

# WORD STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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*James M. Tolle's word study examining key Greek terms in the New Testament, emphasizing the responsibilities of both speakers and hearers in establishing proper Christian communication.*

13 Chapters

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## Chapter One--Basic Concepts #1

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### Lesson One BASIC CONCEPTS (1)

The basic thesis in this series of lessons is that the New Testament is the last and final message God has given to man through the Holy Spirit, that its purpose is to reveal the mind of the Spirit to the mind of man, and that the means of conveying this divinely inspired message is through words. The importance of these words is expressed in such passages as 1 Timothy 6:3-4; 2 Timothy 1:13. Cf. Acts 11:13-14; 1 Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:9.

However, as the reader is certainly aware, the words used by the inspired writers of the New Testament were not English words, not the words used for communication in the English-speaking world. For example, no inspired writer used such words as church, repentance, cross, forgiveness, worship, elder, bishop, preach, doctrine, sin, God, Holy Spirit, faith, belief, justification, heaven, hell, devil, etc. These are simply the words that translators of the English versions of the New Testament have used to convey to English-speaking people the sense of the words originally used in the writing of the New Testament.

In the main, the books of the New Testament were originally written in the ancient Greek language. Virtually all the New Testament manuscripts now extant are written in Greek, not in classical Greek, nor even in the literary Greek of the New Testament period, but in the Greek vernacular known as the Koine, meaning "common," the language of everyday life. It became the international language of the Roman Empire during apostolic times. It was in such general use that the Roman Senate and imperial governors had the decrees translated into it and scattered over the empire. Is it not entirely fitting that the New Testament, the message of the greatest moment for all people, should be originally written in the language most familiar to the people who first received it, in the language that would best convey to their minds the mind of the Spirit?

There are those, however, who have held to the idea that the New Testament was originally written in a special, ecclesiastical Greek. In opposing this idea, George Milligan, late professor of Biblical Criticism at Glasgow University, wrote, "So far from the Greek of the New Testament being a language of itself, or even, as one German scholar called it, 'a language of the Holy Ghost,' its main feature was that it was the ordinary vernacular Greek of the period, not the language of contemporary literature, which was often influenced by an attempt to imitate the great authors of classical times, but the language of everyday life, as it was spoken and written by the ordinary men and women of the day, or, as it is often described, the Koine or common Greek of the great Graeco-Roman world."

The study made by scholars of the Greek papyri found in Egypt, written in the Koine, casts light on the nature of the Greek used in the New Testament. These papyri deal with a wide variety of subjects, representing communication between people in all walks of life. They contain things like census and tax returns, marriage and trade contracts, petitions to the government, notices of birth and death, school exercises, accounts of judicial proceedings, and so forth, along with a number of

private letters touching upon all sides of family and everyday life. Written in essentially the same language as the New Testament, they testify once and for all to the common, everyday Greek used to convey the mind of the Spirit to the mind of man.

In order for God to communicate His thoughts to us, it is necessary that the New Testament be translated into the English language. And since the New Testament was originally written in the language in general use among the people of apostolic times, so it is entirely reasonable that it be translated for English-speaking people in the vernacular with which they are generally familiar. Every language constantly undergoes change, and English is no exception to the rule. Words are not static. They are subject to change and modification in their meanings with the passing of the years. Many words used in the Authorized Version of the New Testament no longer possess in current English the meanings they had in 1611. For example, in 1611 the word "conversation," used in such passages of the Authorized Version as 1 Timothy 4:12, meant "manner of life," but today it generally means "oral and, usually, informal or friendly interchange of views, sentiments, etc., talk or a talk." In 1611 the word "prevent," used in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 of the Authorized Version, meant "to precede or go before," but today it generally means "to forestall; frustrate; circumvent; keep from happening; hinder."

Yet in spite of the changes made in the English language since 1611 and the reasonableness of having God's words conveyed to us in the vernacular we generally use, there are those who consider any suggestion of using a translation other than the Authorized Version as an attack on the divine words itself, as a sacrilege. They virtually believe that the language of the Authorized Version is Holy Ghost English, that this translation authorized by an English king over 300 years ago and executed by a company of bishops of the Church of England is divinely ordained, the only English translation which God approves. This writer recalls hearing a prominent preacher publicly affirm, "Like the old-time religion, take the Authorized Version."

If the New Testament truly serves the purpose for which it was written, to convey to us the Lord's will through the Holy Spirit's inspiration, it will do so only as we understand the meaning of its words. A basic principle of semantics we need to consider in light of the foregoing conclusion is that words are not actual things but only their symbols. For example, you cannot eat the word "pork" or sleep on the word "bed." You cannot ride the word "automobile" or be entertained by the word "television." These words, as well as all others, are only representatives or symbols of the things for which they stand. They are useful only as they convey to our understanding the things they represent. In the preface to his dictionary, written in 1755, Samuel Johnson said, "Words are the daughters of earth and things are sons of heaven." Mr. Justice Miller, in 1878, told a friend that he favored the kind of education which sought "the knowledge of things instead of the knowledge of words." Mr. Justice Holmes, in 1899, said, "We must think things instead of words, or at least we must constantly translate our words into the things for which they stand." It is certainly true that unless we translate the words of the New Testament into the things for which they stand, to gain not just a knowledge of words but of things, we will fail to see the mind of the Spirit. Any word is but an empty sound when it is divorced from its meaning. Instead of becoming a vehicle of thought it becomes a substitute for it. "Words," said Thomas Hobbes, "are wise men's counters, but they are the money of fools. . . . The wise man has need to remember what every name he uses stands for, and to place it accordingly, or else he will find himself entangled in words, as a bird in lime-twigs; the more he struggles, the more belimed. . . . The Light of humane

minds is Perspicuous Words , but first snuffed and purged from ambiguity." It is evident that the person who does not know the valid meaning attached to the words of the New Testament cannot possibly profit by them. If he glibly boasts of his scriptural vocabulary, but does not know the meaning of the words he uses, then his words are really a cover up for ignorance rather than an expression of understanding.

An irrational preoccupation with words is quite widespread in the church. And "irrational" is the correct word here, for it is never sane to get excited over verbal machinery as such. Yet many church members do indeed get excited over words; consequently, they have incorporated into their system of doctrinal soundness what they consider to be a proper vocabulary, which they seriously believe to be apostolic terminology , seemingly unaware that the writers of the New Testament did not write in the English language. They glibly avow that they "call Bible things by Bible names," but in the very slogan itself they contradict their claim by using the word "Bible," which was never used by any inspired writer to designate the book which begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation. It is a basic thesis in this series of lessons that a word or term is scriptural only as it symbolizes a scriptural thing, conveying a scriptural concept or idea, whether or not it is used in a particular translation of the scriptures. "Sound speech, that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:8) is only the kind of speech that conveys scriptural concepts or ideas. "Sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 6:3) are only words that are guides to and conveyances of the things of Christ. Accordingly, the word "Bible" is a scriptural term, even though it is not found in any translation of the scriptures, because it designates a scriptural thing: the Book of books, the holy word of God.

It is absurd, then, to condemn any word or expression as being unscriptural on the sole basis that it cannot be found in any translation of God's word; for example, the expression "my church." Is it an unscriptural expression as such? Not at all. Of course, if it were used to designate the concept of ownership, then it would be unsound speech. Obviously, only Deity can be scripturally designated as the owner of the church. See Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2. But what intelligent member of the Lord's church would be so presumptuous as to claim ownership of the church in using the term "my church"? If a person uses the term to designate his membership in a particular congregation , the local group of Christians with which he works and worships, and so conveys this idea to others, then his use of the term is entirely scriptural. Those who insist that it could never possibly convey this idea are requested to compare the expressions "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16) and "churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Does Paul contradict himself in these expressions, which are of the same grammatical construction, the genitive case? Would any reasonable, intelligent person accuse the apostle of being unsound in speech, of affirming that the saints own the churches? Surely not. It is plainly evident that in one passage Paul speaks of the membership of the churches, saints, and in the other passage he speaks of the ownership of the churches, Christ. Cf. "gospel of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:12) and "our gospel" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). Those who decry the designation of a Bible thing by any word or expression that is not found in a particular version of the Bible are hardly consistent. If they would carefully examine their religious vocabulary , they will find numerous such words and expressions; for example, plan of salvation, scheme of redemption, Bible class, golden rule, great commission, worship service, vacation Bible school, church building, pulpit , sermon, Beatitudes, Christian graces, etc. Is anyone willing to affirm that these expressions or terms are unscriptural as such just because they

are not found in any translation of the scriptures?

Those who insist that each scriptural thing has an exclusively scriptural term to designate it find themselves in the predicament of determining which English version is the version that must be used to please God. For, after all, the various English versions do not in every case render a particular Greek word by the same English word. Notice, for example "seditions" (Authorized), the various renderings of the Greek *dichostasia*: Version), "divisions" (American Standard Version), "dissensions" (Goodspeed), "a factional spirit" (Verkuyl), "factious" (Moffatt). Who is to infallibly determine which of these terms is the scriptural terms? The irrational preoccupation with words which is so widely extant in the church is the basis for bibliolatry, or worship of the Bible. When members of the church become possessed by verbomania and give to words found in a particular translation of the Bible a sanctity and significance separate and apart from the things they stand for, then they are guilty of word worship, of virtually ascribing deity to words. The undue regard they give to so-called scriptural words makes them allow such words to act as barriers between them and scriptural reality. What Francis Bacon perceived and decried in the secular realm is an effective portrayal of the bibliolater. Among the indictments he brought against the medieval schoolmen was their preoccupation with words as against the observation of things; that preoccupation, he charged, was one of the three "distempers of learning." He railed effectively against what he described as "delicate learning" whereby "words usurp the place of substance, and polished phrases are accepted for real weight of meaning." "Of this vanity," he said, "Pygmalion's frenzy is a good emblem; for words are but the images of matter, and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture."

The failure of members of the church to properly use words as guides to truth and to the edification of their fellow Christians is undeniably of invaluable assistance to the devil in hindering the cause of Christ. Too often the trouble caused the church by the wrangling and disputing of certain members, especially in the religious periodicals, is not so much over scriptural principles as it is over words, due to the failure of those involved to use their words as the means of communication rather than as barriers to communication. The Holy Spirit prepared the church for this problem in 1 Timothy 6:4-5; 2 Timothy 2:14.

So many of the words used in the agitation, quarreling, and wrangling that keep the church in turmoil are not idea carriers but merely emotional transmitters. They point to little or nothing in the extensional world, the world of reality, but merely express the emotional state of those who use them. Such words can and do distract the brethren from the reality of truth into a false world of bogus verbal entities--all words and no substance. The brethren so misled thus become the dupes or slaves of words and lose contact with reality. Beveridge and other historians have concluded that the American Civil War might not have been fought if the poisoned-word distillers had not arrested thinking by selling their wares, if over-powering, monstrous words such as states' rights, abolition, secession, rebellion had not taken possession of men's minds. And how much trouble would have been spared the church of God if such loaded unsound, digression, emotionally supercharged words as, Bollism, Sommerism, etc. had not taken an irrational possession of Christians' minds!

This writer remembers with sorrow the agitation over premillennialism that was so prominent in the church some years ago. He personally knew many who blatantly let it be known that they were

against the error of premillennialism, who castigated the premillennialists, but who did not really understand the doctrine they were fighting against. Some of them could not even correctly pronounce or spell the word "premillennialism," but they were "agin it," tooth and toenail, whatever it meant! Although this writer does not believe in premillennialism, the doctrine that the second coming of Christ precedes the millenium mentioned in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, he keenly feels that untold harm was done the cause of Christ by those in the church who used the words "premillennialism" and "premillennialist" to give vent to a sectarian, unloving spirit. Another example of a loaded, emotionally supercharged word used in the church is "modernist." Instead of being used to describe what it generally means among intelligent, informed people; namely, one who denies certain claims made concerning Christ in the New Testament, such as His virgin birth, miracles, bodily resurrection, etc., it is used by many in the church to cast reflection on anyone who deviates from their subjective ideas of orthodoxy. (This writer recalls being labelled a modernist by a certain woman in the church because of his use of the American Standard Version!). And so it is that by being branded with this one loaded term, brethren who firmly believe in the fundamentals of the gospel are placed in the same category as those who deny the inspiration of the Bible and the deity of Christ.

Questions 1. Discuss the use of the Koine in the writing of the New Testament.

2. Why is it reasonable that the New Testament should be translated into the language which we generally use?

3. What basic principle of semantics must we keep before us in this series of lessons?

4. Which of the following terms are unscriptural, if any: Christian living, Christian principles, Christian character, Christian church, Christian college? Be careful and consistent in your answer.

5. What is it that makes a word or expression scriptural?

6. Discuss the irrational preoccupation with words found in the church.

7. Give and discuss some examples of loaded, emotionally supercharged words used in the church.

## Chapter Two--Basic Concepts #2

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### Lesson Two BASIC CONCEPTS (2)

In endeavoring to establish proper communication in the church the responsibility of Christ's followers is twofold, that of the word user and that of the word hearer.

The responsibility of the word user is plainly set forth in the scriptures. Whenever he speaks he must give heed to such injunctions as the following: "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Ephesians 4:29); "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6); "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God . . . that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11). In obeying these commands the word user will always endeavor to communicate ideas or things in the words he uses, and not just the words alone. In so doing he will exercise care and consideration in his selection of words to communicate his thoughts. He will give due consideration to the level of understanding of his hearers, using only those words to which they will most likely attach essentially the same meaning as he. He will utter only those words which are in keeping with his hatred for error and sin, with his love for truth and righteousness, and with his love for Christ and men. He will eschew all words which are calculated to degrade and injure others rather than to edify them. He will indeed so speak as to "give grace to them that hear."

The responsibility of the word hearer is expressed in principle in the Lord's command, "Take heed therefore how ye hear" (Luke 8:18). The spirit of Christian charity demands that he sincerely and honestly endeavor to understand what meaning the other person really intends to convey by the words he uses. It is unfair and unchristian to force upon a person any meaning to his words that he obviously does not intend, and then to club him over the head with his words, accusing him of intellectual dishonesty or of not standing for the truth. Such a practice at its best is stupid; at its worst it is downright vicious. How very unchristian it is, for instance, for some unloving, boorish, ignorant person to lift out of its context a particular statement made by a preacher or Bible teacher, subsequently to accuse him of expressing an idea that he did not remotely have in mind. Or such a person will hear one of his fellow church members use the expression "my church," obviously referring to the local congregation of which he is a member, and then accuse him of using the language of Ashdod and of claiming for himself a prerogative that belongs only to Christ. There are, of course, cases of the abuse of words, but we must be certain that the facts substantiating them are incontrovertible before we accuse any of such a practice.

After the Lord's disciples have exercised all the care and consideration possible in their speaking and hearing, they must recognize that they are fallible human beings who can never be perfect words users and hearers. They must be realistic in recognizing that no word means exactly the same thing to one person as it does to another and that therefore no matter how hard they try to use the proper words and to understand the words of others, perfect communication of their

thoughts is impossible. Once they recognize this, they will not be so ready to feud and fuss and to disfellowship each other over every point of disagreement. And the very recognition of their imperfect ability in communication will create a relaxed atmosphere of mutual tolerance that is so necessary in making possible a better understanding of the ideas they endeavor to communicate to each other.

We have done great injury to the cause of Christ through the years by failing to recognize that since words do not mean exactly the same thing to one person as to another, it is therefore impossible for our finite minds to see the Bible exactly alike. In insisting otherwise, we have confused the ideal with reality. Surely, it is God's will that we see every word in the Bible alike as it reveals the perfect mind of the Spirit. We are indeed commanded, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). But by the same token we are commanded, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48); "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children" (Ephesians 5:1). Cf. 1 Peter 2:21. Being like God, to fully imitate Him, is the perfect standard or ideal for which all Christians are to strive. But how many perfect Christians do you know, who are like the heavenly Father in every respect, absolutely devoid of sin? And how many Christians do you know with whom you are one hundred per cent in agreement as to what the Bible teaches, in perfect agreement concerning the interpretation of every word in the Bible? The answers to these questions are obvious. To be sure, we are to strive for the perfect goal of speaking the same thing, of being perfected together in the same mind and judgment, of seeing the Bible alike. But if we are to maintain any semblance of fellowship in the church, we will have to accept each other somewhat short of the ideal.

If we would keep the door open in the church for the honorable exchange of ideas as to what the Bible teaches so that we can draw more closely to the divine standard of perfect unity in 'our understanding of God's word, we must manifest Christian charity, patience, and forbearance in our relationship with each other. It is certainly to be hoped that this New Testament word study will make some contribution, however small, to harmony and unity among brethren in Christ concerning their understanding of the truths of the sacred scriptures.

Since the words of the English New Testament are translated from the original Greek, it is obvious that if we know the meaning of their Greek equivalents we can truly understand the ideas and concepts contained in the mind of the Spirit. It is surely evident that any meaning we might give to a word in the English New Testament that conflicts with the meaning of its Greek equivalent is definitely wrong. Those who ridicule the study of the Greek New Testament would tacitly put a premium on ignorance. But those who are pre-eminently interested in knowing the truth in their study of the New Testament are willing to use every available means to reach their goal, and they will find that nothing is more basic to this than the study of the language in which the New Testament was originally written.

A primary reason for the study of the Greek New Testament is that the translation from one language to another can be extremely difficult. Williams Barclay observed, "It is always possible to translate words with accuracy when they refer to things. A chair is a chair in any language. But it is a different matter when it is a question of ideas. In that case some words need, not another to

translate them, but a phrase , or a sentence, or even a paragraph. Further, words have associations. They have associations with people, with history, with ideas, with other words, and these associations give words certain flavour which cannot be rendered in translation, but which affects their meaning in the most important way."

Those who insist upon a literal translation of the Greek New Testament into English in every respect are unaware that many Greek words would be meaningless to most readers if they were rendered literally; for example, *splagchnizomai*, generally translated into English as "compassion," but literally meaning "to have the bowels yearning" or "to be moved as to one's bowels."

Since this series of lessons is meant principally to deal with the Greek equivalents of the words we shall select from the English New Testament , the reader is referred to the following books which contain invaluable source material in the study of the language originally used in the writing of the New Testament: W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th Edition; J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources*; H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, A New Edition; A. Deismann, *Light From the Ancient East*; E. K. Simpson *Words Worth Weighing in the Greek New Testament*; , W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*; R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*.

The basic available source of information for a direct study of the words themselves in the English New Testament is a standard dictionary of the English language, such as Webster's Collegiate Dictionary or Webster's New International Dictionary. It is a mistake, however, to conclude that dictionary definitions are infallibly authoritative, that they wolves" is the obvious meaning of the word in Matthew 8:20, but not in Luke 13:32.

We must recognize that merely quoting a dictionary definition does not necessarily mean genuine understanding. One may glibly quote the dictionary definition of a particular word without remotely comprehend. ing the thing or idea it stands for. The dictionary must be used to obtain understanding rather than to cover up one's ignorance. H. R. Huse said, "Dictionary definitions frequently offer verbal substitutes for an unknown term which only conceal a lack of real understanding. Thus a person might look up a foreign word and be quite satisfied with the meaning 'bullfinch' without the slightest ability to identify or describe this bird. Understanding does not come through dealing with words alone, but rather with the things for which they stand. Dictionary definitions permit us to hide from ourselves and others the extent of our ignorance."

Highly recommended as valuable sources of information concerning the meaning of words in the Bible are Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. They represent the cream of Biblical scholarship and belong in the library of every person who sincerely desires to grow in his understanding of God's word. They are especially informative in describing and defining persons, plants, animals, towns, regions, objects used in daily life, customs , and words which designate major doctrines and concepts. Consider, for example, part of the definition of the word "synagogue" in Smith's Bible Dictionary: "The word synagogue (*sunagoge*), which means 'a congregation,' is used in the New Testament to signify a recognized place of worship. They appear to have arisen during the exile, in the abeyance of temple worship, and to have received their full development on the return of the Jews from captivity, etc."

Also highly recommended for the use of the serious Bible student are modern speech versions of the New Testament. They have virtually eliminated archaic words and expressions found in the older versions, being written in the vernacular of our present day and thus couched in the terminology with which we are most familiar. They make for easy, smooth, interesting reading and clarify the meaning of many passages that have hitherto been obscure to those who have limited their study to the older versions. Among the more familiar modern speech versions are those translated by Edgar A. Goodspeed, Ronald A. Knox, James Moffatt, Gerrit Verkuyl, Richard F. Weymouth, and Charles B. Williams.

Gregory of Nyassa said, "What benefit can we reap from this munificence, if we have not the meaning of these words explained to us?" (Sermons on the Beatitudes). Indeed, what benefit does anyone receive who sees the words of the Bible but fails to see their meaning, who thus fails to understand the mind of the Spirit? Although the word study before us can only deal with a few of the words found in the New Testament, the writer sincerely hopes that it will intensify the reader's efforts dropped down from heaven like manna, that they are divinely sanctioned. Yet it is almost universally believed that every word has a "correct meaning" and that the dictionary is the supreme authority in determining the meaning. Indeed, any person who has the audacity to declare that the dictionary can be wrong is looked down on with pity or amusement as being just a bit "off his rocker." Dr. Philip B. Gove said, "There's no divine sanction in language. It's an instrument of the people who use it. If dictionaries did not follow the language you'd end up with a literary language quite separate from the spoken language." Exactly! The writer of a dictionary is not a law-giver but a historian, or as expressed by R. C. Trench, "He is a historian of the language, not a critic." All he can do to the best of his ability is to record how various words have been used in general in the distant or immediate past. He cannot tell, unless he has the gift of prophecy, how any word will be used in the future. He cannot tell how any particular word will be used by any particular person at any particular time. General historical usage is the criteria of his definitions, not divine inspiration.

Consider, for example, the word "baptism." Webster does not purport to tell us how this word is used in the New Testament, where it is a transliteration of the Greek *baptisma*, meaning "immersion, a dipping." He only tells us what meaning has been attached to it in general usage. Note his definition: "The application of water to a person, as a sacrament or religious ceremony, by which he is initiated into the visible church. This is usually performed by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, the manner of performing the act varying with the tenets of various churches." Since all Webster intends to tell us is how the word "baptism" has been generally used, it is absurd to argue that his partial definition of baptism as sprinkling or pouring is wrong because it does not agree with the use of the word in the New Testament.

Since a particular word does not necessarily mean the same thing every time it is used, any dictionary definition that ignores its contextual usage is futile. In the final analysis, the valid meaning of a word is determined by how it is used in a particular setting. Since words do not have a single "correct meaning" as such, we must see them as applying to groups of similar situations, which we can designate as areas of meaning. A dictionary, then, can be an invaluable guide to definition as it gives us these areas of meaning. In each use of a word we examine the context to find out the point intended within the particular area of meaning. Realizing that a dictionary is a historical work, we should thus understand the dictionary to say, "The word 'mother' has most

frequently been used in the English-speaking world as meaning 'a female parent,' and that is probably what it means in the sentence I am now trying to understand." Cf. Luke 2:51. Of course, we must always re-examine the context to be sure that the definition fits. For example, the most frequent usage of the word "fox" as "any certain carnivorous mammals, smaller than to see the meaning in all the words he deals with in his study of the sacred scriptures.

Questions I. Discuss the responsibility of both the word user and word hearer in establishing proper communication in the church.

2. Why can we not see the Bible exactly alike? How can we draw more closely to the divine standard of perfect unity in our understanding of the Bible?

3. Discuss the importance of the study of the Greek New Testament.

4. What is the valid use of a standard dictionary of the English language in our study of the words of the New Testament?

5. How do Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias and modern speech versions help us in our study of the New Testament?

6. What benefit does one receive from his reading of the sacred scriptures if he sees words but not their meaning?

## Chapter Three--Abide, Abundantly

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### Lesson Three

#### ABIDE, ABUNDANTLY

##### Abide

The Greek word for "abide" is meno. Of the 112 passages in which it occurs in the New Testament, sixty-six are found in the writings of John (forty in the gospel, twenty-three in 1 John, and three in 2 John). In classical Greek it means "stay, remain, stand one's ground, stay at home tarry." In the Koine it carries the same basic meaning: "remain, continue." Illustrative of this meaning are the following quotations translated from the papyri: "for I have no leisure to remain longer," "the aforesaid lease shall continue secured to you," "the lease in all its provisions remaining valid," and "in order that the hay of Theoxenis may not remain too long uncut." In the New Testament meno means "live, dwell, lodge, remain with someone, of someone who does not leave the realm in which he finds himself, continue, abide, wait for." See Luke 19:5; Acts 27:31; John 7:9; Acts 21:7; Matthew 10:11; Acts 28:16; John 19:31; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Acts 20:5; John 3:36.

Meno is a favorite term of John to denote an inward, enduring personal fellowship:

It denotes the enduring communion or fellowship between God and Christ. Jesus said, ". . . the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:10-11).

It denotes the enduring communion or fellowship between the faithful Christian and the Godhead. Jesus said to His disciples, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4). John wrote, "If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall abide in the Son, and in the Father (1 John 2:24); "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us" (1 John 3:23-24). See John 6:56; 1 John 4:12-15.

The perfect willingness and ability of Deity to remain with the Christian is unquestionable and undeniable. God has promised, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus has promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). The desire of Deity is to permanently abide with the Christian--not for days, not for weeks, not for months, not for years, but forever! And what is your desire in the matter? Do you truly want to abide with Deity forever? That is a question of profound and practical significance to be answered by everyone who calls himself a child of God, a Christian. Deity will not forsake you, but will you forsake Deity?

The primary reason why many of those who consider themselves Christians do not remain, meno, with Christ during all the varied circumstances of life is that they have never been truly converted

to Him; for true conversion always, without exception, involves the sincere, sober, serious intention to remain with Christ forever. Many who consider themselves members of "the church you read about in the Bible" live their lives unrelated to Christ and His will because they have never soberly counted the cost of discipleship and thus have never met that cost in a life continually devoted to Christ. Many of them were baptized while they were on an emotional binge, having come forward with others during the singing of an invitation song as part of a chain reaction caused by the bombastic persuasion of some powerful exhorter. But when their emotional binge was over, their interest in the things of religion was also over.

However, one who is truly converted to Christ, with the sincere intention of paying the price of discipleship whatever sacrifices it may entail, who gratefully remembers his redemption by the grace, mercy, and merits of Christ, will truly abide in or continue with Christ--not for days, not for weeks, not for months, not for years, but forever!

Note some of the profound significance of abiding in Christ:

Abiding in Christ means fruit bearing. Christ, the true vine, is the power of fruit bearing, and it is only as the branches, His disciples, abide in Him that they can receive this power. The Master said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). The conclusion of this utterance is emphatic: "apart from me ye can do nothing." Successful, fruitful Christian living depends on the Christian's personal relationship with Christ. Dependence on Christ for fruit bearing most assuredly does not set aside His will, but those who seek to live as they ought by being law-centered rather than Christ-centered are bound to fail. Preaching or teaching that is law-centered rather than Christ-centered is powerless, entirely incapable of building up the Christian in the most holy faith. Cf. Ephesians 3:14-20; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 1 John 2:6.

Abiding in Christ means loyalty to His word. The person who abides in Christ, who depends on His power for fruit bearing to the glory of God, faithfully applies himself to the study and obedience of the Lord's word. "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Timothy 3:14); "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). See 2 John 1:9. The Lord said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14).

3. Abiding in Christ means an efficacious prayer life. Jesus declared, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Since Christ our high priest is the only access we have to God and His grace (John 14:6; John 14:13-14; John 16:23; Hebrews 4:14-16), it is obvious why we must abide in Him and be loyal to His word if we would find the answer to our prayers. Cf. Proverbs 15:29; James 5:16; 1 John 3:21-22.

4. Abiding in Christ means abiding in His love. The person who abides in Christ, who is thus loyal to His word, enjoys the assurance that he abides in the love of Christ, to constantly enjoy the blessings involved in that love. The Lord promised, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10).

To abide in the pure love of Christ is to enjoy the highest blessedness that life can give. To abide in the pure love of Christ--not only in His love of compassion for the Christian as a human being, but also in His love of satisfaction and approval for the Christian's fidelity--is to abide in the sure hope of the blessedness that awaits the Lord's disciples in the Father's house.

5. Abiding in Christ means fullness of joy. "These things have I spoken unto you," said Jesus, "that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11). In its context this utterance tacitly affirms that fullness of joy is the natural result of abiding in Christ. One who has constant fellowship with Christ, who thus obeys His commandments and offers effectual prayers, who constantly abides in his love, experiences the great joy of walking in heavenly sunlight. See Php 4:4.

This promise of joy Christ gives to His faithful disciples is an indirect rebuke to those of the world who believe that joy and religion are not associated, that where the one is the other is not. Worldly people have confused joy with mere enjoyment. The former can only come through surrender to Christ and submission to His will. It is more than skin-deep. It is a deep-seated emotion that permeates the soul, not the mere excitement or enjoyment that arises from transient earthly pleasures. It is certainly true that the joyless, grim, harassed, anxious lives of some who call themselves Christians are lives that do not make their home with Christ.

Abundantly

One of the great texts of the New Testament that portrays the wonderful blessings to be found in Christ is John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." If we can grasp at least some of the meaning of the Greek word *perissos*, translated as "abundantly" in this passage, we will enhance our understanding of the spiritually rich life Jesus gives to those who abide in Him.

In classical Greek *perissos* basically means "exceeding the usual number or size, above measure, more than average, above the others, uncommon, unusual, extraordinary, remarkable (of that which is usually encountered among men), abundant, profuse, have something in abundance." This meaning is found also in the Koine. In Romans 3:1 Paul asks, "What advantage (*perisson*) then hath the Jew?", literally meaning, "What then is the superiority of the Jew?" There was something the Jew had that was extraordinary or uncommon in comparison with what other people had. And Jesus is saying in John 10:10 that the life the Christian possesses in Him is over and above that of others, a life that is extraordinary, uncommon, or unusual in comparison with the life of those who have yet to surrender themselves to Him.

The abundant life the Christian enjoys in contrast to the simple, bare existence of the sinner is indeed an extraordinary, uncommon life. Jesus exclaimed, "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). The life designated here as "eternal" has its beginning in this world, simultaneously when the true believer in Christ has passed out of death, the state of sin, into the new spiritual life in Christ. See Romans 6:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:14. How different this life is from the state of one who is dead in sin, who thus faces eternal condemnation! What supremely greater blessings the faithful Christian enjoys than the sinner! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly

places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3); "And in Him [Christ] ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10); "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3:21-23). Cf. Psalms 34:10.

The New English Bible renders John 10:10, "I have come that men may have life, and may have it in all its fullness." Sinners who blatantly boast of "living it up," of enjoying life to the very hilt, cannot possibly, remotely really comprehend life, to live life what it means, its fullness. Yet the principal argument they make against the religion of Christ is that it offers a less abundant life than theirs. How utterly wrong they are! To the question, "Is life really worthy living?," the faithful Christian can give a resounding, "Yea, verily!" Having escaped from the corruption of the world, he enjoys all things that pertain unto life and godliness, becoming a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4). He continually enjoys the living hope of the heavenly fruition of his life with Christ (Colossians 3:3-4).

In both classical Greek and in the Koine, the word *perissos* also means "superfluous, unnecessary, excessive, more than necessary." This meaning is illustrated in the following quotations translated from the papyri: "more than enough has been written," "I count it superfluous to write you at greater length," "if you find any purchasers of the surplus donkeys, get rid of as many as three." This meaning is also found in the New Testament: "For as touching the ministering of the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you" (2 Corinthians 9:1).

Is this particular meaning of *perissos* unrelated to the abundant life given by Christ? Not at all. In the literal sense, of course, the life the Lord gives his followers is not "superfluous, unnecessary, excessive, more than necessary." But figuratively speaking this definition well describes the superabundance of the blessings of Christ, such an abundance as would seem more than necessary from the human standpoint. This is the very idea David had in mind when he exclaimed, contemplating the richness of the blessings he received from God, "My cup runneth over" (Psalms 23:5). This idea is further expressed in Luke 6:38, "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom." See Proverbs 3:9-10.

The superabundance of the blessings of God in the life of the faithful Christian is beautifully described in Ephesians 3:20, where the writer uses the Greek *huperekperissou*, literally meaning "beyond all measure": "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." When the Christian seriously contemplates the exceeding abundance of life he enjoys in Christ, his sense of personal unworthiness makes him realize that he receives from the divine bounty far more than he can ever possibly deserve, so that he too can exclaim, "My cup runneth over."

Each Christian needs to constantly keep before him the penetrating question: Is my life really extraordinary or uncommon in comparison with the life of the sinner? Yes, we all need to see our lives for what they really are, to know in what ways they really differ from the lives of those who make no pretense at all of following Christ.

The real difference between the daily lives of many church members and the lives of those of the world is negligible. And it is especially lamentable that some who claim to be followers of Christ

live less rich, full, and meaningful lives than many who have no religious convictions at all. The punctilious scribes and Pharisees meticulously kept certain rituals of religion, yet Jesus warned his disciples: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

In the latter part of the fifth chapter of Matthew the Lord discusses the gracious, loving treatment His disciples are to extend to their enemies. This is an extraordinary, remarkable characteristic and distinguishes faithful Christians from people of the world. Indeed, it is this out-of-the-ordinary trait that portrays them as true sons of God. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. . . . And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more (perisson) than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?" (verses 43-45, 47). The New English Bible renders perisson in this passage as "extraordinary": "And if you greet only your brothers, what is there extraordinary about that?"

The abundant life given by Jesus involves not only the responsibility for extraordinary living, but also the power for such living (2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 3:20; Php 2:12-13). Those baptized believers whose lives are commonplace and ordinary, who essentially live no differently from the average person of the world, are spiritually powerless people.

The extraordinary, unusual, happy quality of the abundant life in Christ is the influence of the Christian to incite men to accept Christ as their Saviour. It is the radiant light they let shine in the world to lead others to glorify God (Matthew 5:16). Only those who stand out in the crowd, so to speak, whose lives are made conspicuous by love, kindness, sympathy, and good works can influence others to seek the abundant life in Christ.

#### Questions

What is the meaning of meno, abide, in both classical Greek and the Koine?

Discuss thoroughly the word "abide" as it is used in the New Testament to denote an inward, enduring fellowship.

Discuss some of the profound significance of abiding in Christ.

What is the basic meaning of perissos in both classical Greek and the Koine?

In what ways is the life of the faithful Christian extraordinary or uncommon in comparison with the life of the sinner?

How does the secondary meaning of perissos as "superfluous, unnecessary, etc." apply to the abundant life in Christ?

Discuss the extraordinary, abundant Christian life as the Christian's influence to lead sinners to the Saviour.

Is your life really extraordinary or uncommon in comparison with the life of the sinner?

## Chapter Four--Access, Adoption

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### Lesson Four ACCESS, ADOPTION

#### Access

The word "access" is from the Greek prosagoge, literally meaning "a leading or bringing into the presence of (pros, to, ago, to lead)." Polybius used prosagoge to express the bringing up of engines against a besieged town (X.41, 1; IX.10, 9); theofbringingupshipstotheshore(X.1,6); the bringing up of cattle into the stall (XII.4, 10). In Herodian 11.58 the word is used to describe a leading up, carrying up in solemn procession. Associated with its New Testament usage is the thought of freedom to enter through the assistance of another. It is used in Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; Ephesians 3:12. An examination of each of these passages will contribute to our understanding of prosagoge as it relates man to God and as it portrays the work of Christ on man's behalf.

1. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

The access spoken of here that men enjoy through Christ is into divine grace, the unmerited favor of God that makes them acceptable to Him and gives them the "hope of the glory of God." Thayer observes concern-ing this passage that it describes "that friendly relation with God whereby we are acceptable to him and have assurance that he is favorably disposed toward us."

In the technical sense prosagoge was used by the later Greek writers to designate "a landing stage." Plutarch writes of a general who called his troops together on land in front of the sea where there was no prosagoge, no place for ships to put in (Aemilius 13). The word is similarly used in the papyri, concerning which Moulton and Milligan observe, "This would agree with Pallis on Romans 5:2, who thinks that charin [grace] is there pictured as a haven and that prosagogen[access] means 'approach' in a nautical sense." It is comforting to know that from the storm-tossed sea of sin the human soul can find through Christ a safe haven of rest and assurance in the precious grace of God. The faithful Christian ever realizes that were it not for his pilot Jesus Christ who guided him safely out of the sea of sin into the haven of God's grace, he would surely have made shipwreck of his life.

2. "For through him [Christ] we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).

The perfect tense prosagogen used here (also in Romans 5:2) designates the idea of permanency. By the efficacy of the Lord's atoning act all those who accept Him as their high priest, whether Jew or Gentile, have continual, unremitting access to the Father. See Hebrews 4:14-16. The access to the Father portrayed in Ephesians 2:18 is in the Spirit. All who accept the "access" power of Christ, to be brought to God through Him, are given the Holy Spirit, who dwells and rules

in them (Acts 2:38; Romans 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:8). Only those who have the Spirit, who live under His power and influence, truly have Christ and thus enjoy continual access to the Father through Him (Romans 8:9-10; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 3:24).

3. ". . . Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him" (Ephesians 3:11-12).

Boldness and confidence characterize the approach of souls to God who have genuine faith in Christ. In Christ, through His merits, they can approach God without fear. Heinrich Meyer makes the comment concerning this passage, "It is rather the free, joyful mood of those reconciled to God, in which they are assured of divine grace (the opposite: fear of God's wrath)." See Hebrews 3:6; Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 10:19; Hebrews 10:35; 1 John 2:28; 1 John 3:21; 1 John 4:17; 1 John 5:14.

The verb *prosago*, which is the base of *prosagoge*, the word translated as "access," in its transitive use means "bring (forward), bring someone to someone." In its intransitive use it means "approach." Thus we see that one who has access (*prosagoge*) to God is one who is brought to or approaches (*prosago*) God.

*Prosago* is used five times in the New Testament, four of which are quite ordinary. In Matthew 18:24 it refers to the debtor who was "brought" to the king whom he owed 10,000 talents. In Luke 9:41 it is the word Jesus used in His command to the father of the epileptic boy "Bring, hither thy son." In Acts 16:20 it refers to Paul and Silas being "brought" into the presence of the magistrates in Philippi. In Acts 27:27 it is used for a ship "drawing near" to land in a storm. *Prosago* is used only once to describe the special work of Christ: "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit" (1 Peter 3:18). The Christ through whom we have access (*prosagoge*) to God is the One who brings (*prosago*) us to God.

We can better understand the meaning of *prosago* in the work of Christ, and thus the meaning of its counterpart *prosagoge*, by noting its use outside the New Testament.

In the Septuagint *prosago* is used for bringing sacrificial victims to God. Thus it is the word used for bringing to God something entirely dedicated to Him and His service. "And he shall bring the bullock into the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah; and he shall lay his hand upon the head of the bullock, and kill the bullock before Jehovah" (Leviticus 4:4). See Leviticus 8:14.

*Prosago* is also used in the Septuagint for bringing selected men into the presence of Jehovah in order for them to be ordained as priests. "And Aaron and his son thou shalt bring unto the door of the tent of meeting . . ." (Exodus 29:4). In secular Greek *prosago* is commonly used for "introducing" a speaker into the presence of the assembly of the people (*demos*) or into the senate or council (*boule*). It is also commonly used for "introducing" ambassadors to the gathering of the populace when they came to seek terms and for "bringing" a person into a court before a judge. Thus *prosago* is regularly used for introducing a person into the presence of a higher authority. Translated from the papyri are the following quotations: "Cronion, who now happens to be in Alexandria, will bring them before his highness the high-priest;" "I present my supplication with full confidence."

The most special use of prosago in secular Greek is for "introducing a person into the presence of a king" or of "securing for a person the privilege of an interview with a sovereign." Xenophon, the famous Greek historian of Athens, relates how chained prisoners were "brought into the presence" of king Cyrus (Cyropaedia 111.2, 12). He further tells how Cyrus expected anyone who desired anything from him to get into the good graces of his friends so that through them he could ask for a prosagoge, "an introduction to the royal presence" (Cyropaedia VII.5, 45). He relates how Sacus, the cup-bearer, had the work of "introducing" (prosago) to one Astyages those who had business with him and of keep-ing out those whom he did not wish to admit (Cyropaedia 1.3, 8). In fact , there was an official in the Persianprosagocourtcalledtheintroducer,-geus, whose responsibility it was to introduce people into the king's presence.

All the foregoing uses of prosago shed light on the work of Jesus in bringing men to God. Jesus, who suffered for us as our sin-offering, is the person who brings us to God for salvation and redemption so that our lives may consequently be dedicated as a sacrifice to the service of God (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). He is the person who introduces us lowly human beings into the infinitely higher presence of the living God, the heavenly King. Can we think prosagogeus of Jesus better than the introducer,,who presents us before God that we may receive divine grace and the living hope of being brought into His presence again when we shall see Him face to face in heaven?

#### Adoption

The word "adoption" is translated from huiiothesia (huios, a son thesis,a placing),signifying place and condition of a son given to whom it does not naturally belong.

From the papyri we cite: "We agree, Heracles and his wife Iscarion on the one part, that we have given away to you, Horion, for adoption our son Patermouthis, aged about two years, and Horion on the other part, that I may have him as my son so that the right proceeding from succession to my inheritance shall be maintained by him." Among Greek profane writers from Pindar downwards, theos huios"adopted, is son," regularly huiiothesia, which is found form of.

In the New Testament huiiothesia designates the privilege of sonship that God bestows on all who give themselves to Christ. It occurs only in the writings of Paul. While other New Testament writers frequently and emphatically refer to our blessings, privileges and duties as children of God, only Paul uses this special term huiiothesia to portray our relationship to God as sons by adoption. As one who was a Roman citizen and exposed to Greek culture, Paul was evidently informed concerning the customs of adoption among the Greeks and Romans. Thus it is highly probable that he had this at least partially in mind in his use of the word huiiothesia.

In both Greek and Roman practice, adoption was a technical term for an act that had specific legal and social effects. The Romans especially maintained the rights of fathers over their children as virtually despotic; and these rights did not cease when the sons came of age, or had families of their own, but could only be terminated during the father's lifetime by certain legal proceedings, similar to those by which slaves were sold or redeemed. The same term. (mancipatio) was applied to any process of this kind, whether one parted with his son, his slave, or his goods. Thus a man could not be transferred from one family to another, or made the son of any Roman citizen, without a formal legal act. If he was not under the authority of a natural father, he could be put in the

position of the son of another by an act of the sovereign people gathered together in their religious capacity. This transaction was known by the term *arrogatio* while, the taking by one man of the son of another was denoted by the term *adoptio*. Adoption, when thus legally performed, put a man in every respect in the same position of a son by birth of him who had adopted him so that he possessed the same rights and owed the same obligations.

Like the Roman practice of adoption, our adoption as sons of God has certain legal implications. In the state of sin, men are not God's natural children in the spiritual sense. They are described as being "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). Jesus designates their spiritual father as the devil: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (John 8:44). As sinners, having transgressed the law of God, they deserve eternal death (Romans 6:23). But when they seek spiritual redemption by faith in Christ, the loving, gracious God adopts them as His sons through the merits of Christ, who paid the price of their redemption in His death on the cross, thus meeting the legal demands set forth by divine law. As God's legally adopted sons they enjoy the same rights and privileges as Christ, who is the only Son of God inherently, described in John 3:16 as God's "only begotten Son." In being "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23), they enjoy a salvation that includes more than the wiping clean of their sinful state, a mere "not guilty," but the gracious intention of the heavenly Father to treat them as saved sons, brothers of Christ and fellow heirs with Him. "We are sons by grace; He is so by nature" (Augustine).

This concept of adoption in no way contradicts the New Testament portrayal of Christians as being children of God by spiritual birth (John 3:3-5; 1 Peter 1:23). Christians are at one and the same time born children of God and His sons by adoption. The Greek word *teknon*, child, *akintikto*, beget, gives prominence to the fact of birth in describing a member of God's family, whereas *huios*, usually rendered as "son" in the American Standard Version, stresses the dignity, character, and privileges of the relationship. The New Testament never refers to the adoption of a child (*teknon*), but only to *hiothesia*, the adoption of a son (*huios*). The new birth is necessary in becoming a member of God's family because man must be regenerated in changing from the carnal state to the spiritual state, thus to partake of the nature of the divine Father. But in satisfying the demands of divine justice through the redeeming power of Christ the Saviour and in receiving the rights and privileges of full-grown sons, it is necessary that man also be adopted into God's family.

Let us now examine the New Testament passages in which *hiothesia*, adoption, is used.

1. "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).

The leading of the Spirit of God mentioned in the previous verse, which is the proof of sonship or adoption, does not produce in God's sons the feeling of servitude and fear that was characteristic of their former state in the bondage of sin, but rather a consciousness of the affection, love, and confidence that pertains to members of God's family; not the servile, trembling spirit of slaves, but the calm trust of those who know they are sons of God and can confidently cry, "Abba, Father." Cf. 2 Timothy 1:7.

2. "And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

The apostle here indicates that the work of redemption will not be finished until the resurrection. Although the full price of our redemption, the blood of Christ, is already paid, corruption and the grave have not yet surrendered the bodies which at the coming of Christ will be changed into redeemed, incorruptible bodies, fit for the heavenly realm (1 Corinthians 15:51; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; Php 3:21). Cf. Luke 20:36. When the Lord comes again, the sons of God will then enjoy the full privileges of their adoption into God's family.

3. ". . . Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Romans 9:4).

Paul's reference here to the adoption which belongs to Israel is in accordance with Exodus 4:22, "Israel is my son." Cf. Hosea 11:1. The Israelites were adopted by God in the sense that they were brought into a special relationship with Him not enjoyed by other peoples (Deuteronomy 14:2).

4. "But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

In the context of these verses Paul draws a contrast between those under the law and those under grace. Under the law they are considered as children under age, but under grace they are adopted by God to be considered as full-grown sons. Under the law they are considered as bond-servants, in spiritual bondage, but under grace they are redeemed, spiritually emancipated, by Christ to be considered as those who have the rights of sonship, heirs of the heavenly Father. Carefully read Galatians 4:1-7.

5. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ ...having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 1:5).

Here Paul stresses the fact that our adoption as sons of God is through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ since He is the channel through whom we receive all spiritual blessings from God. His sacrifice on the cross makes possible our redemption from the bondage of sin so that we can become sons of God. When sinners believe in Christ as the Redeemer, to put Him on in baptism, they then appropriate the power of the cross to be adopted as God's sons. See Galatians 3:26-27.

## Questions

I. Discuss each New Testament passage in which prosagoge is used.

How does the secular use of prosagoge cast light on its reference in 1 Peter 3:18 to the work of Christ?

What is the meaning of huiothesia?

Discuss the difference in the New Testament concepts of the new birth and adoption.

Discuss all the New Testament passages in which huiiothesia is used.

## Chapter Five--Anxiety, Apostle

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### Lesson Five ANXIETY, APOSTLE

#### Anxiety

The word "anxiety" is from the Greek *merimna*, meaning "care, thought, anxious care or thought, trouble, disquietude." The verb form is *merimnao*, meaning "have anxiety, be anxious, care for, be concerned about something." Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines anxiety as "painful uneasiness of mind over an impending or anticipated ill; state or an instance of being anxious; solicitous desire."

In classical Greek the verb *merimnao* sometimes means "am occupied with," as in Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1124, where Oedipus asks the herdsman, "employed (*merimnao*) in what labour, or what way of life?" In ordinary usage it describes philosophers meditating over their problems. It is also used in the sense of being cumbered with many cares and of something that is treated with anxious care. We can see from the fore-going that *merimnao* has a double meaning, that it is used in both a good and bad sense.

This double meaning is also true of the noun *merimna*. It sometimes is used to denote care, thought, solicitude; for example, in Sophocles 1460, says, where Oedipus Tyrannus "I pray thee, Creon, to take no care on thee for my sons; they are men, so that, be they where they may, they can never lack the means to live." It is also used to denote a troubled mind. Euripides describes how Ion asks Creusa, who is weeping at Phoebus' sanctuary, "Why, lady, art thou disquieted?" (Ion 244).

In the papyri the words *merimna* and *merimnao* are quite common. Anacreon writes, "When I drink wine my worries go to sleep." An absent member of his family writes home, "I am now writing in haste to prevent your being anxious, for I will see that you are not worried." In another letter one writes, "If the next toe quiver, he will be involved in much anxiety and distress: pray to Zeus." In *Aristeas* 271 there is the question "Care, what and preserves watchfulness kingdom?" The answer is, to see that no injury is inflicted by those who are set in positions of authority over the people."

The word *amerimna*, meaning "security, safety, the state of being unworried," is also found in the papyri. In a business deal between two men, the one writes to the other, "And for your security I have issued to you this contract." The adjective *amerimnos*, signifying "freedom from care," is used in a letter written to an absent member of a family, "Have no more anxiety about your household than you would if you were present."

The meaning of *merimna* and *merimnao* in secular Greek, describing both a right and wrong care, carefulness, or anxiety, is essentially the same in the New Testament. First, let us consider the wrong kind of anxiety.

The anxiety that is synonymous with worry, that shows undue, fearful concern for anything, is always wrong. The word of God plainly, unequivocally commands, "In nothing be anxious" (Php

4:6). Notice how this command is rendered in various modern versions: "Don't worry about anything" (Good News For Modern Man); "Do not be anxious about anything" (Weymouth); "Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything." (The Amplified New Testament); "Never be anxious" (Moffatt); "Entertain no worry" (Verkuyl); "Nothing must make you anxious" (Knox).

The Christian who seeks to justify the worry habit needs to realize that worry is sin, transgression of divine law--as much so as fornication , drunkenness, stealing, and such like! He must clearly see that worry is

an unhealthy, ungodly, destructive mental habit. Dr. Smiley Blanton says , "Anxiety is the great modern plague." A prominent physician declares that "worry is the most subtle and destructive of all modern diseases." Another doctor recently said that "all doctors are having cases of illness which are brought on directly by fear, and aggravated by worry and a feeling of insecurity." Surely every Christian who seeks to please his Lord and to enjoy a full, rich, happy life will strive by God's grace to eradicate the demon of worry from his mind.

In being aware of the sin of worry, we should give careful thought to the following considerations:

1. The anxiety that involves too much concern for the affairs of the world is always wrong. Speaking of the man whose heart can be compared to ground covered with thorns, Jesus said, ". . . this is he that heareth the word; and the care (merimna) of the world, and the deceit-fulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). Cf. Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14; Luke 21:34. When anyone materializes life and starves the soul, he is in a perilous situation indeed. When his sole care is for food, drink, clothing, shelter, and pleasure, so that he sets his mind on the things that are upon the earth rather than on the things that are in heaven (Colossians 3:2), he is confronted with the ever imminent danger of losing his soul. The man who is so busy with the affairs of this world that he has little or no time for God and the things involved in seeking first His kingdom and righteousness, is simply too busy! It was not wrong as such for Mary to be concerned with her responsibilities as a homemaker, as one given to hospitality, but it was definitely wrong for her to be "cumbered (distracted) about much serving." That is why the Lord chided her: "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things." Read Luke 10:38-42.

2. The anxiety that involves worry about the future is always wrong. This is the anxiety of borrowing trouble, of having a troubled mind concerning the future. Jesus said, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself" (Matthew 6:34). In the context of this command, Jesus rebukes His disciples because of their anxiety concerning what the future has in store for them in the way of food, drink, and clothing. In effect, he tells them that such worry is wrong because it is blind: it fails to see the bounteous goodness of God in the world. If God shows His loving care in the world by feeding the birds and clothing the lilies, He will surely care for His disciples. Thus worry is wrong because it indicates a lack of trust in God, who has all power to keep us from all harm and to give us everything we need. Carefully read Matthew 6:25-26; Matthew 6:28-30. Also see Luke 12:11; Romans 8:31-39; Hebrews 13:5-6.

Jesus also tacitly declares that worry concerning the future is wrong because it is useless, it accomplishes nothing (Matthew 6:27). Worry about the future never secures for a person what he needs; in fact, it makes him less able to meet his responsibilities. The cure for worry is obvious.

Since it shows a lack of trust in God, then its cure lies in giving God our full confidence, realizing that we are not left to our own devices in facing the problems and responsibilities of life. The man of faith faces life courageously, with an untroubled heart, because he faces it with God. "Casting all your anxiety upon him because he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Php 4:4-7).

Let us now consider the right kind of anxiety.

1. It is right that we should be anxious in the sense of caring or being concerned for our fellow Christians. The church is the body of Christ, and each member should have solicitous care for the welfare of all the other members. ". . . the members should have the same care (merimnosi) one for another" (1 Corinthians 12:25). Paul wrote about having "anxiety (merimna) for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28). This loving concern for his brethren in Christ was a prominent characteristic of the beloved apostle, causing him to incessantly pray for them (Romans 1:9; Php 1:4; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2). His concern for the church is eloquently expressed in his message to the saints at Philippi: "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will care (merimnesei) truly for your state" (Php 2:19-20). Because Paul truly cared for his brethren, he sent a likeminded man, Timothy, to inquire concerning the state of the church in Philippi.

2. It is right that we should be anxious in the sense of caring or being concerned for the Lord's work. In 1 Corinthians 7:32 Paul writes of the person who is "careful (merimna) for the things of the Lord." The business of every Christian should be the Lord's business. His prime concern should be to accomplish the will of Christ. As he cares for the things of the Lord, he will surely care for all men, sinners as well as saints, who are the perfect concern of Him who gave His all to bless mankind. As he cares for the things of the Lord, he will also surely care for Bible study, prayer, worship, etc., for anything and everything that will build him up in the holy faith. It should be the desire of every Christian to know the difference between disabling worry and enabling concern, to abhor the one and to cleave to the other.

#### Apostle

The Greek word for apostle is *apostolos*, literally meaning "one sent forth (apo, from, stello, to send)." In classical Greek the term is associated with seafaring, and more particularly a military expedition, also its commander. In Plato's writings it means a ship ready for departure. It is often used to designate a freighter or transport ship. It is also applied to a group of men sent out for a specific purpose; for example, to a band of colonists.

In the papyri there is an example of *apostolos* being used to designate a ship: "account for the ship (apostolou) of Triadelphus." It is also used to mean an order or bill of lading; for instance, "whenever the boats collected in accordance with the orders of lading (apostolon) arrive;" "in accordance with the bill of lading (apostolou) of the Officium." It is also used to designate a message: "In accordance with the message (apostolou) of his excellency."

In later Greek usage the word assumes the meaning of "a herald , messenger, ambassador, envoy." Herodotus wrote, "Alyattes, the moment that words of the oracle were reported to him, sent a herald to Miletus in hopes of concluding a truce with Thryasybulus" (History 1.21). The meaning of apostolos in the New Testament is that of "a delegate , messenger, one sent forth with orders and authority;" for example, "A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent (apostolos) greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16). The word occurs seventy-nine times in all, sixty-eight of which are in the writings of Paul and Luke.

The Apostle of apostles is Jesus Christ Himself, sent forth from heaven under divine orders and with divine authority. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house." (Hebrews 3:1-2). As Moses was sent by God to authoritatively reveal His will to the Jews, so Jesus was sent by God to authoritatively reveal His will to all mankind. Cf. Hebrews 1:1-2. Jesus declared, ". . . the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent (apostalke) me" (John 5:36). See John 17:3. By so sending His Son into the world, God has revealed Himself to mankind, to enter into history (Matthew 1:23; John 14:9). Justin Martyr, one of the earliest postapostolic church leaders, recognized the supreme apostleship of Jesus with full authority over mankind: "He who is both Son and Apostle of God the Father of all and the Ruler, Jesus Christ" (Apology XII.9).

As Jesus was chosen to be God's Apostle, so certain of the Lord's disciples were chosen to be His apostles. "And when it was day, he called his disciples; and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:13). See Luke 9:10. The qualifications for the apostles to represent the ascended Christ to mankind were expressed by Peter as he and the other apostles prepared to choose a successor to Judas: "Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). Cf. 1 John 1:1-4. These men whom the Lord chose to be His apostles, sent to bear witness of His resurrection, occupy a place of importance next to the Lord Himself in relation to the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 2:20; Ephesians 4:11).

Although Paul possessed the same authority as the twelve apostles, he could not qualify for the apostleship as set forth in Acts 1:21-22 since he had not been with the Lord beginning with His baptism until the day He ascended into heaven. However, he was a witness to the fact of the living Christ (Acts 9:1-6). His apostleship was through special appointment of the Lord so that he enjoyed equal authority with the twelve apostles. Joseph Thayer says, "With these apostles Paul claimed equality because through a heavenly intervention he had been appointed by the ascended Christ himself to preach the gospel among the Gentiles, and owed his knowledge of the way of salvation not to man's instruction but to direct revelation from Christ himself, and moreover had evinced his apostolic qualifications by many signal proofs. Galatians 1:1-11; Galatians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 1 Corinthians 15:8-10; 2 Corinthians 3:2; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:1; cf. Acts 26:12-20."

There are still others who are called apostles in the New Testament, men who were sent forth as messengers of the churches with special orders and authority. Barnabas was such an apostle:

"But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard it . . ." (Acts 14:14). See Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:26. Andronicus and Junias were such apostles: "Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles" (Romans 16:7). Titus and certain unnamed brethren were such apostles: "Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward; or our brethren, they are messengers (apostoloi) of the churches" (2 Corinthians 8:23). Epaphroditus was such an apostle: "But I counted it necessary to send to Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger (apostolon) and minister to my need" (Php 2:25).

Concerning these apostles who were special messengers of the churches, Albert Barnes wrote, "The word apostle evidently is used in the proper sense, to denote one who is sent out to transact any business for others, or as an agent or legate. These persons were not apostles in the technical sense, and these are instances where the word is applied in the New Testament to those who had no claim to the apostolic office."

Closely associated in meaning with apostolos is apostole, literally meaning "a sending away, a mission." In the New Testament it refers to the office and dignity of the apostles of Christ, and is uniformly rendered as "apostleship" (Acts 1:25; Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 9:2; Galatians 2:8).

The word pseudapostoloi, "false apostles," occurs one time in the New Testament, referring to those without the divine commission necessary for the apostleship (2 Corinthians 11:13).

#### Questions

What is the meaning of the Greek words merimna and merimnao?

How are these words used in classical Greek and in the papyri?

Discuss the proposition that worry is sin, that it is an unhealthy, ungodly, destructive mental habit.

Discuss the wrong in the anxiety that involves too much concern with the affairs of the world and worry about the future.

What is the cure for worry?

Discuss the right kind of anxiety.

How is the word apostolos used in secular Greek?

Who is the Apostle of apostles?

What are the qualifications for the apostleship as set forth in Acts 1:21-22?

How does Paul qualify as an apostle of Christ?

In what sense were the messengers of the churches apostles?

Discuss the use of apostole and pseudapostoloi in the New Testament.

## Chapter Six--Assurance, Authority

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### Lesson Six ASSURANCE, AUTHORITY

#### Assurance

Three Greek words are rendered as "assurance" in the New Testament: *pistis*, *plerophoria*, and *hupostasis*. We shall consider each of these words in this lesson.

I. **PISTIS**. This is the word generally translated as "belief" or "faith" in the New Testament. However, in one instance, in Acts 17:31, it is rendered as "assurance." The meaning here is that of "proof, pledge, or guarantee." This meaning of *pistis* is also found in classical Greek. Plato wrote, "But surely it requires a great deal of argument and many proofs to show that when the man is dead his soul yet exists" (*Phaedo* 70). He also wrote of pledges that two lovers exchange between each other: "They consider that they have given and taken from each other the most sacred pledges, and they may not break them and fall into enmity" (*Phaedrus* 256). An example of this use of *pistis* in the Koine is found in a papyrus of the fourth century A.D., "If the left foot quiver, it signifies that a man will be pledgedeceivedoverapromise." and In Acts 17:31 the apostle Paul affirms that the resurrection of Jesus is God's proof, guarantee, or pledge given us that the Lord is fit to be the judge of the world: ". . . he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

II. **PLEROPHORIA**. This word means "a fullness, abundance, full assurance, entire confidence; literally, 'a full-carrying' (*pleros*, full, *phero* to carry),". "It does not occur in classical Greek or in the Septuagint. In 1 Thessalonians 1:5 it describes the inward confidence of faith with which Paul and his assistants appeared preaching at Antioch: ". . . our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance."

In Colossians 2:2 Paul tells of his striving in behalf of his fellow Christians "that their hearts may be comforted, that being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ." We note here that by "the full assurance of understanding" is meant a clear, lucid perception and firm conviction of the truth as revealed in Christ. As George Barlow said, "In this assured knowledge of the greatest truths the mind of man finds its true enrichment. Every other kind of knowledge, however rare and extensive, is in itself poor and unsatisfying."

In Hebrews 6:11 and Hebrews 10:22 *plerophoria* is rendered respectively as "fulness of hope" and "fulness of faith." In each case a footnote gives "full assurance" as the optional rendering of *plerophoria* in these passages.

Closely akin to *plerophoria* is the verb *plerophoreo*, meaning "bring in full measure, fulfill, be fully assured." This verb occurs rarely outside Biblical Greek, where its earliest occurrence is in Ecclesiastes 3:11 of the Septuagint: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed

speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." In the papyri it is used of "accomplishing" or "settling" legal matters; for example, in a passage where the complainer is invited by the strategus to bring forward his witnesses, "in order that I may finish off the matter." In another document the reference seems to be to a collector desiring to get certain monies "in full." It is also used in connection with paying off debts: "but it happens that I have been paid the debt in full."

1. Notice the use of plerophoreo in the following New Testament passages: 1. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us" (Luke 1:1). A footnote renders plerophoreo as "fully established." The next verse tells how "those matters" of which Luke speaks, the things pertaining to the earthly sojourn of Jesus, were "fully established": "even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." Luke affirms that when he undertook the writing of his gospel, the certainty of the things pertaining to Christ had been fully established among his fellow Christians through the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses of the divine word, who had actually beheld the mighty works and resurrection of Christ. See 1 John 1:1-4.

2. ". . . looking unto the promise of God, he [Abraham] wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being that what fully he assured had promised, he was able also to perform . . ." (Romans 4:20-21). Considering this passage in its context, we see that Abraham showed his faith in God by being fully assured or convinced that God would do as He had promised in making him a father of many nations. "The glory which Abraham's faith gave to God consisted in this, that, firm to the persuasion of God's ability to fulfill his promise, no difficulties shook him" (David Brown). So always is the unshakeable assurance of genuine faith in God. Such faith always takes God at His word, unswervingly believing that He will fulfill all His promises. Do you have such a faith?

3. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). The idea here, as the context indicates, is that of being fully convinced, of having a clear conscience, concerning matters which are not morally wrong. In this passage Paul is probably referring to certain Jewish festivals and fast days which had never been enjoined on Gentiles, but which were still being kept by certain converts from Judaism.

4. "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12). Christians are to be fully assured, or fully persuaded, concerning all the will of God so that there will be neither wavering nor falling. For only as they are thoroughly convinced of the sanctity of God's will and of the necessity of obeying it, will they have the frame of mind necessary to withstand every influence that would swerve them from a right relationship with God.

III. HUPOSTASIS. This word literally means "a standing under (hupo, under, histemi, to stand)." Its meaning as translated "substance" in Hebrews 1:3 is "substantial nature, essence, actual being." It also means "confidence, conviction, assurance, steadfastness." It is rendered as "confidence" in 2 Corinthians 9:4; 2 Corinthians 11:17 and Hebrews 3:14. It is translated only once in the New Testament as "assurance": "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). In discussing the varied uses of hupostasis in the papyri, Moulton and

Milligan observe, ". . . in all cases there is the same central idea of something that underlies visible conditions and guarantees a future possession. As this is the essential meaning in Hebrews 11:1, we venture to suggest the following translation, 'Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for.'" This may well be a valid translation. Through our faith in Christ we have God's guarantee of that which we hope for, eternal life in heaven. Strong faith in Christ gives the Christian definite assurance that he is the constant recipient of God's grace and that he is marching to the heavenly Zion. It is a sad commentary on the faith of many who claim to be Christians that they do not have this blessed assurance. Some of these insecure, unhappy souls even affirm that no Christian can have the assurance that he is saved and on the way to heaven. It is evident that they do not really know Christ. Our blessed Saviour has not called us out of the darkness and frustration of sin into a life of insecurity and uncertainty, but into a life that gives the constant assurance and certainty that we are Christ's and possess in Him the divine guarantee of eternal life in heaven. See 2 Timothy 1:12.

### Authority

The Greek word for "authority" is *exousia*, from the impersonal verb *exesti*, "it is lawful." Primarily, *exousia* has the meaning of "freedom of choice, liberty of action." This use of the word in the papyri is common. In wills, contracts, and other legal documents it denotes the "claim," "right," or "control" one has over anything. Epictetus writes of the man having "contempt of all things that are not in the power of his will" (Discourses 111.24, 70). Examples of this use of *exousia* in the New Testament are found in the following passages: Acts 5:4; Romans 9:21; 1 Corinthians 7:37; 1 Corinthians 9:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; Hebrews 13:10; Revelation 13:5; Revelation 22:14.

Another meaning attached to *exousia* is "ability to do something, capability, might, power." This particular usage is found in Jewish Greek writings; for example, "Then looked he unto the king, and said, Thou hast power over men . . ." (2Ma 7:16). Examples of this use in the New Testament are found in following passages: John 10:18; Acts 8:19; Acts 26:18; Revelation 9:10; Revelation 11:6; Revelation 20:6.

The particular New Testament meaning of *exousia* that is the main consideration of this discussion is "authority." It is not possible, however, to draw a fast line between this meaning and that of "power." It is possible, of course, to have the power or ability to do something that one does not have the authority to do; for example, the power to steal, commit murder, etc. But authority always implies the power or ability to do whatever is involved in its scope. Unless it is backed by real power it is illusory. Behind legal authority stands the power of the state to give it validity. Behind the authority of Christians to serve God in the name of Christ stands the power to serve Him. Although authority, then, is best defined as the right to exercise power, and not the power itself, yet it always implies power. Cf. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary: "A right to command or to act." See Luke 4:36 and Revelation 17:13, where a distinction is made between power (*dunamis*) and authority (*exousia*).

At its highest, *exousia* signifies the absolute authority of God, who has both the inherent right and power to do all things compatible with His nature. His incontrovertible authority is directly expressed in Acts 1:7, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority." Only God has underived authority. Thus any rightful authority possessed by others must come from God. Notice Romans 13:1, "There is no authority but by act of God, and the existing authorities are instituted by him" (New English Bible). In Daniel 4:3 the word

"dominion" (Septuagint, *exousia*) is used to designate the absolute authority of God: "How great are his signs! And how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation."

The word "authority," *exousia*, is also most significant as it pertains to the person and work of Christ. Since He is Immanuel, "God with us," His authority is not restrictive or limited. He has the right to exercise unlimited divine power.

During the Lord's earthly sojourn He exercised authority as the One sent of God the Father. His teaching was of authority: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29). He had authority to forgive sins: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house" (Matthew 9:6). He had authority to cast out demons: ". . . with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mark 1:27).

The absolute authority of Jesus Christ as the crucified, resurrected, ascended Son of God is prophetically described in Daniel 7:13-14, where the word for "dominion" in the Septuagint is *exousia*: "I saw in the night-visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The fulfillment of this prophecy is expressed in such passages as Ephesians 1:19-22. Cf. Php 2:9-11.

Before Jesus ascended to His heavenly throne, He expressed to His apostles the authority that would be His as Prophet, High Priest, Saviour, and King: authority hath been "All given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). These words have been called "the charter of the kingdom of God." The Lord here asserted the dominion He has over all things. Previously He had declared, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father" (Matthew 11:27), and now he made good the assertion as He sent forth His apostles to subdue the world to the obedience of faith and as He ascended into heaven to be made both Lord and Christ. The culmination of His authority will be at His second coming, when he executes judgment upon the world (John 5:26-29).

In considering the question of authority in regard to the present day church, composed of uninspired people, we must not think of the church as being infallible. Infallibility is inherently only in Christ and in the teaching which He delivered to the apostles. A member of the church can only speak authoritatively as he presents the message of Christ which is recorded in the inspired scriptures. A thing is not right as such just because it is taught by the church of Christ, but only as the church teaches what is authorized by Christ. Thus in respecting the supreme authority of Christ, we must develop a spirit of objectivity in the church that seeks to know the mind of Christ rather than to merely know what some religious periodical editor or prominent preacher teaches, or what happens to be a particular point of view held by some segment of the church. We must not surrender to others the right to think for ourselves, to determine for ourselves what the word of Christ teaches on any subject.

As free men in Christ who must answer for themselves in judgment (Romans 14:4; Romans 14:12), we must deny any human being the right to tell us infallibly what we can and cannot believe and practice. If we are truly Christ-centered, Christ-oriented in our thinking and in our lives, we will always strive to obey the inspired command, "Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). We will accept no man's word for anything in religion unless it stands the test of proving true to the supreme authority of Christ. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). See Romans 3:4.

The word *exousia* is also used in the New Testament in reference to the apostles. During the Lord's earthly ministry they received special authority from Him. "And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness" (Matthew 10:1). The perpetual authority possessed by the apostles, which they derive from Christ, is expressed by Paul, "For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame" (2 Corinthians 10:8). See Matthew 10:16; Matthew 10:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:22-23; 1 Corinthians 5:3; 2 Corinthians 13:10.

*Exousia* is also used in the New Testament to describe the authority Saul of Tarsus received from the chief priests to persecute the church (Acts 9:14; Acts 26:10; Acts 26:12), the authority of managing household affairs (Mark 13:34), the authority of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others (Luke 7:8), and the authority represented by the woman's veil (1 Corinthians 11:10).

By metonymy *exousia* stands for that which is subject to authority or rule, rendered as "jurisdiction" in Luke 23:7. By metonymy *exousia* also stands for a bearer of authority, one who possesses authority, a ruler, magistrate. This usage is found in the papyri; for example, "accordingly(*exousia*)AnImakemy."entreaties to your highness example of this usage in the New Testament is in Luke 12:11, "And when they bring you before the synagogues, and the rulers, and the authorities . . ."

## Questions

Discuss the meaning of *Otis* in Acts 17:31.

How is *plerophoria* used in 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Colossians 2:2; He-brews 6:11; 10:22?

Discuss the use of *plerophoreo* in the New Testament.

Why do some Christians not have the blessed assurance portrayed by *hupostasis*?

Define the word "authority," *exousia*.

Discuss the authority that pertains to the person and work of Christ.

Why is the church of Christ not infallible?

What authority is possessed by the apostles?

What are the metonymical uses of exousia in the New Testament?

## Chapter Seven--Bishop, Bear

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### Lesson Seven

#### BISHOP, BEAR

##### Bishop

The word "bishop" in the Greek is episkopos, literally meaning "an overseer (epi, over, skopeo, to look)." Such lexicons as Liddell-Scott define it as "overseer, watcher, guardian."

In pre-Christian usage it is primarily applied to the gods. Homer calls the gods watchers over covenants sanctifying their inviolability: "Let us, then, give pledges to one another by our gods who are the fittest witnesses and guardians of all covenants" (Illiad XX.255). Bacchus is called "master (episkopos) of the voice of the night" (Sophocles, Antigone 1148). Nemesis, the messenger of justice, is appointed episkopos to watch over the offenses of children against their parents (Plato, Laws IV.717). In an inscription of the second century A. D. a curse is laid against anyone who injures sepulchral monuments: "Let him have the Erinyes (Furies) as his guardians."

The same basic meaning episkopos has in reference to the gods is also used in reference to men; for example, "watchers of the corpse" (Sophocles, Antigone 217); "The dragon kept watch and ward o'er Dirce's springs" (Euripides, The Phoenician 932); "And let Maidens the women whom we have chosen overseers of such matters . . ." (Plato ,VI.784);"Therefore lord, the master of the house" (Aeschelus, Eumenides 739, 740); "You who were its saviour, the guardian of our wives and children" (Homer ,XXIVilliad.729).

In the classical period of ancient Athens the word episkopos is used to describe those who are guardians or overseers of the affairs of the State. Plato wrote, "I am sure, I said, that he who does not know how the beautiful and the just are likewise good will be but a sorry guardian of them; and I suspect that no one who is ignorant of the good will have a true knowledge of them . . . And if we have a guardian who has the knowledge our State will be perfectly ordered" (Republic VI.506). In an inscription of the second century B. C. the word episkopos is applied to communal officials in Rhodes, where we read of a council of five episkopoi. A later inscription gives one of the earliest uses of the word as applied to men in a religious sense, where it is mentioned in a list of officials of the temple of Rhodes.

Examples of the use of episkopos in Jewish Greek literature are the following: "In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people" (1Ma 1:51); "Moreover , overseers,he that ordained they.certain.might judges have regard and to justice above all things, and distribute it with the same concern they would have about their own souls" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews X.4, 1).

The meaning of episkopos in secular Greek as an overseer, watcher, or guardian is essentially the same in its New Testament usage. As the ancient Greeks applied episkopos to their gods as the highest use of the word, so in like manner the New Testament applies it to Jesus Christ, the only

begotten Son of the true and living God, who is the Bishop of bishops: "For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). Jesus is the supreme Guardian, Watcher, or Overseer of His disciples. He has perfect concern for their spiritual welfare. He is the great head of the body, the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22). He is, strictly speaking, the Archbishop of the church, under whose supreme oversight are His representatives and servants who are designated by the word "bishop," episkopos, in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7).

In seeking for a full understanding of the New Testament use of the word "bishop," we must consider the meaning of two words associated with it: "elder" and "pastor." The word "elder" is from the Greek presbuteros, literally meaning "an older man," and the word "pastor" is from poimen, literally meaning "a shepherd." It is significant that the same church leaders designated in the New Testament as elders or pastors are without exception also called bishops. Illustrative of this is Acts 20:17-18; Acts 20:28, "And from Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, ". . . Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Notice that the apostle refers here to the elders as bishops, telling them that they are responsible to feed the church. The word "feed" is from the Greek poimaino, which corresponds to the noun poimen (pastor). It is evident here that one and the same person is designated by the words "pastor," "elder," and "bishop." See Ephesians 4:11.

Another illustration of the New Testament use of the terms "elder" and "pastor" for the same person designated as a bishop or overseer is 1 Peter 5:1-2, "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who are a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who are also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God among you, exercising oversight as the elders are to tend the flock. This means that they are to function as shepherds or pastors since the word "tend" is from the Greek poimaino, answering to poimen (pastor). The apostle also states that the elders are responsible for "exercising the oversight," which is from the Greek episkopeo, answering to episkopos (bishop).

Still another illustration of the term "elder" for the same person designated as bishop or overseer is Titus 1:5,7, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless as God's steward; not self-willed, etc." Paul does not write of two different persons in his use of the words "elder" and "bishop," but to one and the same person as the context plainly shows.

The distinction which has been made since apostolic times between the elder and bishop is devoid of New Testament authority. Contrary to the New Testament teaching concerning the elders of the church being the same as the bishops, with a plurality of them in every congregation (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Php 1:1; James 5:14), a gradual change was made concerning this original arrangement as ordained by the inspired apostles. Augustus Neander wrote, "What we find existing in the second century enables us to infer, respecting the preceding times, that soon after the Apostolic age the standing office of the president of the pres-bytery [eldership] must have been

formed; which president, as having preeminently the oversight of all, was designated by the special term Episkopos [Bishop], and thus distinguished from the other presbyters."

Not only did the unwarranted distinction made between the bishops and the elders lead to the former assuming authority over the latter, but the bishops gradually extended their authority beyond the local congregation and assumed control of a plurality of congregations in a district known as a diocese. Written during the last half of the second century is the following description of the distinction then recognized between the bishop and elder, affirming God's approval of this distinction: "It is necessary, that the Church, as a city built upon a hill, have an order approved of God, and good government. In particular let the bishop, as chief, be heard in the things which he speaks; and let the elder give heed that the things ordered be done" (The Clementine Homilies III. 57, 1).

As early as Ignatius, who lived during the latter part of the first century, we read of the elders or presbyters being subordinate to the bishops. He wrote, "Your bishop, presiding in the place of God; your presbyters in the place of the council of Apostles" (Epistle to the Mag-nesians VI. 5).

No scholar of good standing denies that in New Testament usage presbuteros and episkopos are used interchangeably to describe the same person, and that this person is given the pastoral function in the church. The great lexicographer Joseph Henry Thayer says, "That they [presby-ters] did not differ at all from bishops or overseers (as is acknowledged by Jerome on Titus 1:5) is evident from the fact that the two words are used indiscriminately, Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Titus 1:7, and that the duty of presbyters is described by episkopein, 1 Peter 5:1 sq." W. E. Vine says "Presbuteros, an elder, is another term for the same person as bishop or overseer . . . Poimen, a shepherd, is used metaphorically of Christian 'pastors,' Ephesians 4:11. Pastors guide as well as feed the flock; cp. Acts 20:23, which with ver. 17, indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops); so also in 1 Peter 5:1-2, "end the flock . . exercising the oversight.' "

Although the three words "elder," "bishop," and "pastor" designate the same person in New Testament usage, they do not describe the same thing concerning him. The word "elder" denotes his dignity and maturity of experience; the words "bishop" and "pastor" denote his function as one who oversees and shepherds the flock of God.

1 Timothy 3:1 declares, "Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Many have misinterpreted this passage by stressing the office of the bishop rather than the good work of the bishop. Actually, there is no word in the Greek of this passage that signifies an office. The sentence should literally read, "If a man seeketh overseership (episkopes), he desireth a good work." The qualifi-cations set forth by the apostle that follow this statement (verse 2-7) are all related to the function or work of the bishop. None of them are arbitrary. It is the good work of overseeing, watching, or guarding His flock that God has ordained for the bishop to do, and it is His will that he who aspires to the overseership be qualified to effectively do this work. Nothing can be more absurd in the eyes of God than for a man to desire to be called a bishop, to seek for an office or exalted position in the church, but not to desire the weighty responsibilities a true bishop must assume. Many in the church hold to the erroneous idea that a congrega-tion has scriptural bishops or elders when it selects some men to be called bishops, to have their names listed on a letterhead and weekly bulletin, whether or not they actually oversee the flock of God. It

is a misnomer to call a man a bishop or overseer who does no overseeing, just as it is a misnomer to call a man a pastor who does no shepherding.

The church of our Lord constantly stands in need of qualified members who will function and work as bishops, assuming the divinely ordained responsibilities of overseership, who will truly "watch in behalf of souls" (Hebrews 13:17). Those who love the Lord must do everything within their power to discourage any man from taking upon himself the overseership who desires a position of prominence and honor but who does not evidence any desire to do the actual work of overseeing the people of God.

## Bear

Several Greek words are translated as "bear" in the New Testament. However, the particular word which is the concern of this discussion is *bastazo*, occurring twenty-seven times in the New Testament. It is one of the most graphic, colorful words found in the sacred scriptures. It has various meanings, which we shall now consider.

1. Take up with the hands. An illustration of this meaning in classical Greek is in Homer, *Odyssey* IX.593, "And I saw Sisyphus at his endless task of raising his prodigious stone with both his hands." This is also the meaning of the word in John 10:31, "The Jews took up stones again to stone him."

2. Bear what is burdensome. *Bastazo* refers to the bearing of physical burdens, such as the cross of Christ: "They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself" (John 19:17). It is used metaphorically in respect of sufferings endured for the cause of Christ: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). It describes the burdens or responsibilities of laborers in a vineyard, those who have "borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat" (Matthew 20:12). It describes the sufferings and troubles borne on behalf of others: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). See Matthew 8:17; Romans 15:1. It further describes religious regulations imposed on others (Acts 15:10), the judgment believers will bear who fail to discharge the obligations of discipleship (Galatians 5:10), and the personal responsibilities each disciple must carry (Galatians 6:5).

*Bastazo* is also used for bearing what is burdensome in the sense of "endure." In a secular manuscript of A. D. 117 it appears in the fore-going sense in a formula about taxation. It also appears in a phrase of Epictetus, "no one could endure your arrogance" (Discourses 1.32). This is similar to the use of the word in Revelation 2:3, where the apostle writes to the Ephesian church: "thou canst not bear evil men." These Christians could not tolerate evil men, which means that they were utterly opposed to their evil practices and refused to allow them to hinder the work they were doing on behalf of Christ. And certainly, in the same way, Christians today should not bear evil men.

3. Carry something. A document of the third century A. D. speaks of Trajan granting an audience to rival Greek and Jewish emissaries from Alexandria, "each one carrying (*bastazontes*) his own gods." We are reminded of Acts 9:15, "He [Paul] is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." As the Greek and Jewish emissaries carried their own gods before the emperor Trajan in the sense of speaking in favor of them, so Paul carried the divine Christ before kings and other men in the sense of bearing testimony concerning Him.

A papyrus of the third century A.D. contains a spell in which the sentence occurs: "I carry the corpse of Osiris . . . should so-and-so trouble me, I shall use it against him." Just, that is, as the bearing of a particular amulet associated with the god Osiris acted as a charm against the troubling gestures of an adversary, so Paul found himself protected against similar attacks by bearing the marks of the Lord. The apostle said, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17). It was not an amulet Paul wore on his body, not some magical charm to stave off the attacks of his enemies, but the actual physical marks of the hardships he had suffered and endured as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3). See Acts 14:19; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

The word Paul employs for "marks" is *stigmata*, the primary meaning being that of the brand which a slave wore on his person, containing either the initials, mark, or name of his owner. Herodotus mentions a temple of Hercules in Egypt in which if any slave took refuge, and had the sacred brands or marks (*stigmata*) impressed on him, he thereby devoted himself to the gods (History 11.13). Paul bore branded on his body the *stigmata*, the sufferings he had endured for the One who bought him, which marked him as truly belonging to Christ. He appealed to this as confirming his apostolic authority, as if to say, "Let no man trouble me by setting my apostolic authority at nought, for my Master will surely uphold and vindicate the apostleship of one who has suffered for His sake through the years."

4. Carry away, remove. This is the most common meaning of *bastazo* in the papyri; for example, "allowing him to carry off 28 artabae;" "it shall not be lawful to remove or sell or pledge this hay." This is also the meaning of the word in such passages as Matthew 3:11 and John 20:15.

5. Pilfer, take surreptitiously. This is also a common meaning of *bastazo*. For example, the word is used in two papyri of the second century A. D. where petitions are made to the strategus complaining of a robbery. In the New Testament it describes the thievery of Judas: ". . . he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein" (John 12:6).

## Questions

What is the meaning of *episkopos* as it is used both in secular Greek and the New Testament?

What evidence do we have that the words "elder," "pastor," and "bishop" apply to the same person in the New Testament?

Discuss the importance of the good work of the bishop and the need of stressing this in our teaching concerning the overseership.

What are some of the burdens that Christians are to bear for the cause of Christ?

In what sense are we to "bear evil men"?

Discuss the use of *bastazo* in Acts 9:15 and Galatians 6:17.

## Chapter Eight--Blot Out, Call

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### Lesson Eight

#### BLOT OUT, CALL

##### Blot Out

The words "blot out" are from the single Greek word *exaleipho*. It occurs only five times in the New Testament, but with great significance. In classical Greek it begins with the meaning of "wash over or plaster." It is used to describe the whitewashing of a wall: "Ladders were made to match the height of the enemy's wall, which they measured by the layers of bricks, the side turned toward them not being thoroughly whitewashed" (Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 111.20). It is used for warriors painting their bodies with war paint: "When they [the Ethiopians] went into battle they painted their bodies half with chalk and half with vermilion" (Herodotus, *History* V11.69). It developed into the general meaning of "wipe out, obliterate, destroy;" for example, "Would God I could rub my beauty out like a picture" (Euripides, *Helen* 162); "And now, my friend, please to begin again at this point; and having wiped out of your memory all that has preceded . . ." (Plato, *Theatetus* 187); "No longer can I efface from my mind the memory of thy sufferings" (Euripides, *Hecuba* 590); ". . . albeit we try to destroy the wicked, house and home" (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1241).

The general classical meaning of *exaleipho* is retained in the papyri. A man writes to another, "I could not read your letter because it had been obliterated." In both classical Greek and the Koine *exaleipho* has the meaning of wiping something out as a person would with a , sponge. This is similar in meaning to the familiar expression "wiping the slate clean." And that is the meaning of the word as it is used in the New Testament. Twice it describes the "wiping away" every tear from the eyes of the eternally redeemed in the blissful state of heaven: "And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4) This expression is one of exquisite tenderness and beauty. The poet Robert Burns declared that he could never read it without being moved to weeping. And it is every tear that God will obliterate from the eyes of His own in heaven. Not even the barest vestige of a tear will remain because not a single cause of tears will exist in that land where there can be no sorrow or pain. Cf. Isaiah 25:8.

Graphically contrasted to the use of *exaleipho* in Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4 is its use in Revelation 3:5, "He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garment; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Those who go to heaven will have their tears obliterated, completely wiped away from their eyes; but those who go to hell will have their names obliterated, completely wiped away from the book of life. As names are blotted out or removed from military registers when death occurs, so God will blot out or remove from the heavenly register the names of all those who are consigned to eternal death in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8).

Another passage in which exaleipho is used is Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." The import of God "wiping the slate clean" regarding our sins as revealed in this passage is especially enhanced by the use of exaleipho in Colossians 2:14, quoted here with verse 13: "And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." The Greek word rendered here as "bond" is cheirographos, literally meaning "a hand-written document," but used by Paul to designate a certificate of indebtedness or bond. In the papyri a man writes to another, "If you can, please worry Dioscorus and exact from him his bond." In connection with the purchase of wine, a papyrus contains the phrase, "for which you draw me up a bond."

A cheirographos, then, is a document which acknowledges a debt that has to be paid. In a sense, this is what the law represented, for it reckoned men as indebted to God because of their sins, a debt that had to be fully paid if they were reconciled to God. But naked law, whether the law of Moses or any other religious legal system, makes no provisions for the paying of this debt, for the blotting out of sins; it can only pronounce a curse on men because of their transgressions of it (Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:10-11). Thus the law is reckoned as being "against us . . . contrary to us." But when Jesus died upon the cross, shedding His blood for the remission of sins, He nailed the law to the cross in the sense of cancelling the debt that it requires of all transgressors. This is evidently the basic teaching of Colossians 2:13-14. The "having forgiven our trespasses" (verse 13) is equivalent to the "having blotted out the bond written in ordinances" (verse 14). No violence at all, then, is done to Paul's meaning when we affirm that the sacrificial death of Christ in "blotting out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us" is the same as His sacrificial death in blotting out our sins.

It is interesting to consider here that another Greek word for cancelling a debt is chiazō. This word literally means "mark with two lines crossing like a capital X (the Greek letter chi)." In cancelling a debt this letter was written right across the document. In the papyri there is an example of its use in a document in which an Egyptian governor gives orders that a bond should be cancelled, "crossed out (chiazesthai)." We must notice that Paul did not say Jesus "crossed out" (chiazō) the indebtedness involved in our transgressions of divine law, but rather "blotted it out" (exaleipho), completely obliterated it. Crossing it out would still make our sins visible, but Jesus has completely obliterated our sins forever. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalms 103:12). "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). Cf. Isaiah 1:18.

A little boy was once puzzled about sins being blotted out, and said, "I cannot think of what becomes of sins God forgives, mother."

"Why, Charlie, can you tell me where are the figures you wrote in your slate yesterday?"

"I washed them all out, mother."

"And where are they, then?"

"Why, they are nowhere; they are all gone," replied Charlie.

"Just so it is with the believer's sins--they are all gone, blotted out, remembered no more."

Are we striving with the Lord's help to grant the same kind of forgive-ness to others as our Father grants us? The man who says that he has forgiven some injury done him by another, but insists that he will always remember the injury, has not really manifested genuine Christlike for-giveness. Let all of us who have had our sins blotted out by God's grace through Christ's blood strive always to grant to others the Christlike forgiveness that truly forgets the sins they commit against us.

## Call

The word "call" is from the Greek kaleo. The noun "calling" is from klesis, and the adjective "called" is from kletos. One of the greatest and most basic themes of the New Testament is the conception of God's calling of men, and it is with this conception that these three words deal.

In secular Greek the verb kaleo has four main usages, all of which throw light on its use in the New Testament.

1. Kaleo is the common verb for "calling" a person, place, or thing by name. Homer speaks of a "hundred-handed monster whom the gods call Briareus" (Illiad 1.393). In a papyrus of A. D. 260 is found the phrase "a necklace of the kind called maniaces." In the New Testament we note the following references: ". . . thou shalt call his name JESUS" (Matthew 1:21); "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9); ". . . to be called of men, Rabbi" (Matthew 23:7); ". . . he went into a city called Nain" (Luke 7:11). Those who heed the call of God enjoy the great honor of being called the sons of God: "I will call that my people, which was not my people; And her beloved, that was not beloved. And it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, There shall they be called sons of the living God" (Romans 9:25-26). Cf. Acts 11:26; James 2:7; 1 Peter 4:16.

2. Kaleo is the common verb for "calling" or "summoning" a person. An example of this usage in classical Greek is Homer, Odyssey 11.348, "Telemachus called her to the storeroom." In the New Testament it is used for the calling to a task; for instance, "'For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. " (Matthew 25:14). It is also used in reference to a reward given a laborer: ". . . the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and pay them their hire" (Matthew 20:8).

3. Kaleo is the common verb for "calling" a guest to one's house or inviting a person to a repast. An example of this usage in classical Greek is Herodotus, History IX.16, "Thersander told me that he was himself among those invited to the feast." It is interesting to note here that the past participle passive ho keklemenos and the adjective ho kletos can both by themselves be translated as "the guest." An example of this is in the Septuagint version of 1 Kings 1:49, "And all the guests (hoi kletoi) of Adonijah were afraid." In the New Testament kaleo is rendered as "call" in reference to those invited to the wedding feast (Matthew 22:3). It is also rendered as "bidden" in reference to the invitation Simon the Pharisee had given to Jesus to dine with him (Luke 7:39), in reference to the humble and conceited who were invited to a feast (Luke 14:8), and in reference to those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). See also 1 Corinthians 10:27.

4. Kaleo is the common verb for summoning or bringing a person into a court of law. This is a familiar usage in classical Greek, especially in the writings of the dramatist Aristophanes. It is the word used when one is summoned before a court to stand trial and to give an account of his actions. In the New Testament it is used in reference to Peter and John being summoned to appear before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:18) and to Paul being summoned before Felix to face his Jewish accusers (Acts 24:2).

The foregoing uses of kaleo shed light on what the call of God means to the Christian. Carefully note the following considerations:

1. The call of God is a summons to Christian living. The Christian is urged time and time again in the New Testament to walk in manner that is worthy of his divine calling; for example, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to talk worthily of the calling (klesios) where-with ye were called" (Ephesians 4:1). See 1 Corinthians 7:17. The Christian is called to follow Christ: "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). The Christian is called to sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:7). In answering this call he will lead a holy life (1 Peter 1:15). All Christians have been "called to be saints" (Romans 1:7). The word "saint" is from the Greek hagios, literally meaning "separated." The call of God, then, is to a life separated from the world and consecrated to God. The saint is one whose life is God-oriented. In living a holy life the saint or Christian will be counted "worthy of his calling" (2 Thessalonians 1:11). In so living he will truly make his "calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

2. The call of God is a summons to privilege and honor. Kaleo and klesios are intimately associated with the invitation to a feast, and the call of God to men is the call to enjoy the privilege of feasting on the spiritual food and drink given by the great Benefactor. Read Luke 14:15-24. To answer the invitation to this feast is to receive from God life's greatest honor. Indeed, the divine call the faithful Christian has answered and continues to answer is described as "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Php 3:14). See 1 John 3:1.

3. The call of God is a call to judgment. Kaleo and klesios are also intimately associated with being summoned before a judge or court. The Christian who has answered God's call to duty, privilege, and honor shall some day be summoned to appear before Him in judgment, when the great King will give him his final call, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Carefully read Matthew 25:31-40.

There are some other important matters we must deal with concerning this concept of "the call of God."

1. The call of God is associated with salvation. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called" (1 Timothy 6:12). ". . . God; who saved us, and called us with a holy calling" (2 Timothy 1:9). Cf. Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:9. One who enjoys the salvation to which God calls men has been called out of the darkness of sin into the light of righteousness (1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 1:13). He has been called to the glory of Christ and God (2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 5:10).

2. The call of God is associated with divine grace. ". . . him that called you in the grace of Christ" (Galatians 1:6). "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who . . . called me through his grace"

(Galatians 1:15). The call of God comes to us not on the basis of our merits but solely on the basis of divine grace, the unmerited favor of God and Christ.

3. The call of God is associated with peace. "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body" (Colossians 3:15). God's call is not to confusion but out of confusion not to turmoil but out of turmoil. It is the call to "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Php 4:7).

4. The call of God is associated with divine fellowship. "God is faith-ful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:9). This fellowship (Greek *koinonia*) the Chris-tian enjoys with Christ is the sharing of His nature, power, and blessings. Cf. 1 John 1:5-7.

5. The call of God is associated with freedom. "For ye, brethren, were called to freedom"(Galatians 5:13). To answer God's call is not to find slavery but glorious freedom--freedom from sin and Satan, freedom to love, to serve, to be happy!

6. The call of God is associated with hope. ". . . as also ye were called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). One who answers the call of God receives the living hope of final and complete victory through Christ. No longer does he live in the pessimism and despair of sin, but in the glorious expectation that his new life in Christ will continue throughout all eternity.

#### Questions

How is *exaleipho* used in classical Greek and the Koine?

Discuss the use of *exaleipho* in Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4 and Revelation 3:5.

What is the connection between the use of *exaleipho* in Acts 3:19 and Colossians 2:14?

Discuss the four main usages of *kaleo* in both secular Greek and the New Testament.

What does the call of God mean to the Christian?

What are some other important matters involved in the concept of "the call of God"?

## Chapter Nine--Cheerful, Cherish

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### Lesson Nine CHEERFUL, CHERISH

#### Cheerful

The Greek word for cheerful is *hilaros*, used only once in the New Testament. It is the derivation of the English word "hilarious." It signifies that readiness of mind, that joyful and gracious attitude, which is prompt to do anything. Webster defines "cheerful" as "full of cheer; gleeful; joyous; also, ungrudging, hearty."

In a papyrus of the fourth century A. D. *hilaros* is used to describe the bright color of gold that has been cast into a furnace. In another papyrus it is used as a proper name, *Hilara*. In the Septuagint version of Psalms 104:15 the verb *hilaruna* translates a Hebrew word meaning "to cause to shine." Cheerful people have indeed happy dispositions that can well be described by the bright color of molten gold. They are indeed worthy of the name *Hilara*, Cheerful. They have indeed allowed God to make them shine, to create in them a radiant disposition.

Casting light on the meaning of *hilaros* is its use in two quotations from the Shepherd of Hermas: "Why are you downcast, Hermas? for you were wont to be patient and temperate, and always smiling. Why are you so gloomy and not cheerful?" (Vision 1.2, 3); "With cheerful countenance did she depart, and as she went, she said to me, 'Behave like a Man 1:1,(VisionHermas".4, 3). Cheerful people have a smiling, not gloomy, disposition. They have a cheerful, not cheerless, countenance.

Let us now consider the sole New Testament passage in which *hilaros* is used: "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The apostle makes it plain that the opposite of the cheerful giver is the one who gives grudgingly, or of necessity. The word "grudgingly" in the Greek is *lupe*, meaning "grief, sorrow." So the cheerless giver gives of grief or sorrow, unsmilingly, unhappily, with the feeling of tragedy, as if his giving is loss rather than gain.

The Greek word for "necessity" is *anagke*, meaning "under compulsion." The cheerless giver gives not because he wants to but because he has to. It may be that he gives because of pressure put on him by others. Cf. Luke 18:2-5. It may be that he gives because of the constraint of what he feels to be a legal requirement of divine revelation. But in either case his giving is not done freely and willingly. Paul re-requested that Philemon accept his runaway slave Onesimus back in his household because he would freely desire to do so, not merely because it was his cold duty to do so: "But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will" (Philemon 1:14). And the goodness of Christian giving is always that of free will, of unbounding willingness. Such giving is truly cheerful giving.

Concerning divinely acceptable giving, Clement of Alexandria said, "See then, first, that he has not commanded you to be solicited or to wait to be importuned, but yourself to see those who are to be

benefited. . . .Excellent accordingly also is the apostle's saying, 'For the Lord loveth a cheerful giver,' who delights in giving, and spares not, sowing that he may also reap, without murmuring, and disputing, and regret, which is pure beneficence."

In the apocryphal Septuagint the grace of cheerful giving is beautifully expressed: "In all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness. Give unto the Most High according as he hath enriched thee; and as thou hast gotten give with a cheerful eye. For the Lord recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as much" (Sir 25:9-11).

When Paul observes that "God loveth a cheerful giver," he does not deny the love God has for all men, including cheerless givers. But he does affirm that the love God has for the cheerful giver is a very special kind of love, the love that declares His approval of them, that expresses His admiration for them because in their giving they are like Him, the gracious Giver of all good gifts. Cf. the Septuagint of Proverbs 22:9, "God blesses a cheerful (hilaron) and liberal man."

Gracious, warmhearted people do not enjoy receiving a gift, no matter how valuable it may be, that is forced and constrained. And God will not approve or commend what His children give Him unless it is given joyously and willingly. He desires not only liberal giving but also gracious hearts.

Notice some characteristics of the Christian who is a cheerful giver:

1. He has a heart free from covetousness. Covetousness is the attitude of greediness or avarice, the desire to have more than one's rightful share. The covetous person believes that the abundant life consists in what one possesses and not in what he gives; he believes that it is more blessed to receive than to give. But the cheerful giver believes that the abundant life consists in liberality, openheartedness, unselfishness, concern for God's work and the needs of others. He believes that the higher blessedness of life is not in receiving but in giving. See Acts 20:35.
2. He is grateful for the blessings he has received from God. The cheerful giver is ever mindful of the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's only begotten Son, which has made possible his freedom from sin (John 3:16). He is ever mindful of the continual blessings, both spiritual and physical, that flow to him from the bountiful hand of his Father (James 1:17). Being grateful for the manifold blessings he has received from God, he finds it easy and joyous to give to God what rightfully should be dedicated to His service.
3. He loves God and men. Love always motivates cheerful giving. When we love someone, we want to please him, to serve him, to do for him. We never find it hard to sacrifice for those whom we love. So one who truly loves God and men, cheerfully gives of his means to glorify God and to bless men.
4. He is dependent on the grace of God. In appealing to the Corinthian Christians concerning their responsibility and privilege of giving to the Lord, thus to benefit their poverty-stricken brethren, the apostle Paul pointed them to the example of the Macedonian Christians: "More-over, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the; churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellow-ship in the ministering to the saints: and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave

their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God" (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). Notice in this citation the relationship between the grace of God given the Macedonian Christians and their joyful, liberal giving. It was not by main strength and awkwardness that they so graciously gave to the Lord, but by the outworking of the grace of God which had flowed into their hearts. Their dependence for acceptable giving was not on themselves but on God. They were truly converted to the Lord, having first given themselves to Him. And all others who are truly converted to the Lord, no matter how poor they may be, always find through God's grace the power for cheerful, liberal giving. Such giving is always a manifestation of God's grace in them.

Then, too, we must recognize that the truly converted Christian, who loves God and is grateful for His blessings, gives cheerfully and liberally because he knows that he will be the recipient of divine grace for higher and more fruitful living. Carefully read 2 Corinthians 9:8-12. Once any Christian is convinced that cheerful, liberal giving will always result in the grace of God for increasingly abundant living, there will be no "stew" in his stewardship of the manifold grace of God.

A word closely akin to *hilaros* is the noun *hilarotes*, meaning "cheerfulness, gladness, graciousness." In the New Testament it is used only in Romans 12:8, ". . . he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." Cheerfulness describes the attitude of the cheerful person. It must characterize every act of mercy the Christian renders others. As God loves the cheerful giver, so also He loves everyone who extends mercy to others with cheerfulness. "Wherefore put on cheerfulness, which always is agreeable and acceptable to, God, and rejoice in it" (Shepherd of Hermias, Commandments X.2, 6)

### Cherish

The word "cherish" is one of the most beautiful, meaningful words in the New Testament. It is from the Greek *thalpo*, primarily meaning "to heat or warm." In classical Greek this meaning is quite common; for example, "And this moment the bow was in the hands of Eurmachus, who was warming it by the fire" (Homer, *Odyssey* XXI.179). Metaphorically "deceiving," means *thalpo* "to soften by as in the writings of Aristophanes. In the writings of Sophocles it is used to describe the inflaming or heating of passion. It is also used metaphorically with the meaning of "comfort or cherish," as in the writings of Theocritus. An example of the use of the noun *thalpore*, comfort or consolation, is Homer, *Iliad* 1.167, where Andromache cries out to her husband Hector who is ready to go into combat against Achilles, "It would be better for me, should I lose you, to comfort the dead and buried, I shall have nothing left to bring me when you are gone, save sorrow."

*Thalpo* is used only twice in the New Testament. Its first occurrence is in Ephesians 5:29, quoted here with the preceding verse: "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church." In his use here of *thalpo*, cherish, Paul may have both its literal and meta-phorical meanings in mind. Certainly, the man who loves his own body will provide for its warmth, as he is able, by furnishing himself with suitable clothing and shelter. And if he loves his own wife as his own body, he will provide the means of keeping her body warm. But far more important than the physical comfort he provides her is the spiritual and mental comfort he gives her to keep her heart warm. It is interesting to note here that in a papyrus of the sixth century A. D. there is a marriage contract in which a husband undertakes to "love, cherish, and serve" his wife. These words are virtually literally incorporated in many modern

wedding ceremonies. Every Christian husband who reads this is asked to recall the nuptial vows he made before the wedding altar. In effect, did you not promise to love, cherish, and serve your wife? Are you keeping this promise? Are you as solicitous for the welfare of your wife as for your own body? Do you lovingly labor not only to keep her body warm, but also to keep her heart warm by the courtesy, consideration and encouragement you constantly extend her? Paul says that the husband is to show the same concern for his wife that Christ shows for the church. He who gave Himself for the church is tenderly, lovingly solicitous for its every need. See Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 5:25-27. And so must Christian husbands imitate His concern for the church as they lovingly cherish their wives.

The one other use of *thalpo* in the New Testament is in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, quoted here with the next verse: "But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us." Paul declares that he and his co-workers had the same attitude toward their Thessalonian brethren as a nursing mother has toward her own children. The word "gentle" is from the Greek *epios* which is commonly used of the kindness of parents toward their children.

As a loving mother nurses her offspring with gentleness, so Paul and his fellow workers nurtured their brethren in the same gentle spirit. They cherished them in feeding them the word of God, just as a nursing mother cherishes her children in providing them with the milk of her breast.

Why does the loving mother cherish her children? Because they are dear to her. And Paul and his co-workers cherished their brethren in Thessalonica, treating them with gentleness, because, to use the apostle's own words, "Ye were become very dear to us."

We are reminded here of the use of *thalpo* in the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 22:16, where the description is made of birds covering their young with feathers. This figure is made memorable by our Lord's mournful words over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). Even though the Lord's offer of care and protection was refused by the subborn, recalcitrant Jews, yet His tender, solicitous feeling for them was essentially the same as that of a clucking hen for her tiny chickens. This was the attitude of Paul and his co-workers toward their brethren, and it must be the attitude of all other Christians who would please their Lord. When we truly love our brethren, we will deal with them gently, graciously, and patiently, cherishing them as our Lord does.

#### Questions

Discuss the use of *hilaros* in the papyri, the Septuagint, and the Shepherd of Hermas.

What is meant by a cheerful giver? Why does the Lord love such a giver?

Discuss some of the characteristics of the Christian who is a cheerful giver.

How is *thalpo* used in classical Greek?

How are Christian husbands to cherish their wives?

How did Paul and co-workers cherish their Thessalonian brethren?

What should be our attitude toward our brethren?

## Chapter Ten--Church, Citizenship

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### Lesson Ten CHURCH, CITIZENSHIP

Church No complete agreement exists among Biblical scholars concerning the derivation of the word "church." Most of them believe that it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon circe, which in turn can be traced back to the Greek kuriakon, the Lord's house, from kurios, lord, master; kuros power, supreme authority. Others, however, connect it with the Middle English kirke, from the Latin circus, circulus (Greek kuklos, circle), because the congregations were gathered in circles. Be that as it may, in the New Testament the word "church" is translated from ekklesia, which many authorities believe is from ek, out, and klesis, a calling.

The word ekklesia was first used in Athens to refer to the convened assemblies of the people, of which there were two kinds: the ordinary (kuriai ekklesiai) and the extraordinary. Eventually ekklesia was used to designate the lawful assembly in any free Greek city of all those possessed of the rights of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs. "That they were summoned is expressed in the latter part of the word; that they were summoned out of the whole population, a select portion of it, including neither the populace, nor strangers, nor yet those who had forfeited their civic rights, this is expressed in the first. Both the calling (the klesis, Php 3:14; 2 Timothy 1:9), and the calling out (the ekloge, Romans 11:7; 2 Peter 1:10) , are moments to be remembered, when the word is assumed into a higher Christian sense, for in them the chief part of its peculiar adaptation to its august uses lies" (Richard Trench).

An example of the use of ekklesia during the classical Greek period is found in Herodotus, History 142, where Maeandrius of Samos "called an assembly of all the citizens." Another example is Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War 60, where Pericles of Athens is reported to have said, "If our assembly have the purpose called of a reminding you upon certain points." Cf. Euripides, Orestes 939. Adolph Deismann has emphasized the significance of the fact that the Latin-speaking people of the West, to whom Christianity came, did not translate ekklesia, but simply transliterated it into ecclesia, and used it in the same way. He cites an interesting bilingual inscription of A.D. 103-4, found in the theater at Ephesus, which refers to a gift by a Roman official of a silver image of Artemis and other statues. The inscription orders that these statues are to be set upon their pedestals at every ecclesia, assembly, of the city in the theater. It is obvious that to the Greeks and Romans alike the word meant a convened or summoned assembly. This meaning was not lost in the New Testament. In Acts 19:39 the town-clerk of Ephesus is recorded as saying, "But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly (ekklesia)." Cf. Acts 19:32; Acts 19:41.

The word ekklesia was also familiar in the Jewish Greek-speaking world. In the Septuagint it is very common, occurring over seventy times. It refers to the community of Israel, God's called-out people of the Old Testament, whether assembled or not. In some instances it is translated as "congregation" and in others as "assembly." See Deuteronomy 18:16; Judges 20:2; 1 Kings 8:14; Leviticus 10:17; Numbers 1:16. There is one instance in the New Testament where ekklesia is

rendered as "church" to designate the entire community of Israel: "the church in the wilder-ness" (Acts 7:38). Who can deny that the Jews were the church of God , even though the term "church" is not found in certain English versions of the Old Testament? The Jews were indeed God's ekklesia, church, under the Old Testament, just as Christians are indeed God's ekklesia, church , under the New Testament.

The followers of Christ, Christians, are those who have been sum-moned by God through Christ to assemble before Him. They are always assembled in His presence when they heed His word and do His will, wherever they are at all times, and not only when they are assembled together for public worship (Hebrews 10:25). Thus in keeping with the original meaning of ekklesia, it is proper to refer to the New Testament church as the New Testament assembly.

Notice three different ways in which ekklesia is used in the New Testament in reference to those whom Christ has summoned from the world to serve God.

1. It means the universal church. Jesus had this concept in mind when He declared, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). He refers here to all men of every age, race, and country who have answered His call through the gospel, to the sum total of His disciples throughout all ages of the Christian dispensation. Other New Testament references to the ekklesia as the universal church are 1 Corinthians 10:32; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 3:21; Php 3:6.

2. It means a local church or congregation, a company of Christians banded together in a particular locality. An example of this meaning is 1 Corinthians 1:2, ". . . the church of God which is at Corinth." The sum total of the congregations of God's people constitute "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). See Revelation 1:4. Php 1:1 de-scribes a congregation that is organized according to the divine pattern: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Cf. Acts 14:23. See Romans 16:1; Galatians 1:2.

3. It means the assembly of a congregation in any particular place. The purpose of such an assembly may be to worship God (1 Corinthians 11:18-34; 1 Corinthians 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:23) or to do anything else that is necessary in obeying the Lord, as is suggested by Matthew 18:17 in connection with 1 Corinthians 5:4-5.

The New Testament portrays the church in three relationships.

1. It is referred to as belonging to Christ. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." It is His church by right of purchase: ". . . the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). See Ephesians 5:25. The church is portrayed as Christ's body (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Colossians 1:24). It is through the faithful members of His body, who subject themselves to the divine head, that Jesus acts. When members of the body, the church, speak and work for Christ, it is Christ Himself who is speaking and working. Cf. Galatians 2:20.

2. It is referred to as belonging to God. ". . . the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2). See 2 Corinthians 1:1; Gala-tians 1:13; 1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Timothy 3:15. The church belongs to the Father as well as to His Son Jesus Christ because it is He who gave to the world the supreme gift of His only begotten Son to make possible the existence of the church. Were it not for His love

for mankind there would be no church. See John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. Jesus Himself declared in a prayer to God, "All things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them" (John 17:10). See 1 Thessalonians 2:14.

3. It is referred to in terms of its human composition. The church is composed of people, human beings. It is not an institution but a living organism, "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5). Thus the church is often portrayed in the New Testament in terms of the people who compose it. In 1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul speaks of "the church of the Thessalonians," meaning the local congregation composed of inhabitants of Thessalonica. In 1 Corinthians 14:33 he speaks of "all the churches of the saints," meaning all the local congregations composed of saints. In Romans 16:4 he speaks of "all the churches of the Gentiles," meaning all the congregations composed of Gentiles. Consistency demands that those who insist that the phrase "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16) is divine authority for giving the church a name must also insist the same concerning such phrases as "church of the Thessalonians," "churches of all the saints," and "churches of the Gentiles." But, in fact, the divinely inspired scriptures do not give the church a name as such, but merely described it in terms of its ownership and composition. Such phrases, then, as "churches of Christ" and "churches of the saints" are not names, but simply descriptive expressions portraying different relationships of the New Testament ekklesia.

The limitation of space will not permit us to discuss all the facets of New Testament teaching concerning the ekklesia. But one last point is to be noted. In our teaching and preaching we must never present the church to the world as perfect in fact but only in divine design. It is most assuredly God's desire that the church be completely devoid of sin and error, but such is never the case in reality. The church is composed of people, human beings; and people are never infallible, never perfect, but always fallible and imperfect in themselves. We do the cause of Christ great injury when we make the church the central theme of our teaching and preaching, virtually claiming infallibility and perfection for ourselves in the slogans we parade before the world: "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent;" "We are scriptural in teaching and practice;" etc. If we would be faithful children of God we must present the perfect, infallible Christ to the world, laboring diligently to convert sinners to Him rather than to the church, which is composed of imperfect, fallible souls whose hope is not in their own merits or goodness but solely in the merits and goodness of the sinless Son of God. If we convert men to the church, we convert them to weak, frail human beings who are powerless to save, who at their very best are unprofitable servants of God. But if we convert them to Christ, we convert them to Him who has all power to save, who is "wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

#### Citizenship

"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Php 3:20). The word "citizenship" in this passage is from the Greek politeuma, literally meaning "common-wealth, state." An inscription has been found at Pompeii, of Egyptian origin, 3 B. C., is "employed which of an association politeuma of Phrygians whom we must suppose to have resided in some Egyptian town or district in the employment of their own laws, religion, and administration of justice" (Moulton and Milligan). Arndt and Gingrich state that this word often denotes a colony of foreigners. Many commentators would translate Php 3:20 as follows: "We are

a colony of heaven." M. Dibelius' free rendering is: "Our home is in heaven, and here on earth we are a colony of heavenly citizens." The sense which Paul most likely had in mind is rendered by Thayer: "the commonwealth whose citizens we are." The apostle contrasts this description with that of the preceding verse, which portrays those who "mind earthly things." The faithful Christian knows that his eternal abiding place or home is not this transitory world but heaven. In the world he is but a stranger, living in temporary exile. His commonwealth is heaven. Longing to enter into the possession all the privileges of his heavenly home, earthly things have no attraction for him, and he unceasingly seeks to live in harmony with his high destiny. His treasures are not earthly but heavenly; therefore his heart is in heaven and not in the world (Matthew 6:19-21). Unlike those whose only treasures are earthly, who mind earthly things, he obeys the divine injunction, ". . . seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). See Galatians 4:26; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 11:13-16; Hebrews 12:22.

A word akin to *politeuma* is *politeuo*, translated as "manner of life" in Php 1:27, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." A footnote in the American Standard Version says, "Behave as citizens worthily." In the papyri *politeuo* (*politeuomai*) is used in the sense of "I live the life of a citizen;" "I live the life of a member of a citizen body." Paul's meaning is that Christians should constantly be aware of their heavenly citizenship and thus so conduct themselves that they will exalt and glorify the gospel of Christ.

The word "citizenship" is found in one other New Testament passage: "And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, "But I am a Roman born" (Acts 22:28). The Greek word used here is *politeia*, signifying the relation in which a citizen stands to the State, the condition of a citizen, citizenship. The reference in this passage is to citizenship in the Roman Empire, a legal privilege enjoyed by the chief captain and Paul.

## Questions

How was the word *ekklēsia* used in the ancient Greek world?

In what sense was the community of Israel the *ekklēsia*, church, of God in the Old Testament?

Discuss three ways in which *ekklēsia* is used in the New Testament in reference to the Lord's people.

What are the relationships in which *ekklēsia* is portrayed in the New Testament?

What is the difference between the church as it is divinely designed and as it actually exists?

Discuss the use of *politeuma* in Php 3:20.

How is *politeuo* used in Php 1:27?

## Chapter Eleven--Comforter, Coming

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### Lesson Eleven COMFORTER, COMING

#### Comforter

The Greek word rendered as "Comforter" in the New Testament is *parakletos*. In the passive sense it originally meant "one who is called to someone's aid." In the few places where the word is found outside the New Testament it mainly has the meaning of "one who appears in another's behalf, mediator, intercessor, advocate, pleader, a friend of the accused person who is called to speak to his character or otherwise enlist the sympathy of the judges." In one New Testament passage it is rendered by the word "Advocate," designating Christ: "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Christ is described here as the Christian's Helper, Friend, or Advocate in pleading his cause before the heavenly Father. In the intimate, personal relationship the apostles enjoyed with Christ during His earthly ministry, He was truly their Comforter or Helper. When the time came near for His departure from the earth, He promised them another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would take His place in their lives so that they would not be alone in the world like fatherless children: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate [orphanous, orphans]: I come unto you" (John 14:16-18). The Holy Spirit given to the apostles was, in fact, the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to them: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

The Holy Spirit was the apostles' Comforter and Helper primarily in inspiring them with the divine word and in bearing witness concerning Christ: "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:26); "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me" (John 15:26). See John 16:7-15. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, not only revealed to the apostles the divine word and bore witness concerning Christ, but He was also the agency through which God's providence worked in their lives to accomplish His purpose (Acts 16:6-15; Php 1:19). Since Jesus dwelt in the apostles through the Spirit, Paul's utterance in Php 4:13 tacitly affirms that the Spirit was the dynamic that made possible their loyalty to Christ during all the trials of life: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

There can be no valid argument against the plain promise of Christ that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, was to dwell in the apostles: "He abideth in you, and shall be in you." But does He dwell in Christians today? Indeed so! Is He still the Comforter of Christians? Indeed so! Although Jesus was speaking directly to the apostles when He declared that the Holy Spirit would be with them "for ever" (John 14:16), these words cannot limit the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to the apostles but must include the Lord's disciples in every age. The promise in the great commission

of the abiding presence of the Lord was also spoken directly to the apostles (Matthew 28:16-20), but it is just as applicable to Christians in every age as the promise of the indwelling Comforter.

It is true that the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in the Christian unless the word of God dwells in him, since there can be no knowledge concerning the Spirit apart from the divine word and since one cannot have the Spirit of God who rejects the word of God. Cf. Ephesians 5:13; Colossians 3:16. But the foregoing conclusion in no way denies the fact of the real presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, in the Christian. The Christian needs more than knowledge concerning the Spirit and His will; he also needs the Spirit Himself. The dynamic of Christian living is not in merely knowing about the Spirit and His will, but in knowing Him personally. And to know the Spirit personally is to know God and Christ since the latter dwell in the Christian through the Spirit (Romans 8:9-10; Ephesians 2:22; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13).

There are those, however, who know about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who are striving by their own strength alone to obey the divine will, but who do not actually know or experience the divine presence in their lives. They are spiritually impoverished and empty. Jesus declared, "Apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). To repeat the words of Paul in Php 4:13, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." The apostle also said, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). One might have a full understanding of the word of God, try hard in his own strength alone to obey its commands and to follow its examples, and yet not possess the power or dynamic for the enriched Christian life spoken of in Ephesians 3:16-20, made possible by the indwelling Spirit: ". . . that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

The Holy Spirit in the Christian has well been described as the strengthening and enabling presence of Christ. He gives the Christian no new revelation but makes possible the understanding of the revelation once and for all delivered to the saints and the translation of it into abundant Christian living. Indeed, whatever the Christian needs, whether temporal or spiritual, is made possible by the indwelling Spirit. After referring to the liberality of the Philippian Christians in supplying certain of his needs, Paul said, "And my God shall supply every need of yours" (Php 4:19). 2 Corinthians 9:8 attributes the all sufficiency of God's provisions for His faithful children to His grace: "And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in every-thing, may abound unto every good work." But God and His grace in the Christian, providing for his every need, are made real by the indwelling Spirit, who is described as "the Spirit of God" (1 John 4:2) and "the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29).

The providential aid of the indwelling Comforter or Helper, the Holy Spirit, is elaborated upon in the eighth chapter of Romans. After the writer Paul establishes the fact of the presence of the Spirit in the Christian (verses 9-11), he subsequently declares, "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are

called according to his purpose. . . . If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (verses 26-28, 31, 32). Please carefully and reverently read these words again. Paul affirms that the Spirit who dwells in us helps us in our infirmity or weakness, making intercession for us. Because God has not forsaken us (Hebrews 13:5-6), but is really and actually present in the Spirit, all the circumstances of life are working for our good so that no earthly power can defeat us. From God through His Spirit we freely receive the power to do His will, to be faithful to Him whatever our lot in life may be.

The promise given to every baptized believer of the indwelling Comforter or Helper is plainly expressed in Acts 2:38, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Those who are baptized have already received the divine word, according to verse 41, but in addition to this they now receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is simply another way of saying, "the Holy Spirit as a gift." See Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; Romans 5:5.

Another passage that distinguishes between divine revelation and the Holy Spirit in their relationship to the Christian is 2 Timothy 1:14, "That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us." The "good thing" which Paul says was committed unto Timothy was "the pattern of sound words" or word of God, mentioned in the preceding verse. The Holy Spirit was to be the enabling power for Timothy to guard the word of God, and so also is He the same power for all others who have received Him. Some other passages which affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit in God's children are Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 4:30.

Does it make any difference whether or not the Christian believes that the Holy Spirit dwells in him? Indeed so! Next to the realization that he has been bought with the price of the precious blood of Christ, he can find no greater incentive for holy living than the awareness of the indwelling Spirit. Notice carefully 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." When the Christian seriously, reverently realizes that he has been bought by Christ's blood and that the Holy Spirit dwells in his body, he will not use that body to serve sin but to serve righteousness.

Coming The word used in the New Testament to designate the second advent of Christ is *parousia*, translated as "coming." The use of this word in secular Greek sheds light on its New Testament usage. It simply means the presence or arrival of someone or something. Plato wrote "Are not the good good because they have good present with them" (*Gorgias* 497). In the papyri *parousia* is used in such expressions as "the repair of what has been swept away requires his presence;" "we await your coming." A similar use of *parousia* is found in the New Testament. Paul speaks of his bodily presence as being weak (2 Corinthians 10:10). He rejoices at the coming of Titus (2 Corinthians 7:6). He urges the Philippian Christians to be as obedient to God's word during his absence as they were during his presence (Php 2:12).

Above all, *parousia* describes the second coming of Christ, when His presence with men will again be realized (Matthew 24:3; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:4; 2

Peter 3:12; 1 John 2:28).

A brief study of the contemporary secular use of parousia will indicate what kind of picture the second coming of Christ conveyed to the minds of the early Christians and what it must also convey to our minds. In the papyri and in Hellenistic Greek parousia is the technical term to denote the "visit" of a king, emperor, or other person in authority. A papyrus describes the Serapheum Twins laying their grievances before King Ptolemy Philometer and Queen Cleopatra on the occasion of their visit to Memphis. The official character of the visit of a person in authority was often emphasized by the taxes or payment that were exacted to make preparation for it. One document refers to the contributions for a crown to be presented the king on his "arrival (parousias)." A certain Appenneus writes that he has prepared for "the visit (parousian) of Chrysippus" by laying in a number of birds for his consumption. A papyrus tells of "the 80 artabae of wheat for the supplies imposed in connexion with the king's visit."

He who has been made both Lord and Christ, who now sits on the throne of His kingdom, will some day come again (Acts 2:29-36; Acts 1 Corin-thians 15:23-25). His will not be an ordinary coming, but the parousia of the King of kings and Lord of lords, worthy of the most careful preparation His subjects can possibly make. Nothing is more plainly taught and more highly featured in the New Testament than the second coming of Christ. Do you really believe He is coming again? Are you really making serious, diligent preparation for His return?

Not only is the realization of the presence of Deity in the Holy Spirit an incentive for godly living, but also the realization that King Jesus is coming again. Note how the apostle Paul connects upright living with love of the Lord's appearing or second coming: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). When the Christian seriously considers the eventual return of Christ--that He is coming at a time no one knows and that He will receive unto Himself only those who trust in Him and love Him--he is made cognizant of the necessity of being continually prepared for this great eventuality. See Mark 13:33; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:10-14.

Not only does the Christian's realization of the second coming of Christ give him an incentive for holy living, but it also gives him great comfort and hope. After discussing the second coming of Christ, Paul exhorts, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). Belief in Christ's return is indeed a comfort to His disciples. With this belief, the loss of loved ones who have died in the faith brings no lasting sorrow. With this belief, the realization that we must eventually die does not fill our hearts with fear and dread. With this belief, the living hope concerning better things to come is made certain. "Which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil" (Hebrews 6:19). "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13). See 1 Peter 1:3-9.

When Jesus revealed to His apostles information concerning His impending departure from the earth, they were at first saddened by the news. What would become of them if their Leader, Master, and Friend were to leave them? But Jesus immediately comforted them, instilling hope in

their hearts by promising to come again: "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). How wonderfully heart-warming and soul-thrilling is the inspiring thought of our Lord's second coming, to know that if we have maintained a living faith in Him we shall actually see our beloved Saviour face to face and be received by Him to be conformed to the body of His glory! "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (1 John 3:2).

How Christ is coming again is discussed in Matthew 16:27; Matthew 26:64; Acts 1:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7. Why Christ is coming again is discussed in Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 15:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10; Jude 1:14-15.

### Questions

What is the meaning of parakletos?

Why do we know that the Lord's promise to send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to His apostles is applicable to the Lord's disciples in every age?

Discuss the indwelling Spirit as the dynamic of Christian living.

Discuss the providential aid of the indwelling Spirit.

How is the word parousia used in secular Greek?

What use does Paul make of the word in 2 Corinthians 7:6; 2 Corinthians 10:10; Php 2:12?

Discuss the use of parousia in the papyri and Hellenistic Greek to describe the visit of a king, emperor, or other person of authority.

Why is belief in the second coming of Christ an incentive for holy living? Why does this belief give the Christian comfort and hope?

## Chapter Twelve--Compel, Confirm

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### Lesson Twelve

#### COMPEL, CONFIRM

##### Compel

One of the Greek words rendered as "compel" in the New Testament is *aggareuo*, meaning "press into service, force, compel." It is found in three passages: Matthew 5:41; Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21.

The word is of Persian origin, from the noun *aggaros*, meaning "courier." In Herodotus, History 111.26 is found one of the earliest uses of *aggaros*: "There was a courier sent to him by Darius whose message was not to his mind." The reference here is to a postal arrangement much admired by the Greek historians. On the principal highways stations were established where horses and riders were kept for the purpose of carrying forward the royal mails, on the principle of relays. Herodotus graphically describes it: "Nothing mortal travels as fast as these Persian messengers. The entire plan is a Persian invention; and this is the method of it. Along the whole line of road there are men (they say) stationed with horses, in number equal to the number of days which the journey takes, allowing a man and horse each day; and these men will not be hindered from accomplishing at their best speed the distance which they have to go, either by snow, or rain, or heat, or by the darkness of night. The first rider delivers his dispatch to the second, and the second to the third; and so it is borne from hand to hand along the whole line, like the light in the torch-race, which they celebrate to Vulcan. The Persians give the riding post in this manner the name of *aggarum*" (History VIII.98).

The Persian couriers were empowered in cases of emergency to press into their service any available persons, beasts of burden, or other means of transport. Thus *aggareuo* came to mean "forcibly to impress into service," to compel a person to serve whether it was to his liking or not. In a country occupied by some foreign invader this became extremely burdensome and vexatious to the inhabitants. The conquered people had to endure the bitterest humiliation under such a system, especially when it was widely abused by those in authority. Referring to such humiliation, Epictetus wrote, "You ought to possess your whole body as a poor ass loaded, as long as it is possible, as long as you are allowed. But if there be a press (*aggareia*, and a soldier should lay hold of it, let it go, do not resist, nor murmur; if you do, you will receive blows, and nevertheless you will also lose the ass"

How this *aggareia* was abused can be seen in the regulations that certain government officials made to curb the exercise of it. When King Demetrius of Syria was seeking the good will of the Jews during the time of the Maccabean Jonathan, Josephus says that he offered to "free all those Jews who had been made captives and slaves in my kingdom" and "I also give order that the beasts of the Jews be not pressed (*aggareuo*) for our service" (Antiquities XIII.2, 3). Ptolemy Euergetes II and his queen decreed that his governors and officials "shall not impress any of the

inhabitants of the country for private services, nor requisition (aggareuo) their cattle for any purpose of their own," and that "no one shall requisition (aggareuo) boats for his own use for any pretext whatsoever." In a certain Egyptian temple an inscription was written under the direction of the prefect Capito decreeing that "no one shall take or requisition (aggareuo) anything, unless it has a written authori-zation from me."

The Persian postal arrangement with its power of impressment was adopted by the Romans, who occupied Palestine during the time of Jesus. An example of the assertion of their impressment authority is given in Matthew 27:32, "And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon compelled to go by with name: them, him that they might bear the cross." See also Mark 15:21.

Jesus was entirely aware of the Roman practice of impressment and of the humiliation it caused His people the Jews. However, instead of recommending that they resist any attempt to impress them into service He commanded them to obey those in authority, no matter how humiliat-ing and irksome it might be--even to go beyond the limits of what was demanded of them: "And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two" (Matthew 5:41). The principle contained in this command is repugnant to all who think only of themselves, who are forever basing their actions on their "rights" rather than on their influence for good. But those who believe in the conquering force of love over evil, who consider uppermost their influence for good rather than their "rights," are willing to go the second mile in being of help to others, even when the help is ungraciously demanded. They are willing to undergo any kind of humiliation if by doing so they can manifest the loving spirit of Christ-like service. However, they are not cravenly subservient but lovingly submissive; not acting as slaves but as those who are truly free in Christ--truly free to show forth the gracious, helpful spirit of their Lord. Irenaeus wrote, "And if anyone,' he says, 'shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain,' so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbor, nor regarding their evil institutions, but performing thy kind offices" (Against Heresy XIII.3).

Another Greek word translated as "compel" in the New Testament is anagkazo, meaning "cause or compel someone in all the varying degrees from friendly pressure to forceful compulsion." Being a Greek, Titus was not "compelled" to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3), but the Judaizers "compel" the Galatians to be circumcised (Galatians 6:12); Paul was "compelled" by the church at Corinth to become foolish in speaking of himself (2 Corinthians 12:11); Peter "compelled" the Gentiles to live as Jews (Galatians 2:14).

In some instances anagkazo is translated as "constrain." Jesus "con-strained" the disciples to enter the boat (Matthew 14:22; Mark 6:45); the servants were to "constrain" those in the highways and hedges to come to the feast (Luke 14:23); Paul was "constrained" to appeal to Caesar (Acts 28:19).

Confirm The word "confirm" as considered in this phase of our lesson is from episterizo, meaning "make to lean upon, strengthen (epi, upon, sterix a prop, support).".It is rarely found outside the New Testament. In classical Greek it is used by Aristotle and Lucian. There are no known references to its use in the papyri. It is used only three times in the Septuagint. In the New Testament it is used only in the book of Acts, where it refers to the strengthening and establishing of the disciples of Christ: "And when they [Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch,

confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:21-22); "And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them" (Acts 15:32); "And he [Paul] went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches" (Acts 15:41); "And having spent some time there, he [Paul] departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples" (Acts 18:23).

The reader is requested to carefully study the foregoing passages, noting that they either imply or expressly teach the following:

1. The Need of Strengthening the Disciples. The disciples referred to in Acts who were confirmed or strengthened by such preachers and teachers as Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas were young in the faith, still comparatively babes in Christ. There was the constant danger that they would fail to reach their heavenly goal because of the tribulations they had to face for the sake of Christ; thus they had to be exhorted to "continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." They had to be strengthened against the devil, who constantly sought to destroy them (1 Peter 5:8-10). Being deficient in their spiritual understanding and discernment, they were in danger of being led astray by false teachers (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Peter 2:1-3). They certainly needed all the strength they could possibly receive to withstand every temptation and to abide in Christ, to be faithful to him all their days.

And who in the church today are so spiritually mature that they no longer need strengthening in the faith? Even the best of Christ's disciples need to give heed to Hebrews 3:13, "But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Even those who have already been strengthened or established in the faith need to be continually reminded of their Christian responsibilities and privileges. To such as these Peter wrote, "Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. . . . Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12-13; 2 Peter 1:15).

2. The Means of Strengthening the Disciples. The confirming or strengthening of the early disciples was done through the preaching and teaching of God's word. Surely, those responsible for this significant work presented the ethic of Christ, the rules of Christian living. They surely commanded the disciples to obey the Lord in giving diligence to supply in their faith the graces of virtue, knowledge, self-control, etc. (2 Peter 1:5-7), to be "stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). They surely commanded the disciples to "abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22), to "live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world . . . zealous of good works" (Titus 2:12; Titus 2:14). Surely, everything involved in godly living was revealed to the disciples by those responsible for confirming them.

But in presenting the word of God these faithful teachers and preachers revealed more than the rules of godly living. They also revealed the example of Christ (Matthew 11:29; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21), the grace and power of God through the indwelling Spirit (2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 3:14-20; 2 Timothy 1:14), the need of sincere, unceasing believing prayer (Matthew 21:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:16), and the love that must be the motivation for all good

works (1 Corinthians 13:1-8). In withholding nothing that was profitable (Acts 20:20), they presented to their fellow Christians not only the teaching of God's word concerning the rules and regulations of godly living but also the grace, power, and motivation for such living. And today this is still the only kind of teaching that is calculated to confirm or strengthen the Lord's disciples.

3. The Responsibility of Strengthening the Disciples. God has ordained that the church assume the weighty responsibility of strengthening its members, of helping and encouraging them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:13). See Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24. How well is the church today assuming the responsibility of confirming its members, especially those young in the faith? Are we being as zealous in following the second part of the great commission as we are the first: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20)?

Have we not been far more zealous of making disciples than of strengthening and establishing them once they are made? Have we not often neglected the new disciples, failing to bring to their hearts and minds the unsearchable riches of Christ? Many disciples of Christ either die spiritually or remain perpetually spiritual babes because of the failure of the church to nurture them in the word of God. What a tragic waste of time and effort it is to make disciples and then to let them wither on the vine, so to speak, because of the church's lack of concern for their spiritual needs!

Is the rite of confirmation as practiced by certain religious groups either expressly taught or implied in those passages which speak of teachers and preachers of God's word confirming the disciples? Not at all. As Albert Barnes observed, "The expression 'to confirm' has in some churches a technical signification, denoting 'to admit to the full privileges of a Christian, by the imposition of hands.' It is scarcely necessary to say that the word here refers to no such rite. It has no reference to any imposition of hands, nor to the thing which is usually supposed to be denoted by the rite of confirmation. The truth was that these were young converts; that they were surrounded by enemies, exposed to temptations and to dangers; that they had as yet but slight acquaintance with the truths of the gospel; and that it was therefore important that they should be further instructed in the truth, and established in the faith of the gospel. This is what Paul and Barnabas returned to accomplish. There is not the slightest evidence that they had not been admitted to the full privileges of the church before, or that any ceremony was now performed in confirming or strengthening them."

#### Questions

Discuss the background of the word *aggareuo*.

What principle is taught by Jesus in Matthew 5:41?

Briefly discuss the meaning and use of *anagkazo* in the New Testament.

What is the meaning of *episterizo*?

Why do the disciples of Christ, especially the new converts, need strengthening or confirming?

Discuss the responsibility of the church in strengthening or confirming the disciples.

What is the scriptural basis, if any, for the rite of confirmation?

## Chapter Thirteen--Conscience, Covenant

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### Lesson Thirteen CONSCIENCE, COVENANT

**Conscience** The word "conscience" is from the Greek *suneidesis*, literally meaning "a knowing with (sun, with, oida, to know);" that is, a co-knowledge or joint-knowledge. It is used thirty-one times in the New Testament. It appears nowhere in the four gospels. It is most frequently used by Paul, twenty-one times in all. W. T. Davison suggests that the Pauline use of the word has left "more impression on the moral history of the world than all that Aristotle and Seneca ever wrote." Twice it occurs in Acts five times in Hebrews, and three times in Peter's epistles.

Primarily, *suneidesis* designates the consciousness or awareness of anything. For example, in Hebrews 10:2 it pertains to the awareness of sins; in 1 Peter 2:19 it pertains to the awareness of God. But more than mere awareness or consciousness of anything, it has a moral quality about it, approving or disapproving that of which it is aware. Con-science, then, in the moral sense is that other "I" one carries with him that passes judgment upon his motives and conduct, declaring what is right and wrong in his life. This concept of *suneidesis* is found in secular Greek. In a papyrus of 194 A. D. there is a description of a woman who had stolen some goods and painfully felt the disapproval of her conscience: ". . . oppressed by the consciousness (*suneidesei*) of what she appropriated of the furniture and stored articles." In a papyrus of the second century A. D. there is found the phrase "being oppressed by an evil conscience (*suneidotos*)."

The negative sense of conscience is indeed conspicuous in the New Testament. Conscience disapproves of actions or motives the individual deems wrong. This is either expressly mentioned or implied in such passages as Romans 2:15 and Hebrews 10:22. But more conspicuous in the New Testament is the positive sense of conscience. One's conscience approves what he deems to be right and should thus prompt him to obey the right. Paul says that the Christian is to obey civil authority "for conscience' sake" (Romans 13:5); that is, prompted by a realization that this is the right thing for the Christian to do. In Romans 9:1 Paul declares that his conscience attests his truthfulness: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit." In 2 Corinthians 1:12 he affirms along with his co-worker Timothy that their conscience attests their sincere, holy life: "For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

While conscience approves what one deems to be right and disapproves what he believes to be wrong, it cannot by itself be the final ethical authority, infallibly declaring what is right and wrong. A person's conscience is a creature of his environment, of all the forces that have shaped his ethical or moral sense. The Hottentot who defined good and evil by saying, "It is good if I steal somebody else's wife and bad if my wife is stolen," was only expressing the influence of his environment in shaping his sense of right and wrong. The conscience that is considered good by God is the conscience that approves only His ethical teaching as revealed through Christ and that prompts obedience to it (Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:19; 1 Timothy 3:9; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter

3:16).

Of course, unregenerate man has been able to formulate some ethical concepts that are in harmony with God's will. In an elemental sense he retains an innate knowledge of what is good. This is implied by the Lord's utterance in Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children . . ." Elsewhere he addresses to the multitudes the question, "And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Luke 12:57). Paul wrote concerning the Gentiles, who were not given a direct revelation from God as the Jews: "For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts with one another accusing or else excusing them" (Romans 2:14-15).

But it is only as a person is regenerated by Christ, thus to have a heart receptive and a life lovingly obedient to the divine will, that his conscience receives God's approval. It is such a conscience that one longs for who is baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38): "Baptism . . . saves you today (not the mere washing of dirt from the flesh but the prayer for a clean conscience before God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21 --Moffatt). Only the regenerate person, who looks to Christ for the pattern of ethical living, can truly be described as "holding faith and a good conscience" (1 Timothy 1:19).

Yet there is a sense in which the unregenerate person can have a good conscience, when he is true to what he believes to be right, even though his moral sense may be in conflict with the Christian ethic. When Paul declared, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1), he affirmed that even as a persecutor of the church, contrary to the will of Christ, he did what he conscientiously believed to be right. See Acts 26:9. The only course of moral integrity for a person to follow is his sincere conviction as to the right course of action. In so doing, at least he preserves the sense of duty and personal dignity. The same unflinching loyalty to his conscience that Paul showed as a persecutor of the church was manifested in his relation to Christ as a zealous Christian. The man who acts conscientiously, who is true to his convictions even though they are wrong, is always commended above the man who acts against the disapproval of his conscience.

To act from conscience does not necessarily make the act good, but to act against conscience invariably makes the act bad. See Romans 14:23. Only in the course of being true to one's honest convictions does the possibility of further enlightenment exist. To stifle the voice of conscience can only result in shutting the door to additional light. John Calvin said, "Whenever we take a step in opposition to conscience, we are on the high road to ruin." At Worms Martin Luther made the courageous, earth-moving affirmation, "My conscience is found in the word of God. I am not able to recall, nor do I wish to recall anything, for it is neither safe nor honest to do anything against conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen." No matter how wrong he may be, the conscientious person, sincerely desiring to be right and to do right, is never far from the kingdom of heaven; he is always a ready subject for genuine conversion to Christ and commitment to His ethic. Cf. 1 Timothy 1:12-13. But whoever persistently acts contrary to his conscience is in danger of losing his moral sense and thus of losing all sense of the need of Christ and the forgiving power of His blood. Paul speaks of those "branded [seared] in their own

conscience as with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). In his comments on this passage, E. Conder said, "A nerve diseased or almost paralyzed may possibly be healed; but when it has been subjected to the cauterizing iron it is perished. What hope for a man whose conscience is cauterized?" Cf. Ephesians 4:19; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 6:4-6.

No man can afford to act contrary to his conscience; if he pursues such a course, certain moral and spiritual doom faces him. The Christian ethic insists, however, that the conscience not only be obeyed but that it also be enlightened and educated by the word of God. Only the person who by the power of Christ's blood has cleansed his conscience to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14), whose conscience thus both approves and obeys the Christian ethic, enjoys the kind of faith that continually has access to the grace, mercy, and power of God in Christ.

**Covenant** The Greek word for "covenant" is *diatheke*, primarily signifying "a disposition of property by will or otherwise." It is one of the commonest words used in the Septuagint, and it is also quite common in the New Testament. In its ordinary, non-technical usage in the Septuagint it signifies a covenant or agreement entered into between two parties; for example, the covenant the Gibeonites wished to make with Joshua (Joshua 9:6), the covenant which the Jews were forbidden to make with the inhabitants of Caanan (Judges 2:2), and the covenant between David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 23:18). See Genesis 31:44.

*Diatheke* is also used in the Septuagint of the promise, agreement, or covenant that God made with man. An example of this is the agreement God made with Israel as recorded in Deuteronomy 4:13; Deuteronomy 4:23, "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments . . . Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he made with you." *Diatheke* also designates the new agreement God made with man after the flood (Genesis 9:12-17) and God's agreement with Abraham (Genesis 17:4-9). References to its use in the Old Testament are found in the New Testament; for example, the covenant God made with Abraham (Acts 7:8) and the covenant God made with Israel (Acts 3:25; Romans 9:4).

In classical Greek one of the uses made of *diatheke* is that of any "agreement" or "treaty" between two parties, as in Aristophanes, *The Birds* 440. It is also used in the general sense of "ordinance" or "disposition," as in Plato, *Laws* 1.624, and of "last will and testament," as in Epictetus, *Discourses* 11.13, 7. In the Koine, as illustrated in the papyri and inscriptions, *diatheke* means "testament, will" with such absolute unanimity that examples would be superfluous.

In the New Testament *diatheke* designates the covenant between God and man made possible by the death of Christ (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; 2 Corinthians 3:6). A comparison of *diatheke* with another Greek word, *suntheke*, will cast light on the nature of this covenant. *Suntheke* is the normal word used in the Koine for a covenant between two persons, such as a marriage covenant, or an agreement between states. In the Koine, however, as we previously noted, *diatheke* means a "will or testament," as illustrated time and time again in the papyri and inscriptions. Why, then, should the New Testament never use *suntheke* but always *diatheke* to designate the agreement God has made with man through Christ?

The reason is plain. *Suntheke* always describes an agreement made on equal terms, with each party having the same rights as the other and which either party can alter. But the word

"covenant," translated from *diatheke* in the New Testament, means something quite different. God and man do not meet on equal terms. Of His own free choice and unmerited favor, God offers man a saving, sanctifying relationship with Him through Christ, which man cannot alter, change, or annul, but which he can only accept or refuse. "Diatheke is properly *dispositio*, an 'arrangement' made by one party with plenary power, which the other must accept or reject, but cannot alter" (Moulton and Milligan). Now the most conspicuous example of such an arrangement is a will. The conditions of a will are not made on equal terms. They are made by one party for the benefit of another, who can either accept or reject them but not alter them. It is entirely fitting, then, that the word used for "will" in the Koine should be the word used for the agreement or arrangement God makes with man through Christ.

The illustration of this agreement or arrangement as a "will" or "testament" is vividly portrayed in Hebrews 9:15-17, "And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant (*diathekes*), that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament (*diatheke*) is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth."

We must recognize that our relationship with God as those redeemed by Christ is not something we have entered into in our own right and on our own terms. It is solely and completely made possible by the grace of the loving God through the merits of the sin-offering Christ (Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11-14). Philo said, "A covenant is a symbol of grace which God sets between Himself who extends the boon and man who receives it. It is fitting for God to give and for a wise man to receive."

What must we say, then, about the legalistic concept that would make man God's equal in his relationship to the new covenant? It is sacrilegious presumption, to say the least. Yet there are those who boastfully speak of their "obedience" to the new covenant as if it were of the same significance and importance as God's work in making this covenant with them. Such a concept virtually makes salvation in Christ a matter of human merit as well as of divine merit; thus it tacitly negates the grace of God. But when one truly recognizes his spiritual poverty in sin and his utter need of God's mercy, he cannot possibly equate his obedience to the gospel with the rich provisions made for his salvation by the love and grace of God. Such obedience can only be the reaching out of humility and trust to receive the free, unmerited gift of salvation in Christ. Such obedience will not glorify self but God.

"What moved God to make the covenant of grace? His own free mercy and grace, for when He made it we were like forlorn bastards and half-dead foundlings that were cast out in the open field to die in their own blood when our Lord came by and made a covenant with us" (Samuel Rutherford).

#### Questions

What is the literal meaning of *suneidesis*? How many times does it appear in the New Testament? In whose writings does it appear most often?

What concept does *suneidesis* primarily designate in the New Testament?

What is the role of conscience, *suneidesis*, in the moral realm?

Discuss some passages which deal with conscience as it approves what one deems to be right and prompts him to obey the right.

Why cannot conscience be the final, infallible authority in determining what is right and wrong?

When does a person's conscience receive God's approval?

What danger confronts the person who persistently acts contrary to his conscience?

What does the word *diatheke* primarily signify?

Give some examples of the use of *diatheke* in the Septuagint to designate a promise, agreement, or covenant God made with man?

What is the difference between the meaning of *diatheke* and *suntheke*?

Why does the New Testament never use *suntheke* but always *diatheke* to designate the agreement God has made with man through Christ?

Why is the new covenant superior to the old covenant? See Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 8:6-12; Hebrews 12:24; Hebrews 13:20.

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