Until He comes again, we remain pilgrims pursuing heaven while preparing for His return. We must live above the world as we earnestly watch for HIM. Consider: Matthew 24:42; Luke 12:37; Acts 1:11. There was a firm belief within the early Christian community that Christ would return soon [2 Thessalonians 3:10-11]. One of the distinct characteristics of Christians is that they are expecting and eagerly awaiting the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The fact that Christ will come again should exert a great influence on our lives; thoughts of our hearts and actions we chose every day.

Heaven should be the object of our daily thoughts. Anticipating the return of our Savior should encourage in times of need, cheer in times of trial, guide when tempted and make us dead to the world. All the while leading us to look toward the heavens with an eye of anticipation.

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God, Romans 8:19 (NAS95). For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God, Romans 8:19 (NKJV). We are to look for the future inheritance with intense hope. The gospel is to sustain every Christian during trials because of the prospect of deliverance leads to the realization that we are fully sons of God. We wait for the full benefits of an adopted child of God, the recovery of the body from the effect of sin, and the hope that sustains us in this life. Christians have evidence of their adoption and its benefits. While living in this world, exposed to sin and difficulties, we patiently wait with eager anticipation for a home in Heaven. On the day of judgement, the saved will be admitted into the full privileges as a child of God.

So that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:7 (NKJV).

For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, Galatians 5:5 (NKJV).

And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come, 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV).

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, Romans 8:20-21 (NAS95). This is the hope that sustains and supports us through trials and all the problems this world brings. **The hope:** that the renewed man will be delivered from all the problems and sin in this world. The glorious liberty [NKJV] is relief from corruption, lust, sin and even death. This glorious liberty provides freedom from the “earthly” that allows us to embrace the “heavenly” as children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body, Romans 8:22-23 (NAS95). The **first fruits of the Spirit**, the pledge of what is to come as we wait for adoption. The full privileges of being adopted into the family of God, includes the redemption of body. Mortally will give way to immortally and the saved will be elevated to a state of being in the presence of God. We can plainly see Paul’s meaning in Ephesians 1:14, Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory, (NAS95). The promise or “seal” [2 Cor. 1:22] He has given confirms we belong to Him. The earnest of the Spirit is a pledge that ALL of God’s promise’s will be fulfilled as He has stated. Heaven was purchased by the blood of Christ our Redeemer for those who seek and find God. We are those “peculiar people” [1 Pet. 2:9] because we are purchased, and the result is complete deliverance from the world and sin. The purpose of this is “unto the praise of His glory.”

For deeper individual study consider inheritance – 2 Corinthians 5:5; possession - Act 20:28; His glory - Eph. 1:6,12.

## ??? Questions ???

(1) Where is your citizenship?

(2) Is it possible to have dual citizenship in heaven and the world? Why or why not?

(3) What is the object of our contemplation?

(4) Describe how we can live above the world.

(5) How does Peter describe the return of Christ?

(6) Explain how the promise of Christ's return helps you daily?



(7) What is the freedom Paul is speaking of in Romans 8?

(8) How are we purchased? What was the cost?

(9) List the full benefits of an adopted child of God.

(10) When will the faithful receive these benefits?



So that whoever believes will **in Him** have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes in Him** shall not perish, but have eternal life, John 3:15-16 (NAS95) “Whosoever” indicates **all** may come and the gospel was and still is for all. Many believed that Jesus was a great teacher. However, most never came to an understanding that He was also a mediator and more importantly THE Savior. It is that relationship that produces the connection to eternal life. The method to avoid “perishing” is to believe **in Him**. Belief is the motivator of obedience to those who are seeking Him. Repentance, love, and obedience are the ingredients that make up faith. It is impossible to have any true hope or trust in eternal life if one does not believe and obey.

“For God so loved the world,” but this does not suggest He approves of the misconduct of mankind. He hates sin but loves the sinner enough to provide a method to change his behavior. He gave His son, a free unmerited gift, to mankind demonstrating the greatest expression of love ever shown. His deepest desire is that none should perish [2 Peter 3:9].

The gospel of John was written to cause seekers to believe in *Jesus Christ*. Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** you may have life in His name, John 20:30-31 (NAS95). Fourteen times in the gospel of John he uses some form of the word believer(s) **IN HIM** and connects the act of belief with salvation which leads to eternal life.

The apostle Paul makes many references on this same subject: Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes **in Him** receives forgiveness of sins, Acts 10:43 (NAS95). Paul said in Acts 19:4, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to **believe in Him** who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus, (NAS95). Romans 9:33 and 10:14 state that those who believe IN HIM will not be disappointed. With the writing in 2 Corinthians, Paul begins to show us the great value of being **IN HIM**. For as many as are the

promises of God, **in Him** they are yes; therefore, also through **Him** is our Amen to the glory of God through us, 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NAS95). All, yes, **all** the promises God made beginning in Gen 3:15 and continuing throughout the scriptures were through HIM, Jesus Christ. God's promises were carried out in Jesus Christ the redeemer who provided pardon for sins to the penitent. They also provided sanctification of the obedient, support during trials and temptation, guidance during difficult times, peace in death and eternal glory beyond the grave. Paul is ascertaining that God's promises are always fulfilled as promised.

Paul uses most of the first chapter of Ephesians to demonstrate HOW we have a relationship with Christ Jesus and the tremendous value of that relationship. The lessons to be learned about our subject in verses 3-12 can be seen in almost every verse. Verses 3-6 are the functions of the Father and 7-12 functions of the Son. The connection between Christ and the saints resides IN HIM and through Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**, Ephesians 1:3 (NAS95). *Blessings include pardon, peace, redemption, adoption, and access to God through prayer.*

Just as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, Ephesians 1:4 (NAS95). This is God's plan even before man was created, to provide for his future. He predestined us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, Ephesians 1:5 (NAS95). The plan keeps unfolding before our eyes.

To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**, Ephesians 1:6 (NAS95).

**In Him** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, Ephesians 1:7 (NAS95). To receive the spiritual blessing (vs.3) God had to reconcile us back to Him and He did so by redeeming us through the blood of Christ.

Which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight, He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed **in Him**, Ephesians 1:8-9 (NAS95). God's purpose, intention, and will are all put in place to carry out His design for the salvation of those who seek Him, [2 Corinthians 1:20].

With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things **in Christ**, things in the heavens and things on the earth. **In Him**, Ephesians 1:10 (NAS95). At the appointed time according to His plan, everything that was done was in and through Christ, the agent and redeemer.

Also, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory, Ephesians 1:11-12 (NAS95).

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13 (NAS95). As a “seal” on a document validates that it is authentic, so the seal of the Holy Spirit validates that the Ephesians were adopted children of God. They had to first hear, believe and obey the message of truth.

Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory, Ephesians 1:14 (NAS95)? Christians have assurance because of God’s pledge, guarantee, and down payment. Assurance that God’s promise of salvation is real, guaranteed, and held in place until the body and soul are redeemed and glorified in heaven.

In the letter to the Colossians, Paul uses several examples to demonstrate his point: dwell in Him, walk in Him, built up in Him, and made complete in Him. All require action on our part to remain IN HIM after completing our obedience. Several passages in I John refer to abiding IN HIM, [John 15:1-8].

And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, Philippians 3:9 (NAS95). If you study the 90+ passages that contain a reference to IN HIM, the most common thought is “believe in HIM,” obey His will and receive His promise of eternal life.

## ??? Questions ???

(1) In your own words, describe what it means to be IN HIM.

(2) What is the value of being IN HIM?

(3) Explain the relationship between God and Christ as described in 2 Corinthians 1: 20.

(4) How does Paul illustrate our relationship with Christ in Ephesian 1?

(5) Who is functioning in these passages in Ephesians 1?

3-6 \_\_\_\_\_

7-12 \_\_\_\_\_

13-14 \_\_\_\_\_

(6) List the spiritual blessings available to us IN HIM.

(7) Analyze Ephesians 1:8-9. What is the message of these verses?

(8) Describe the circumstances that were present when the “fulness of time” occurred.

(9) Give your understanding of the” seal” in Ephesians 1:13.

(10) List some of the attributes of being IN HIM from the letter to the Colossians.