

The background of the cover is a vibrant, high-angle photograph of a mountain valley. The hills are covered in lush green grass and some yellow wildflowers. A small river or stream winds through the valley floor. The sky is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

PETER'S ENCORE
& LATER PAUL

comments on

SECOND PETER
& EPHESIANS

JONATHAN MITCHELL

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Upon

The Jonathan Mitchell New

Testament
BY
JONATHAN
MITCHELL, MA

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BOOK COVERS

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INTRODUCTION

Both of the NT letters discussed in this book have had their authorship questioned by ancient commentators and by recent scholars. At the same time, other ancient and other current scholars accept the authorship as indicated in the texts. The textual and literary reasons for the doubt by some are reasonable and honest, but so are the reasons for acceptance by others. But what should this mean to the average person who may wish to understand what these ancient documents said, and meant? This book will not address the issue of authorship,

but will simply take the documents as we find them, and will also compare what the authors have said with both other NT writings and OT references. Questions of acceptance into the institutional church's canon of Scriptures was made during a period of history when the organizational "title," or considered "office," of an author (within the church's early history) was a deciding factor, rather than simply taking the words and thoughts on their own perceived merits, or the spirit that the reader found within the texts, as the "deciding factor" on whether or not the documents should be considered "inspired." Should it matter whether

Peter actually wrote what tradition has labeled as *2 Peter*, or whether it was Paul – or one of his students – that wrote *Ephesians*? The beauty of both truth and admonitions are the same, regardless who it was that originally penned the contents. For a good overview of the reasons that folks think that *2 Peter* was written after Peter's death, William Barclay sets them forth clearly and concisely in, *The Letters of James and Peter*, The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. Ed., The Westminster Press, 1976, pp 284-89. The author of this present work receives the arguments of John A.T. Robinson who dates it in the mid-60's, AD (see comments below). For

cogent arguments for Paul as the author of *Ephesians*, see Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians, A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, pp 223-4, cited below.

The richness of insights and revelations concerning the results and effects of the Christ-Event and the giving of the Holy Spirit (the Sacred Breath-effect) that are contained in Peter's reminders and admonitions, and in Paul's unveilings and encouragements (the "indicatives" and the "imperatives") are indeed treasures for the followers of Christ, and for the world's cultures and societies at

large. Paul's sermon and Peter's letter give beautiful pictures of what God's reign looks-like, of the realities of our life in Christ in the called-out covenant communities, and of humanity's positive destiny and expectations.

Following the comments on 2 Peter are three articles that address topics in two of Peter's sermons in the book of Acts. Following the comments on Ephesians are a short study on a statement by Paul in 1 Cor. 15, a consideration of the topic referred to as "spiritual warfare," in contemporary Christianity, an investigation into what Paul meant when he used the word, "anathema," my expanded translation of Psalm 23, from

the Septuagint (LXX), for a meditation, a study into the meaning of the phrase, “the kingdom of God,” as it is used in the NT, and finally, a review of the places where Jesus warned of the judgment of “hell.” May these fresh, expanded translations and the comments that are on offer be an aid to “building the house of the Lord,” Christ’s body.

May all of His goodness overwhelm you,

Jonathan Mitchell, Surprise AZ, 2015

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All works that have been quoted are referenced within the text of this work; some of the above authors were cited within the works of other scholars listed, above.

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House, 1983; *NRSV*, American Bible Society, 1989; *The New Testament, An Expanded Translation*, Kenneth Wuest, WM B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

ABBREVIATIONS and APPARATUS

ABBREVIATIONS:

DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls

MS: manuscript

MSS: manuscripts

MT: Masoretic Text

LXX: The Septuagint – Greek version of the Old Testament

Gen., Ex., Matt., Rom., etc.: commonly accepted indicators of the books of the Bible

Aleph, A, B, C, D, Ψ, etc.: indicate an individual codex or MS

p: signifies that the MS is a papyrus MS

TR: *Textus Receptus* (the "Received Text;" the "Majority Text")

cf: confer or compare

JM: translations of the LXX by the author

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Ed. Gerhard Kittel, W.B. Eerdmans, 1977

APPARATUS:

Brackets, []'s, have been used for the following situations:

to give a reading based upon other MSS

to insert notes or comments into the text

to insert words to aid in the reading of the English version
to indicate the reference of a quote from the Old Testament
to insert explanations

Parentheses, ()'s, have been used for the following situations:

to give other possible meanings of a Greek word
to give alternate renderings of phrases or verses
to give a potential idiomatic translations

“=” has been placed before words for the following situations:

to signifies that the following is a potential idiomatic translation, or

paraphrase to give another
spelling of a name or a suggested
equivalent name to give a Hebrew
equivalent of a word or name to
give an explanatory note

COMMENTS on 2 PETER

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Following the critical analysis of John. A.T. Robinson, this epistle was written circa A.D. 61-62 (*Redating the New Testament*, The Westminster Press, 1976 p169-199, 352). Together with other scholars, Robinson maintains that, “2 Peter cannot be considered except in conjunction with the epistle of Jude”

(ibid p 169). He also posits from internal evidence that it, “clearly implies that Paul is still alive” (ibid p 183), and quotes F.H. Chase: “The general tone of the Epistle harmonizes best with a date somewhat late in the apostolic age.... Within a year or two of the Pastoral Epistles... the Apocalypse... the First epistle of St. Peter, and the Epistle to the Hebrews” (ibid p 173). He later observes that this dating, “is precisely the period to which 2 Peter was assigned by independent reasoning by Zahn (*INT* II, p 210; Robinson, ibid p 198). David H. Wheaton concludes, “... if we are prepared to accept Petrine authorship, then a date shortly before the

apostle's death (1:14), somewhere in the sixties, would seem most likely" (*The New Bible Commentary, Revised*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1979 p 1250). Claude Holmes Thompson observes that, "No less than 19 of the 25 vss. of Jude are incorporated into or used in some manner by 2 Pet (2 Pet. 2:1-3:3)" (*The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, Abingdon Press, 1971, p 931). Thomas W. Leahy notes: "In spite of the 'catholic' character of its address (1:1), the emphasis on concrete dangers indicates a restricted group of communities. Since 3:1 probably refers to 1 Pet., the recipient churches may be the same communities of Asia Minor (1

Pet. 1:1)” (*The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol. II, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968 p 494). Donald W. Burdick and John H. Skilton instruct us: “In his first letter Peter feeds Christ’s sheep by instructing them how to deal with persecution from outside the churches (see, e.g., 1 Pet. 4:12); in this second letter he teaches them how to deal with false teachers and evildoers who have come into the church (see 2:1; 3:3-4)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, 1995 p 1897). Barclay concludes, “*Second Peter* was written to combat the beliefs and activities of certain men who were a threat to the Church” (ibid p 283). The first chapter reminds the recipients

of their calling in the Lord, and gives encouragement for growth in their life in Christ. The second chapter addresses false teaching, and the third calls them to awareness of Christ's presence, ending with ethical admonitions and a call to stand firm and continue toward maturity. E.W. Bullinger summarizes: "The apostle continues the practical teaching of the earlier letter, exhorts and warns, illustrating again from the OT history..." (*The Companion Bible*, The Lamp Press, Ltd., p 1863). So let us begin our search for the gems of this message.

Chapter 1

1. Simon (other MSS: Symeon) Peter, a slave and sent-off representative (or: emissary) of Jesus Christ, to (or: for) the folks obtaining by lot an equally valuable (precious; honorable) faith, conviction, trust and loyalty, along with us, within the midst of an eschatological deliverance, in union with fair and equitable treatment in rightwised relationships in the Way pointed out, and centered in covenant inclusion-and-membership, which come from and characterize our God and Savior (Deliverer; Rescuer; Source of health and wholeness), Jesus Christ (or: Jesus, [the] Anointed One; = Jesus,

[the] Messiah):

Jacob (James) refers to Peter as Symeon in Acts. 15:14. If this is the correct reading here, it is the only other place in the NT where this occurs. (Cf the spelling “Simon” together with Peter in Mat. 16:16; Lu. 5:8; Jn. 21:15) Peter, following Paul (Rom. 1:1) terms himself **a slave of Jesus Christ**, as well as being His “**sent-off representative**,” or, “emissary.” Peter had complied with his Master’s instructions, given in Mat. 28:19-20. This letter was a part of what Jesus instructed Peter to do in Jn. 21:15, “**As a herdsman, be habitually feeding** (or: grazing) **and tending My young lambs!**”

Barclay (ibid p 293) points out that the LXX uses the same word “slave” (*doulos*) to describe the relationship of Moses to Yahweh in Ps. 105:26, “He sent forth Moses, His slave...” Mal. 4:4 reads, “Moses, My slave.” Joshua was called “a slave of [the] LORD” in Josh. 24:29. David, the king of Israel, was referred to by God as, “My slave,” in 2 Sam. 3:18, and as “His slave,” in Ps. 78:70. We also read in Acts 2:18, “**I will continue pouring from out of the midst of My Breath-effect (or: diffusing from My Spirit and Attitude) even upon My slaves – both men and women...**” Then in 1 Cor. 7:22 Paul expresses the freedom which paradoxically comes

with being a slave belonging to God,
“In fact, the person within the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh] – being one that was called [when being] a slave – is [the] Lord's freed-person (or: exists being [Christ's or Yahweh's] emancipated slave). Likewise, the person being one that was called [when being] free, or a freedman, is Christ's slave.”

Barclay observes,

“To call the Christian the *doulos* of God means that he is inalienably possessed by God.... he is unqualifiedly at the disposal of God.... The Christian has no

rights of his own, for all his rights are surrendered to God.... he owes an unquestioning obedience to God. The master's command was a slave's only law.... The command of God is *his* only law.... He must be constantly in the service of God.... All [a slave's] time belonged to his master. The Christian cannot... compartmentalize life into the time and activities which belong to God, and the time and activities in which he does what he likes" (ibid; emphasis original; brackets mine).

Peter uses a participle of a verb that

means “to obtain by lot.” We find this same verb used in Lu. 1:9 of Zechariah where we are told, “**he obtained by lot the [duty] to burn incense, after entering into the [holy place] of the inner sanctuary of the Temple.**” Again in Acts 1:17 we read of Judah (Judas) that he, “**obtained by lot the allotted portion (or: share) of this attending service.**” The only other place in the NT where this verb is used is of the soldiers casting lots for Jesus’ cloak (Jn.19:24). Two things emerge from Peter using this word here:

- 1) the divine choosing for a specific purpose
- 2) our appointment by God unto a

place of service in the body
(which is His temple).

This **lot of faith** that we receive is **equally valuable** for everyone. The **loyalty** is honorable. The **conviction and trust** that these covenant communities share **along with** Christ's **sent-off representatives** are precious and are mutually valuable to the entire group. Wheaton points out that, “**obtaining by lot**’... implies grace and not merit as the source of this gift” (ibid p 1251). This calls to mind Eph. 2:8-9, “**For you see, by (or: to; in; for; with) the grace and joyous favor you are (you continuously exist being) folks having been**

delivered (rescued; kept safe; saved; made whole; restored to your original state and condition) **so as to now be enjoying salvation through** [some MSS add: the] **faithfulness** (or: loyalty; trust; faith; confidence), **and even this not forth from out of you folks, [it is] the gift of and from God** (or: the gift which is God; or: the gift pertains to God), **not out of works** (or: not forth from the midst of actions or deeds done; = not self-produced; = not from the Law or the old covenant), **to the end that no one could boast.”**

In his first letter, Peter applied Hos. 2:25 to his audience,

“[You folks] who [were] once (or: formerly) "not a people," but now [are] "God's people;" [formerly] being the ones having "not been given mercy," yet now [are] "folks being mercied (being given mercy)” (1 Pet. 2:10).

In Eph. 2:11-13 (see below) Paul makes the same point, emphasizing their inclusion into the category of being “God’s people.”

This allotted trust-confidence-faith-loyalty is given to mankind **within the midst of an eschatological deliverance**

that was accomplished by God (on *dikaiosunē*, cf Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God, An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009). This happens to us **in union with fair and equitable treatment in rightwised relationships in the Way pointed out** (another meaning of *dikaiosunē*). It created, and is “**centered in, covenant inclusion-and-membership.**”

The next phrases are ablatives/genitives, and on offer is the conflation of these two functions: **which come from and characterize our God and Savior** (Deliverer; Rescuer; Source of health and wholeness), **Jesus Christ** (or: Jesus,

[the] Anointed One; = Jesus, [the] Messiah). The two nouns, **God** and **Savior** are in the same case following a single definite article (also in the same case), so the two nouns are to be taken as together, or as a unit, **God and Savior**. So this construction is identifying **Jesus Christ** as our **God and Savior**. Leahy points out that, “The theologically significant application of the title ‘God’ (*theos*) to Christ, although unusual in the NT, is not unparalleled (Jn. 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; probably also Ti. 2:13; 2 Thes. 1:12; Rom. 9:5; 1 Jn. 5:20...)” (ibid p 495). The title Savior/Deliverer occurs five times in this letter (1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18).

2. **May grace and peace** (or: favor and harmony from a joining; [= shalom]) **be multiplied** (or: caused to increase) **to you folks** (or: by you; in you; for you) **within full** (or: accurate; complete; added) **intimate and experiential knowledge and insight of God, even Jesus, our Lord** (or: from God as well as from Jesus, Who is our Master; or: of God, and of our Owner, Jesus),

Too often we tend to read over the words **grace and peace** without considering their significance. At the beginning of a letter, this can be taken as simply a “greeting” that the author extends to his or her recipients. Then we move on to the real message of the letter.

But “grace” is a core element of the good news that came in Jesus Christ. Paul rhetorically asked in Rom. 7:24b-25a,

“What will be progressively rescuing me from out of the body of this death (or: from out of this body of the death; out of this body which pertains to death and which has its origin, character and qualities in death)? Grace! The Grace of, and the joyous favor from, God! – through Jesus Christ our Owner (Lord; Master)!”

In Rom. 5:2a, we read,

“through Whom, also, we have

had and now hold the conducted approach and access (or: the act of bringing toward to gain entrée), **by [His] faithfulness** (or: in this trust; with that confidence; for loyalty), **into this grace and joyous favor within which we have stood and in union with which we now stand.”**

And in Rom. 5:21 we are instructed, **“to the end that JUST AS the Sin** (the failure; the erroneous act; the deviation and digression which issued in missing the goal) **at one point reigned** (or: ruled as king; exercised sovereign sway) **within, and in union with, the**

Death, THUS SO (or: in **THIS** way) **also the Grace and joyous favor would reign** (should rule as king; can exercise sovereign sway) **through an eschatological deliverance that created rightwisedness** (or: by means of being rightly-turned into an existence with equity in [covenantal] solidarity of right relationships which accord to the Way; through a liberating Justice-[expression]) **[which leads] into Life which belongs to, pertains to and has the characteristics of the Age** (or: eonian life; Life of the Age [of Messiah]; a life for

the ages) – **through Jesus Christ, our Owner** (Lord; Master).”

So, in effect, Peter is asking God (notice the “divine passive” voice in **be multiplied**, i.e., by God) to increasingly bring His kingdom reign of grace to, in and among these folks – for since “grace reigns” (Rom. 5:21, above), the reign of grace will be multiplied, increasing throughout all creation.

Kenneth Wuest points out that *eirēnē*, "peace," comes from the Greek verb *eirō* "which means 'to join.' That is, when things are disjointed, there is lack of harmony and well-being. When they are joined together, there is both" (*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek*

New Testament, Vol. I, Wm. B.

Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973, Eph. and Col. p 24). Liddell and Scott (*Gr-Eng. Lex*, Oxford, 1968, p 491) defines *eirō*:

"fasten together in rows (as a necklace); string together (especially in speech)." It is Christ that joins us, and harmony comes from His having joined us together (*cf* Eph. 2:14-18, below). Peter desires the folks in Asia to be a "joined" community – all of them abiding in the Vine (Jn.15:1 ff). This peace and joining is to be seen as extending beyond the covenant community to the culture surrounding them, for that passage in Eph. 2, noted above, informs us that God has made Jew and Gentile into One New

Humanity.

We find the same blessing of the first clause of this verse in 1 Pet. 1:2b, but here (in his second letter to them) he adds the sphere or realm within which he desires the **grace and joining peace** to be “caused to increase” **to, for and in** them: **within full** (or: accurate; complete; added) **intimate and experiential knowledge and insight of God**. Growth in the Lord should increase our intimate knowledge of God and should “add insights” for us to be able to better enjoy Him. Jesus prayed in Jn. 17:3,

“**Now THIS is** (or: exists being) **eonian life** (living existence of

and for the ages; life pertaining to the Age [of Messiah]): **namely, that they may progressively come to intimately and experientially know You, the only true and real (genuine) God – and Jesus Christ, Whom You send forth as an Emissary (or: as well as Jesus [as the] Anointed One, whom You sent off as a Representative).**”

Paul’s words in Phil. 3:10 beautifully express this desire,

“to intimately and experientially know Him, and the ability – even the power – of His resurrection and also the [other

MSS: a] **common existence** (participation; partnership, sharing and fellowship) **of the results and from the effects of His experiences** [note: these include good times/feelings and passions, as well as sufferings] – **being a person that is being continuously conformed by** (being progressively brought together with the form of; being habitually configured to) **His death.”**

There is one more function (the instrumental) of the dative case of the pronoun **you folks** that should be considered: “by you folks.” The

communities are to be Christ's instrument for increasing the **grace** and **peace** (in the full and ACCURATE knowledge of God and of Jesus) among the folks where they live.

The final expression of this verse has the following potential renderings:

- 1) **even Jesus, our Lord** – which equates Jesus to God, and tells us that He expresses the full and accurate knowledge of God
- 2) from God as well as from Jesus, Who is our Master – this renders the “God” and “Jesus” as ablatives, telling us from Whom all the above comes. It also renders the conjunction: “as well

as”

3) of God, and of our Owner, Jesus – this rendering of the conjunction joins God and Jesus as objects of the desired insight, but it also puts them in separate categories of our understanding.

MS *p72* omits “**even/as well as/and**” following “God,” so it could read, “accurate insight from God: Jesus our Lord.”

3. just as all those things [leading] toward life and reverence (standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the well-being of devotion and virtuous conduct from ease, in true relation to God) **[are] being now available for us**

from having been freely given to us
(or: presented as a gift in us) **from His**
divine power and ability through the
full (accurate; complete; added)
intimate and experiential knowledge
of the One calling us to His own (or:
by His own; for His own; in His own;
[p72 B & other MSS instead read:
through; by means of]) **glory and**
excellence in nobleness

(i.e., virtues of: braveness,
courage, good character, quality,
self-restraint, magnificence,
benevolence, reliability, moral
valor).

This verse is a continuation of the
thoughts in vs. 2. **Just as** the grace and

peace/joining are multiplied in the sphere and realm of full, accurate, intimate knowledge of God, so too **all those things [leading] toward life and reverence are now available for us** because they have **been freely given to us from His divine power and ability**. Pause and consider this; it is amazing. Everything that we need to live the life of His kingdom, the Life of the Truth, the life of grace and peace – the joining of all humanity into one new Person (the corporate Christ, the Second Humanity – 1 Cor. 15:47), the life of the new creation, all comes from **His power** and from **His ability**. This is GRACE. But Peter's thought is not finished; this, too,

is given and is now available **through the full, accurate, complete intimate and experiential knowledge** of God, or Christ. No wonder Paul joined these thoughts together in Eph. 4:13,

“[to go on] until we – the whole of mankind (all people) – can (or: would) come down to the goal (or: attain; arrive at; meet accordingly; meet down face-to-face): into the state of oneness from, and which is, The Faithfulness (or: the unity of, that belongs to and which characterizes that which is faith; or: the lack of division which has its source in trust, confidence and

reliability, has the character of
and is in reference to the loyalty
and fidelity), **even which is the
full, experiential and intimate
knowledge** (or: and from
recognition; and of discovery; as
well as pertaining to insight)
which is (or: of; from; in
reference to) **the Son of God,**
**[growing] into [the] purposed
and destined adult man**
(complete, finished, full-grown,
perfect, goal-attained, mature
manhood) – **into** (or: unto) **[the]
measure of [the] stature** (full
age; prime of life) **of the entire
content which comprises the**

Anointed One.”

Exact insight into **the One calling us to His own glory and excellence in nobleness** is what Paul was describing here in Eph. 4:13. This is what he called the “purposed, destined, finished and complete” human – the *eschatos* Adam of 1 Cor. 15:45. Peter calls this **His own glory**, which includes the meaning of His reputation, His opinion, His imagination, and from OT usage of “glory,” His manifest presence. Being called to His presence calls to mind Heb. 10:22 where we are informed that “**we can be continuously and progressively approaching with a true heart in fullness of faith, [our] hearts**

having been sprinkled...” That context described our entry into God’s presence in the holy of holies, in the temple. But now we are the temple, and so our entrance is by the knowledge of God, the intimate experience of Him living within us.

But now let us consider other terms that Peter uses here. First, observe the parenthetical expansion of the word **reverence**: standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the well-being of devotion and virtuous conduct from ease, in true relation to God. This is the condition and the sphere into which He has brought us. This describes the beauty of His holiness (quality that sets one

apart from the profane). The next term has been conflated to offer two central concepts of this word: **excellence in nobleness**. The other options include the following virtues: braveness, courage, good character, quality, self-restraint, magnificence, benevolence, reliability and moral valor. The kingdom of God is composed of folks who manifest God's virtues; they are a community of **excellence and nobleness** because of the God who indwells them. They manifest His presence.

From the MS reading **His own**, which is in the dative case, we have the functions that can be rendered:

- 1) to His own glory and

excellence in nobleness –
signifying that this is the place and
condition to which He is calling
us

2) by His own, etc. – this means
that His glory and excellence is
that which attracts and invites us

3) for His own, etc. – means that
His work of creating us in His
image is for His glory and
reputation, and it will display His
excellence and nobleness

4) in His own, etc. – focuses on
the location of to where we are
called: suggests being in Him.

The other MS tradition does not have the
words “His own,” but in their place has

a preposition that differs from “His own” by only one letter. It is *dia*, which means “through; by means of,” and is followed by nouns in the genitive instead of the dative. This reading would simply say that He is calling us through, or by means of, glory, excellence and nobleness. It would be like what we read in Rom. 2:4,

“God’s kind and gentle usefulness (sweetly-disposed benevolence) is continuously leading you into a change of mind and purpose (a paradigm shift; or: a change of heart and thinking, accompanied by a turn, or a return, to God).”

4. [It is] through means of which things – the precious (valuable; honorable) and greatest effects of the promises – [that] He has freely given (or: [which] He Himself has presented as a gift) to us, to the end that through these [gifts], you folks would come to be (or: could come into existence being; should be born) people of common-being from a divine essence and nature (or: folks having a partnered share that is based upon a common existence from a divine born-instinct and native condition; or: fellow participants of a germination which is divine), while fleeing from the corruption (ruin; decay) within the dominant System

(or: that is united with the secular realm; or: centered in the ordered world of society, religion, culture, economy and government; or: in the center of the aggregate of mankind), [**which is**] **in the midst of passionate cravings** (rushing emotions; lusts; violent over-desires; [or, with *p72* & Aleph: fleeing the strong desire of corruption within the world]). These opening verses display Asiatic rhetoric, which in Peter's day was quite popular in Asia Minor. The repetition of certain thoughts and the piling of one idea upon another – as we observe here – were characteristic of this style. It grabs the attention of the listeners while at the same time reminding them of

important truths or introducing new topics to them. So we see this verse reaching back to the previous three (**through means of which things**) and then affirming again that these are “**the precious (valuable; honorable) and greatest effects of the promises**” that “**HE has been freely given** (or: has presented Himself as a gift) **to us.**” He is driving home the point that all that we have in this new creation has come from God – freely, as a gift, which means that there are no requirements. The parenthetical alternate, “has presented Himself as a gift,” lets us see clearly that what we have been given is simply “Him.”

Next he moves on to the purpose of all of these blessings: **to the end that through these [gifts], you folks would come to be** (or: could come into existence being; should be born) **people of common-being from a divine essence and nature.** The word that I have rendered “**common-being**” is the present participle of the word “to be; to exist” joined to the adjective “common.” In the parenthetical expansion, I have on offer other meanings of this word that are based upon common usage. The next words, “**from a divine essence and nature,**” are also expanded, and on offer are the alternate results of this complex prepositional phrase:

- 1) folks having a partnered share that is based upon a common existence from a divine born-instinct and native condition
- 2) fellow participants of a germination which is divine.

The word “divine” is common to each of these renderings. The idea of **common-being** is mirrored in the rendering “common existence.” Corporate and cultural nuances are seen in its renderings, “partnered share” and “fellow participants.” These simply give other viewpoints from which to observe this apocalyptic description of our relationship to God and His kingdom. A “partner” has a “common existence” in

an endeavor. Sharing usually involves participating with another. But the root idea of having a **common-being** with God speaks of an organic, relational and existential state into which He has birthed us, and which we have now “**come to be.**” The words **essence and nature** can also speak of one’s “instinct and native condition.” These thoughts are paralleled in 1 Jn. 3:2,

“**Beloved ones, now** (at the present time) **we continuously exist being God's children** (born-ones; bairns from the standpoint of origin), **and it has not yet been made visible** (or: it is not yet apparent or manifested) **what we**

will proceed in being. We have perceived, and thus know (or: are aware) that if it (or: He) should be (or: whenever it {or: He} may be) made visible, apparent and manifested, [then] folks like to Him (like-ones to Him; ones like Him; people resembling Him) we will be existing, because we will continue seeing and will be progressively perceiving Him just as (according and exactly as; in the manner that) He constantly exists (or: He is).”

In an agricultural metaphor it can speak of a “germination which is divine.” This

calls to mind the metaphor used by Jesus, when speaking of Himself, of Israel, of the Law, and of humanity:

“unless the grain of wheat (or: kernel of corn; = seed of an agricultural crop), upon falling into the earth (the ground; the field), should die, it by itself continues remaining alone. Yet if it should die, it proceeds to bear much fruit (= it produces a harvest of many grains, or, seeds)” (Jn. 12:24).

Paul lists this fruit in Gal. 5:22, 23. He admonished in 1 Tim. 6:11,

“However you, O human from God (or: O person whose source

and origin is God), **be constantly fleeing** (taking flight from) **these things. But continuously pursue** (or: rapidly follow, press forward and chase) **fair and equitable dealings in right relationships in the Way pointed out** (rightwisenedness; justice; = loyal covenantal living), **faith** (trust; trustworthiness; loyalty), **love, persistent remaining under in patient yet relentless endurance to give support, meek and gentle sensitivity** (mildness of temper).”

This has happened here and now, and it was a reality while those folks were

“fleeing from the corruption (ruin; decay) within the dominant System.”

That system might have been the Roman Empire with its pressures to conform to its requirements. For those coming out of Judaism, it would have been the pressure to continue with the purity codes or sabbath-keeping. I have parenthetically listed the meanings which the word *kosmos* might suggest in this context: that which is united with the secular realm (which could involve kinship systems, family involvements, cultural norms), religion (whether Judaic or Hellenistic or Roman), or the ordered world of society, economy or government. Living as a participant of a

covenant community would mean that these folks should get away from **the corruption** in any area of their world.

Peter identifies the known source of such corruption: **passionate cravings**, rushing emotions, lusts, violent over-desires. All these things are common to estranged and alienated humanity which has not yet been resurrected into the Christ-life. The alternate MS readings say basically the same thing, just wording it in a reverse order so that he speaks of their “fleeing the strong desire” that comes from corruption (the disconnection of the human nature) that is within the world (= systems).”

It is worth noting that the word

corruption simply means “ruin” or “decay.” It is the perversion of something that is inherently good, or the losing/loss of life from an organism that originally had life.

5. Yet, also, this same (or: And yet for this very cause): **while bringing into and alongside** (i.e., making full use of) **all diligent haste, you folks at once fully lead the chorus of** (or: completely choreograph; further outfit with added supplies) **the excellence and nobleness** (virtues of braveness, courage, good character, quality, self-restraint, magnificence, benevolence, reliability, moral valor) **[being inherent] within your faith and trust; along with the**

intimate, experiential knowledge and insight [being] within the excellence and nobleness (virtues of braveness, courage, good character, quality, self-restraint, magnificence, benevolence, reliability, moral valor);

Peter now reaches back (**this same**; or, for this very cause) to vs. 3 – picking up, again, God's **excellence and nobleness** to which, by which, in which and for which Christ has called us – in order to present a tapestry of these virtues, demonstrating how the community should weave these same into its corporate life in order to reflect to the **dominant System** the image of our God. He enhances the importance of the

following admonition by employing a picture of action: **bringing into and alongside** (i.e., making full use of). The urgency of this action is indicated by the phrase which he urges them to bring to these life endeavors: **all diligent haste**. Barclay paraphrases this dependent participle as, “bend all your energy” (ibid p 296), but the clause modifies the verb, **at once fully lead the chorus**. This rhetorical ploy will alert his listeners to the importance of what he is about to say. And now he describes just how they are to build (*cf* 1 Cor. 3:10-15). It is to be “completely choreographed,” and done with joy as they **at once fully lead the chorus of**

the excellence and nobleness, which God has supplied and in which they reside and which is [**being inherent**] **within [their] faith and trust** – which came with the entrance of the Word (Rom. 10:17) and the giving of the Spirit. This “excellence and nobleness” was first in the faithfulness of Christ, and now has been brought into them by His presence within His temple. Take note of the repeated preposition **within** (*en*) that leads this chorus of virtues on through vs. 7. These virtues are actually realms of God’s character. Within each one we find yet another. And these are His qualities which transform us into being, **“people of common-being from**

a divine essence and nature” (vs. 4, above).

Barclay instructs us that the verb that is used in the main clause, “comes from the noun *chorēgos*, which literally means *the leader of a chorus*” (ibid p 298).

The word also came to refer to “public-spirited citizens who voluntarily took on the duty, at their own expense, of collecting, maintaining, training and equipping such choruses” that were needed for the performance of Greek plays. The verb came to mean “lavishly to pour out everything that is necessary for a noble performance,” and was later applied to those who would “equip an army with all necessary provisions; it

can mean to equip the soul with all the necessary virtues for life.... The very word is an incitement to be content with nothing less than the loveliest and most splendid life” (ibid pp 298-9). This historical background helps us to color in the picture, but we must not be misled to think that what follows is what *WE* supply, but rather what we do with what Christ has supplied to us. The KJV rendering of the verb as, “add,” and then the RV and NASB renderings, “supply” (and then inserting the personal, possessive pronoun “your” before each of the remaining prepositional phrases), and the NRSV reading, “support your faith with,” all distort what Peter is

saying by putting the burden upon the members of the communities to be the source of supply for these virtues.

Beginning with **faith and trust**, all of the entire list of virtues are, “**the precious (valuable; honorable) and greatest effects of the promises [that] He has freely given**” (vs. 4, above) and which are expressions of “**His own glory and excellence in nobleness**” (vs. 3, above).

These virtues are “**all those things [leading] toward life and reverence (standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the well-being of devotion and virtuous conduct from ease, in true relation to God) [that are] being now available for us from having been**

freely given to us” (vs. 3, above).

Christ is the “public-spirited citizen” of the New Jerusalem, who supplies all of these virtues to humanity, and by being “in Him,” we can “lead the chorus,” and “choreograph” the dance of our lives as we are being “led by the Spirit” (Rom. 8:14).

This is all to be choreographed **along with the intimate, experiential knowledge and insight [being] within the excellence and nobleness.** All that is needed to build His temple is within His excellence and nobleness in which and by which He has called us. He called us **to** this work and now “**we are God's fellow-workers** (or: we are co-

workers of and from God; we exist being co-workers who belong to God)” (1 Cor. 3:9). In abiding within the Vine (Jn. 15:1ff) we dwell within His excellence, and it is there that we gain “intimate, experiential knowledge and insight” of God.

6. also the inner strength and self-restraint [which is inherent] within the intimate, experiential knowledge, as well as the persistent remaining under in humble support (or: steadfast, patient endurance) [being inherently] within the inner strength and self-restraint; and then the reverence (standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the well-being of devotion and virtuous

conduct from ease, in true relation to God) [**inherent**] **within the persistent remaining under in humble support** (or: steadfast, patient endurance); Then, within the **intimate, experiential knowledge** we find **the inner strength and self-restraint** which is inherent **WITHIN** this knowledge and insight. Next, within His inner strength and self-restraint we also find **persistent remaining under in humble support** (or: steadfast, patient endurance). Going deeper into this latter we find His **reverence** (standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the well-being of devotion and virtuous conduct from ease, in true relation to God). As we go

further through these virtues of God we realize that, with the Spirit, we are **“constantly and progressively searching... the depths of God”** (1 Cor. 2:10).

Wheaton (ibid p 1253) points us to another writing where **persistent remaining under in humble support** (or: steadfast, patient endurance) is repeatedly used. In Heb. 12:1-3 we read:

- 1. Consequently and for this very reason, then, we also, continuously having such a big cloud of witnesses (spectators; folks bearing testimony; people with evidence) environing us**

(lying around for us and [they] themselves surrounding and encompassing us), **after at once putting off from ourselves all bulk and encumbrance** (every weight; all that is prominent; or: getting rid of every arrow point within us) **and the easily-environing** (skillfully-surrounding; well-placed encircling) **failure** (sin; error; mistake; shooting off-target; missing of the point), **we can and should through persistent remaining-under** (or: relentless patient endurance and giving of support) **keep on running the**

racecourse continuously lying before us (or: lying in the forefront within us; or: lying ahead, among us),

2. turning [our] eyes away from other things and fixing them (or: looking away) **into Jesus, the Inaugurator** (First Leader; Prime Author) **and Perfecter** (Finisher; the Bringer-to-maturity and fruition; He who purposes and accomplishes the destiny) **of the faith, trust, confidence and loyal allegiance, Who, instead of and in place of the joy** (or: in the position on the opposite side from the happiness) **continuously lying**

before Him (or: lying in the forefront within Him; lying ahead for Him), **remained under a cross** (an execution pole for suspending a body) – **despising shame** (or: thinking nothing of [the] disgrace) – **and has sat down and now continues seated, remaining in the right [hand] of** (or: = in union with the place of receiving at; = at the place of power and honor, which is) **God's throne.**

3. For consider attentively again (or: logically reckon back for yourselves; gather it up in yourselves concerning) **the One**

having remained under while undergoing (or: having patiently endured while giving support in) **such contradiction** (the anti-word; the message which is contrary to reason; speaking in opposition, against, or instead of) – **[which was directed] into Himself** [other MSS: {permeating} into the midst of themselves] **by those missing the mark** (the sinners; those making a mistake, committing error, missing the point) – **to the end that you may not tire with exertion** (or: labor to weariness), **being continuously dissolved** (be

enfeebled and exhausted; caused to fall apart) **in your inner selves** (or: by your souls; = in your lives).

7. and further, the brotherly affection (fondness for and among the fellow believers) [**resident**] **within the reverence** (awe with goodness; well-being of devout, virtuous conduct in the ease of true relation to God); **and then finally, the love** (uniting acceptance) **within the brotherly affection.**

Within the heart of God there is **brotherly affection.** From where else can we experience this? But brotherly affection is a two-way street (known as the Way): **the reverence** also comes

from God toward us. Relationship is a mutual experience. God so loves us (Jn. 3:16) that He lives in “virtuous conduct in the ease of this true relationship” with us. Not only that, He relates to Himself in us (Mat. 25:40; Acts 9:5), and thus should we reverence all others and all of His creation. This calls to mind 1 Pet. 2:17a,

“Value everyone (Honor all)!
Habitually love (Practice loving)
the brotherhood (= the organism
of fellow-believers)!”

Fondness for and among the fellow believers (**brotherly love**) is the home, the location of *agapē* (**love**). It resides within the covenant community, which is

His temple (Love's home). All other virtues lead to this (Love, dwelling on the mercy seat within the holy of holies), and at the same time, all other virtues come from this (are dispensed from the heart of God).

It is also worth remembering 1 Pet. 1:22 here,

“Having purified your souls (= inner selves) within the hearing obedience (the humble, attentive listening and submissive hearing) of the Truth and from Reality [which directs and leads] into unhypocritical (non-hypercritical; non-hyper-separating so as to over-evaluate; not determined

from below; non-nit-picky; or: unpretended; unfeigned; thus: genuine) **brotherly affection** (= fondness for the fellow believers), **love one another with acceptance in a stretched-out and extended way, from out of a clean** [other MSS: true; genuine] **heart.**”

And further,

“**Now [this is] the goal** (the final situation; the end of the process): **all [are to be] like-minded** (of the same frame of mind and disposition), **folks sharing and expressing the same feelings** (being sympathetic), **ones being**

fond of and expressing affection for the brothers (= fellow believers; = communal members), people tenderhearted and compassionate, folks of a humble disposition and way of thinking” (1 Pet. 3:8).

On this section of vss. 5-7, Leahy comments, “Beginning with faith, one virtue provides the basis of the next, until the summit is reached with Christian love (*agapē*)” (ibid p 495). This “summit” is God Himself, for, 1 Jn. 4:16 instructs us, **“God exists continually being Love (God is Love).”** Paul gave us insights to God’s love in 1 Cor. 13, were we read,

“The Love (or: This unrestricted acceptance) **is habitually even-tempered, taking a long time to be in a heat of passion** (is constantly long-enduring, long-suffering and patient; it keeps on putting anger far away; it continues slow to progress toward feelings which cause violent breathing or rushing emotions) – **it continues being usefully kind.**

The Love (or: This urge toward unambiguous, accepting reunion) **is not constantly boiling with jealousy and envy. The Love is not continuously bragging or “showing off” – it is not**

habitually being puffed up; it is not conceited or arrogant. It is not repeatedly indecent in manner or behavior (it does not continually display lack of [good] form, rudeness or improper demeanor); it is not habitually self-seeking (or: not constantly pursuing its own interests or rights); it is not continually caused to be sharp [in response] nor aroused to irritation or upset emotions; it is not habitually keeping account of the worthless thing, nor logically considering something of bad quality, nor counting the injury.

It does not continue to rejoice upon [seeing or hearing of] the injustice, nor is it happy about dishonesty, inequity, or lack of the qualities of the Way pointed out, yet it repeatedly rejoices with the Truth (or: takes delight together in Reality). [Love] continuously covers all mankind; it is habitually loyal to all humanity; it constantly has an expectation for all mankind; it is continuously remaining under and giving support to all people.

(or, since “all” can also be neuter: It [i.e., unambiguous acceptance] progressively

puts a protecting roof over all things; it is habitually trusting in, and believing for, all things; it is continually hoping in or for all things; it keeps on patiently enduring all things.)

The Love (or, again: This unrestricted drive toward reunion) **never – not even once – fails** (falls out or lapses; = becomes fruitless or ineffectual; [other MSS: falls down; collapses])” (vss. 4-8).

8. You see, these things are constantly subsisting (or: supportively sub-

governing; humbly ruling; beginning from below) **as a possession in you folks** [or, with A and others: are continually existing alongside being present for you] **and are repeatedly being more than enough** (abounding) – **neither [being] inactive** (or: ineffective) **nor unfruitful** (or: unproductive). **He is continually setting [these] down and causing [them] to stand in accord [in and among you] unto the accurate, additional** (or: full), **experiential and intimate knowledge of our Lord** (or: Owner; Master), **Jesus Christ.**

The first clause almost deserves being underlined or put in all CAPS for

emphasis! The virtues listed in vss. 5-7 are not something to be attained or developed, nor are they a product of our own efforts. **These things** (i.e., vss. 5-7) **are constantly subsisting, supportively sub-governing, humbly ruling and beginning from BELOW as a POSSESSION IN us**; they “are continually existing alongside being present for [us].” They are manifestations of Christ IN [us]! They (collectively) are the fruit of the Spirit! And they are all the building material that we need to construct God’s building (1 Cor. 3:10ff) and Christ’s body (Eph. 4:12, 15-16). They are “gold, silver and precious stones.”

These are “raw materials” that are God Himself. With vss. 5-7, above, in mind let us look at how the last virtue mentioned here (**love**) both begins and ends Eph. 4:15-16,

“But continuously being real and true (living in accord with reality and the facts; holding to, speaking, pursuing and walking in Truth; truthing it) **within, and in union with, LOVE** (or: centered in unambiguous acceptance [of others]), **we can grow up** (enlarge; increase) **into Him – the ALL which is the Head: Christ** (or: [and] we would in love make all things grow up into Him Who

is the head and source: [the] Anointed One)! – **from out of Whom** (or: out from the midst of Which) **all the Body** (or: the entire body) **being continuously fitted and framed together** (made a common joint by a word; laid out and closely joined together) **and constantly being knit together and caused to mount up united through every fastening** (or: joint) **of the supply of rich furnishings** (or: through every assimilation of the full supply of funds; through every touch {kindling; setting on fire} of the completely supplied

requirements) **in accord with** (or: down from; commensurate to; in the sphere and to the degree of) **the operation** (operative, effectual energy) **within [the] measure of each one part** [other MSS: member], **is itself continually making** (or: is for itself progressively producing and forming) **the growth and increase of the Body, [focused on and leading] into house-construction** (or: unto building [up] and edification) **of itself within the midst of, and in union with, LOVE.”**

The first participle, **constantly**

subsisting (or: supportively sub-governing; humbly ruling; beginning from below) **as a possession**, is a conflation of the meaning of the verb *huparchō* which is *archō* (to begin, rule, hold a leading position) with the prefix *hupo* (under; below). The extended meaning of “possessing” has been derived from contextual use elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Lu. 8:3, 41; 12:33; 14:33; Acts 4:32; etc.), as well as here. MSS A, Y and others interpreted this verb as meaning “continually existing alongside” (*paronta*: from *para-*, alongside + *eimi*, to be, to exist), i.e., they are present and available. It is interesting that from this verb comes the

noun *parousia* (presence), which has eschatological connotations. But returning to the stronger MS witnesses, the idea of **subsistence** suggests both a means of living a life, and living in a low position (e.g., Mat. 23:11; Lu. 14:9-10; Lu. 22:27b; Jn. 13:4-15). In the kingdom of God it is the way of “sub-governing, humbly ruling and beginning from below (a low position).”

Furthermore, these things are something that we **possess**, since we have Christ within us. It is from out of Him that we operate – also, like branches of the Vine. The next clause, “**and are repeatedly being more than enough** (abounding),” is a present participle referring to

“these things” – meaning that possessing the Spirit’s virtues listed in vss. 5-7 is all that we need: they are abounding in our presence and are more than enough for us to subsist as His servants. What is more, they are **“neither [being] inactive** (or: ineffective) **nor unfruitful** (or: unproductive)” – which is to say that these manifestations of God are active, effective and fruitfully productive in the life of the community. They will accomplish His purposes and disseminate His Love into all mankind. In the last statement of the verse we are instructed that God **is continually setting** His virtues, i.e., the fruit of His

Spirit, down and causing [them] to stand in accord in and among us, to the end that the called-out communities will observe their presence and manifestations, and thus be brought **unto the accurate, additional** (or: full), **experiential and intimate knowledge of our Lord** (or: Owner; Master), **Jesus Christ**. Note the correlation between these positive virtues and our experiential understanding of our Lord. This is what He is like, and so as the Spirit manifests them within us individually and corporately, the world will learn what God is really like. Paul related “accurate and full experiential and intimate **knowledge** of Christ” to,

“the ability – even the power – of His resurrection and also the [other MSS: a] common existence (participation; partnership, sharing and fellowship) of the results and from the effects of His experiences [note: these include good times/feelings and passions, as well as sufferings] – being a person that is being continuously conformed by (being progressively brought together with the form of; being habitually configured to) His death” (Phil. 3:10).

It is the cruciform life that reflects the

image of God.

9. You see, the person in whom these things are not continuously present exists being (or: is) blind, constantly blinking and closing his or her eyes (or: progressively becoming short-sighted and nearsighted) taking hold of forgetfulness of (or: receiving oblivion in regard to) the cleansing from his/her old sins (mistakes of the past; former failure; [other MSS: from the results and effects of his/her former sins and errors]).

He is still reaching back to vss. 5-7, calling to their awareness that if they have stopped “observing” Christ (2 Cor. 3:18), or if their consciousness has

ceased to dwell in Him (Jn. 15:6), then they “**are taking hold of forgetfulness**” and they are instead “receiving oblivion” concerning their actual state of being. He is not saying that their **cleansing** has ceased to exist or that they lost their place in Christ. Rather, he is just pointing out that if these virtues are not **continuously present** in their lives then this is because they are **constantly blinking and closing [their] eyes** and are not observing Him in others (Mat. 25:44). The life of the called-out community is to be vital and spreading, so as to progressively include others in its sphere of influence. This first (**bold**) rendering can also indicate falling

asleep, and it calls to mind Paul's admonition in Rom. 13:11,

“This also – being folks having seen and thus knowing the season (the fit of the situation; the appointed fertile moment) – that [it is] by this time (or: already) an hour to be aroused (or: awakened) out of sleep, for now our rescue (our deliverance; our wholeness, health and salvation) [is] closer than when we came to trust (or: we believed with faith and conviction).”

And in Eph. 5:14b Paul quotes the Lord as saying,

“Let the sleeper (the person

continuously down and being fast asleep) **be waking up, continue rousing, and then stand up (arise) from out of the midst of the dead ones, and the Christ will continue shining upon you (progressively enlightening you)!”**

But this verb developed a second meaning, which is on offer as a progressive present tense:

“progressively becoming short-sighted and nearsighted.” I conflated the two nuances in this meaning. Barclay explains the first as “unable to take the long view of things” (ibid p 306). Many cannot perceive God’s “plan of the ages” (Eph. 3:11) with

salvation/deliverance/re-birth continuing through the coming ages. The second signifies being able to see clearly at a short distance only, and such folks often squint in trying to see better. These people can usually only see their own circumstances and personal needs or welfare. They are unable to focus on the wider culture, or on humanity as a whole. Their interest remains centered in their own little group (which they usually see as being a small, special group).

All these virtues are still present within the community, but if anyone is simply **closing his or her eyes** to the situations

around them (the stranger, the hungry, the naked, the sick – Mat. 25:43), there will not be an outflowing of love, excellence of nobleness, trust, faith, loyalty, insight, inner strength or self-restraint, humble support in brotherly affection, or reverence for others or for their environments. The characteristics of a covenant community is a union of folks who have these Spirit-influences continuously present and available for the world, and for each other. They have a “long view” of creation and of humanity.

10. Wherefore (or: Because of this), **brothers** (= [my] family), **hasten to exert yourselves to a greater extent**

to constantly make firm (sure-footed and steadfast) **your calling** (or: invitation) **and election** (selection; act of choosing out); **for you see, in repeatedly doing these things, you can by no means** (would under no circumstances) **stumble once** (or: at any time).

Peter now affirms his solidarity with them, rhetorically drawing them into a receptive attitude. They are his **brothers**, his family. He is not writing with sternness, but with inclusive love. He then repeats the same verb that he used in vs. 5, **hasten to exert yourselves to a greater extent**, as he builds his exhortation.

But how are we to understand the next infinitive clause: **to constantly make firm** (sure-footed and steadfast) **your calling** (or: invitation) **and election** (selection; act of choosing out)? This is not suggesting that their “salvation” is dependent upon some kind of self-works. Their calling is to be what was described by Jesus in Mat. 5:

13. **"You people, yourselves, exist being (are) the salt of the Land (or: earth). Now if the salt should ever be made dull or tasteless, in what way will it continue being salted (or: made salty)? It still continues giving strength into nothing (= it still**

cannot provide seasoning) – **if not being thrown outside, to be repeatedly** (or: continuously) **trampled down by people** (or: tread down under mankind).

14. "**You folks, yourselves, exist being** (are) **the light of the ordered System** (the world of culture, religion, politics, government and secular society; = the human sociological realm). **A city located up on a mountain** (or: situated on top of a mountain range) **continues unable to be hidden or concealed.**

15. "**Likewise, people are not normally lighting a lamp and**

then placing it under the measuring bowl (or: a one-peck grain-measuring basket), but rather upon the lampstand – and it continues shining and giving light for all those within the house.

16. "In this way, let the Light, which you folks possess (or: which has a source in you folks; or: which you people are), shine in front of mankind (before humans), so that people can see your fine works (or: the beautiful works that you are; the ideal acts which come from you folks) and they can give glory to (or: and

[these deeds; or: these works of beauty] will bring a good reputation for) **your Father – the One in union with the atmospheres [that surround you folks]** (or: within the midst of the heavens)!

This is just one example of their “calling.” It is to function as Christ’s body and God’s temple within the earth. Peter is calling them to make their position within the surrounding culture **“firm, sure-footed and steadfast.”** This is like Paul admonishing these same folks in Eph. 4:1,

“I myself – the prisoner (or: bound one; captive) within, in

union with, and centered in [the] Lord [= Christ or Yahweh] – am therefore repeatedly calling you folks, as it were, alongside: exhorting, admonishing, imploring and entreating you to walk [your path] (= behave; = live your life) worthily pertaining to (or: in a manner suitable to the value of) the calling and invitation in regard to which you folks are called (or: from which you were summoned).”

Peter then goes on to explain what he meant, in the second half of the verse: **in repeatedly doing these things, you can**

by **no means** (would under no circumstances) **stumble once** (or: at any time). The “**these things**” are the same “**these things**” of vs. 8, above, which in turn are the producing by God’s Spirit within them of the same virtues “continuously subsisting (i.e., available)” within them that he described in vss. 5-7. He is speaking of how not to **stumble** as they walk the Path, which is Christ (Jn. 14:6). Leahy suggests that, “This verse sums up the purpose of the epistle: to exhort the readers to firmness in their Christian vocation” (ibid p 495). Here Wheaton (ibid p 1253) points to Phil. 2:12-13, “**Consequently, my loved ones,**

according as at all times (or: as always) you folks submissively listened, paid attention and humbly obeyed, not as only in my presence, but further, now (at this moment) much more in my absence – in company with fear and trembling (or: = earnestness and concern) – be habitually working commensurately with the deliverance (or: be constantly producing on the level and sphere of the wholeness and well-being which are the outcome of the rescue and salvation) of, or pertaining to, yourselves, for

you see, God is the One habitually operating with inward activity, repeatedly working within, constantly causing function and progressively producing effects within, among and in union with you folks – both the [condition] to be habitually willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action, repeatedly operating to cause function and habitually setting at work so as to produce – for the sake of and over the pleasing good form and the thinking of goodness in

delightful imagination,”

and then directs us to Judah (Jude) 24,

“Now in and by (or: with; to)

Him being powerful and able to

keep and guard you folks from

stumbling (or: tripping) and from

harm, and then to stand you

flawless and blameless (or:

unblemished; without defect or

stain) **in the presence of His**

glory (or: down in sight of the

manifestation of Him which calls

forth praise and yields a good

opinion and reputation; or: down

in the center of a view of the glory

which is Him) **in extreme joy** (in

the center of a much-jumping

exultation; in union with body-moving celebration).”

11. For thus (in this way) **the Path of entrance into** (or: the place and act of the Way unto) **the center or midst of the eonian reign** (or: the Kingdom pertaining to and having the character and qualities of the Age; the for-the-ages sovereign influence and actions) **of our Lord and Savior** (or: Owner and Deliverer), **Jesus Christ** [= [the] Messiah], **will continue being richly led in full chorus and further outfitted with supplies for you** (in and among you; to you; by you folks).

The “**Path of entrance into** (or: the place and act of the Way unto)” is from

the word *hodos* (path, way) prefixed by *eis* (into; unto; into the midst of). This is a subtle reference to Jesus, as seen in Jn. 14:6 and as perceived in the work of the cross and His resurrection. But then he carries on, “... **into the center of the eonian reign.**” This is “the Kingdom pertaining to and having the character and qualities of the Age” of the Messiah. It is “the for-the-ages sovereign influence and actions of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” But now what does he say about this?

He is telling them (and us) that **thus**, “in the way” described from vs. 5, on, “the place and act of the way unto” His kingdom “**will continue being richly led**

in full chorus and further outfitted with supplies for you.” This Path of entrance will continue being richly led in full chorus, and furnished IN and among US. It will progressively be fully outfitted and supplied TO us. He supplies, furnishes, progressively outfits and continues leading the chorus which proclaims the Way (Himself) into the relationship and realm to which He has called humanity. Now I have included the instrumental function of the dative “you,” so that it can read that He “will continue” richly leading the chorus, while furnishing and fully supplying this (place and act of the Way unto Himself) “BY you folks.” They (and we) are the

means by which He continues furnishing the Path of entrance to the rest of the world. They continue fully supplying the place and act of the Way, so that they can say to the world, “Come unto us, all you folks that are weary and heavily burdened, and we shall supply you with the true Rest (which is Christ within them, the expectation of the glory).” This verse does not speak of some future event for our personal glory. It speaks to a then, and now, present reality for them in their daily lives, and of their call to extend the Way of deliverance to those yet dead in their deviations from the Path.

Jesus told Nicodemus that in regard to

God's kingdom and reign, something was needed:

“unless anyone (or: someone) may be born back up again to a higher place (or: can be brought to birth again; or: would be given birth from above), he continues having no power (or: he is continuously unable) to see or perceive God's reign, sovereign influence/activity, or kingdom”
(Jn. 3:3).

Paul alluded to this birth in Gal. 4:26 by saying, **“the Jerusalem above is (continues being) free, who is (or: which particular one continues being) our mother.”** This figurative reference

to Jerusalem is an eschatological code word for the called-out, covenant communities who have been,

“jointly roused and raised (or: suddenly awakens and raises) [us] up, and caused [us] to sit (or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us]) together within the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens” (Eph. 2:6).

In the symbolic picture of “sitting,” Paul is pointing to reigning in Christ’s kingdom. John saw a vision of this present situation in Rev. 5:9, where the folks that were “**bought**” by the death of the Lamb were “**from out of the midst of every tribe and tongue** (or:

language) **and people and ethnic multitude** (or: nation).” Then, in the next verse (5:10), it is said of them, “**and they continue reigning** [reading with Westcott & Hort (following A); other MSS: they will continue reigning] **upon the Land** (or: the earth).” This was an echo of Rev. 1:5b-6a,

“**the One continuously loving us by loosing** [other MSS: washing] **us from** [other MSS: out of] **our failures and deviations** (or: sins; errors; situations and results of where we missed the target or fell short of the goal) **within His blood** (or: in union with the blood which is Him), **and made**

(formed; created; produces) **us**
[other MSS: **in**, for, **with** us; **of**
us] [**to be**] **a kingdom** (or:
sovereign reign; [other MSS:
constructed of us a kingdom which
brings sovereign influence]):
priests in (or: by; for; with) **His**
God and Father.”

So with this added information from John's experience, we see that “the Kingdom pertaining to and having the character and qualities of the Age [of the Messiah]” is actually His people, here on earth.

Jesus, in the parable of the sheep and the kids (immature goats) said to His followers,

“Come here, you folks having received words of ease and wellness from (or: spoken well of by; or: having received the blessing of; or: bearing thoughts, ideas, expressions and the Word of goodness from) My Father! At once come into possession of the inheritance of, and enjoy the allotment of, [the period of, place of, or realm of] the reign (or: kingdom; influence and activity of sovereignty) having been prepared and made ready from a founding (a casting down [as of a foundation; or: of seed]) of a system (or: of [the] adorned

arrangement; of an arranged order; of [the] world)” (Mat. 25:34).

He explained this **reign** in vs.46 of that same chapter,

“the fair, just and rightwised folks who are in right relationship with people and are in accord with the Way pointed out [continue going off or coming away] into eonian life (life which has its source and character in the Age [of the Messiah]; life pertaining to the Age; or: the life of and for the ages).”

Christ’s **eonian reign** (etc.) here in Peter’s letter equates to **eonian life** in

the age of the Messiah, in Mat. 25:26. In the OT type as seen in the tabernacle/temple, God's throne was the "ark of the covenant" which resided in the holy of holies. In the reality which is the new covenant and new creation, we are God's temple (2 Cor. 6:16). He reigns from within us, where we are seated with Him who is the Overcomer. In Rev. 3:21, the called out communities were told that the folks that were continually victorious (by abiding in Christ, the Vine) would **"sit (or: be seated) with Me within My throne, as I also conquer (or: conquered; overcome; overcame and was victorious) and sit (or: sat down) with My Father within**

His throne.” This is all because of our union with, and our existence within, the Christ.

12. Wherefore (or: For this cause) it will always continue being my intent to be constantly reminding you concerning these things – even though [you are] being folks having seen and thus knowing, and ones being set and firmly established within the truth and reality [that is] being continuously present (existing alongside) [with and in you].

The “wherefore” means, “because of all of the above” and “for this cause.” He knows that everyone constantly needs **reminding** – especially concerning these

things, as we face the daily tests and social encounters. He speaks again of this “reminder” below in vs. 13, and then uses a cognate of this noun in vs. 15. It seems that humans easily forget, or become distracted. Cf 3:1-2, below. Take note that he is addressing them corporately as he recognizes that they are folks that have seen, and so now know these things.

Now observe that he affirms their condition and sphere of existence: they are **“ones being set and firmly established within the truth and reality [that is] being continuously present (existing alongside) [with and in you].”** Next, observe that this **truth** (Christ),

and this **reality** (i.e., the new creation; God's kingdom; the new covenant) is **continuously present** in them, and is "existing alongside" them. This last term is a present participle form of our word "*parousia*." See the comments, above, on the MS reading of A, etc., where the verb form of this word is used.

Their being "set and firmly established" indicates that in this letter he is not addressing some future salvation or ultimate destiny. The reminding is necessary because of the many distractions in our lives. From the preposition **within** we can see that Truth/Reality is their realm of existence, the place to where they were transferred

– as we read in Col. 1:13,

“He who drags us out of danger (or: rescued us) forth from out of the midst of the authority of the Darkness (from Darkness's jurisdiction and right; from existing out of gloomy shadows and obscure dimness; = the privilege of ignorance), and changes [our] position (or: transported [us], thus, giving [us] a change of standing, and transferred [us]) into the midst of the kingdom and reign of the Son of His love.”

A glance back at his first letter to these folks sheds further light on the second

half of vs. 12, here:

“Now the God of all grace and favor (or: the God whose character and quality is all grace and favor; the God Who is every grace and joyous favor), **the One calling** (or: inviting) **you folks – ones experiencing a little and briefly suffering – into His eonian glory** (His glory and reputation which has the quality and characteristics pertaining to the realm of the Age and which continues on into an unseen and indefinite time) **within Christ Jesus** [with other MSS: in union with the Anointed One (= the

Messiah)], **the Same One** (or: He) **will continue getting [things, or, you] down and prepare [them, or, you]** (or: repair [them; you]; fit, knit or adjust [them; you] thoroughly), **will continue setting [things; you] fast and establish [them; you], will continue imparting strength** (will make [things; you] strong), **[and] will progressively set a base upon which to ground and found [things and you]: the strength** (or: might) **[to do these things is] in Him and by Him, on into the ages”** (1 Pet. 5:10-11).

13. But I am continuously considering

it right, and in accord with the Way pointed out – as long as I continue existing within this tent-effect (or: tabernacle) – to keep on arousing and to progress in fully awakening you folks with a reminder,

His reminders are meant **“to keep on arousing and to progress in fully awakening”** them, as groups (note the plural) – and individually, of course.

This calls to mind Paul’s words to those at Rome, that **“[it is] by this time (or: already) an hour to be aroused (or: awakened) out of sleep”** (Rom. 13:11), and later, to these folks in Asia Minor, where he gives them the Lord’s word,

“Let the sleeper (the person

continuously down and being fast asleep) **be waking up, continue rousing, and then stand up (arise) from out of the midst of the dead ones, and the Christ will continue shining upon you (progressively enlightening you)!”** (Eph. 5:14b).

Paul also gave a similar admonition to those in Thessalonica,

“Consequently, then, we may not continuously fall asleep even as the rest (= as other folks), but rather, we can and should continuously be aroused and stirred up from sleep [comment: thus, awake to be alertly watchful;

also a figure for being alive] **and sober** (or: clear-headed). **You see, the folks continuously falling asleep** (or: drowsing) **are sleeping at** (or: from [the]) **night.... We, on the other hand, being of Day** (belonging to and having characteristics of [the] Day; having [the] Day as our source), **can and should continuously be sober** (clear-headed), **putting on** (or: clothing ourselves with; enveloping ourselves in; entering within) **a breastplate** (or: thorax) **of faith and love...**" (1 Thes. 5:6-8a).

Peter sees his actions as **right, and in**

accord with the Way pointed out – the Way that is Christ. The sent-forth representatives of Christ felt a responsibility for their “sheep” (Jn. 21:15-17).

Let us consider the present infinitive in the last clause: **to keep on arousing and to progress in fully awakening**. This describes a process. People who are born into the kingdom of God begin as babies in the spiritual life. Recall Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 3:1,

“I myself, brothers, was not able to speak to you folks as to spiritual ones (people having the effect of the Breath; folks controlled by the Attitude), **but to**

the contrary as to fleshly folks
(= ones who focus on that which affects the flesh; = natural people who live as alienated and estranged from God) – **as to infants in Christ** (or: non-speaking babies in [the] Anointing).”

Life in the new creation still follows the pattern of the natural life. We must **GROW** into maturity,

“until we – the whole of mankind (all people) – **can** (or: would) **come down to the goal** (or: attain; arrive at; meet accordingly; meet down face-to-face): **into the state of oneness**

from, and which is, The Faithfulness (or: the unity of, that belongs to and which characterizes that which is faith; or: the lack of division which has its source in trust, confidence and reliability, has the character of and is in reference to the loyalty and fidelity), **even which is the full, experiential and intimate knowledge** (or: and from recognition; and of discovery; as well as pertaining to insight) **which is** (or: of; from; in reference to) **the Son of God, [growing] into [the] purposed and destined adult man**

(complete, finished, full-grown, perfect, goal-attained, mature manhood) – **into** (or: unto) **[the] measure of [the] stature** (full age; prime of life) **of the entire content which comprises the Anointed One** – to the end that **no longer** (or: no more) **would or should we exist being infants** (immature folks; not-yet-speaking ones), **continuously being tossed by** (= being caused to fluctuate from) **[successive] waves and repeatedly being carried hither and thither** (or: around in circles) **by every wind of the teaching** (or: from what is taught) **within**

the caprice (the throw of the dice; versatile artifice; games of chance; the trickery) **of mankind, in readiness to do anything** (amoral craftiness; working everything; or: = while stopping at nothing) **with a view toward and leading to the methodical treatment** (or: the systematizing or technical procedure) **of The Wandering** (the straying; the deception; [A adds: of the thrusting-through; or: from the person who casts {divisiveness or harm} through the midst of folks]). **But continuously being real and true** (living in accord with reality

and the facts; holding to, speaking, pursuing and walking in Truth; truthing it) **within, and in union with, love** (or: centered in unambiguous acceptance [of others]), **we can grow up** (enlarge; increase) **into Him – the ALL which is the Head: Christ** (or: [and] we would in love make all things grow up into Him Who is the head and source: [the] Anointed One)!” (Eph. 4:13-15).

14. having seen and now knowing that swift [in approach] is the laying aside (or: the putting off or away) **of my tent-effect** (or: tabernacle; = body), **according as also our Lord, Jesus**

Christ, made clearly visible to me (or: makes [it] evident for and in me).

Peter is speaking metaphorically about his imminent death, but this thought continues what he was just saying about his call to shepherd his sheep by constantly reminding and arousing them to full alertness to the presence of Christ among them, and to the times in which they are living. This idea reaches back to vs. 10, above, about making their calling “sure-footed and steadfast,” rather than slipping into progressively “**closing one’s eyes**” and “**taking hold of forgetfulness**” (vs. 9) concerning the Good News of the ease and well-being in Christ.

Paul spoke with the same metaphor of “tent/tabernacle” in 2 Cor. 5: 1,

“For we have seen, and thus know, that if our house, of the tabernacle which is pitched on the land, would at some point be dismantled (or: that whenever our house, which is this tent upon the earth, should be loosed down), we constantly have (continuously hold; presently possess) a structure (a building) forth from out of the midst of God: an eonian house (a house having the qualities and character which pertain to the Age; a house for the ages) – not made by hands –

resident within the heavens (or: in union with the atmospheres).”

All humanity has been aware that our physical existence here is a temporary existence, and our “tent” is designed for us to always be prepared to “pull up the stakes,” and move on. The Lord prepared His disciples for His departure from them (Jn. 13:33ff). Jesus spoke of Peter’s death in Jn. 21:18-19, but the expression in the last clause, here, may have referred to a more recent and specific (**clearly visible** and evident) disclosure from Jesus to Peter. As Wheaton points out, “The metaphor is that of doffing clothes, and is developed further in 2 Cor. 5:1-8” (ibid p 1253).

15. But I will also continue earnestly hastening (or: quickly endeavoring) **to always have you, after my departure** (exodus; a road or path out; = death), **to continually make mention** (or: make the recollection) **of these things.**

Now Peter uses the verb of urgency (**earnestly hastening**) concerning himself that he used to admonish them in vs. 10, above, having used its noun cognate in vs. 5. He is rhetorically highlighting to them the urgent need for haste and quick endeavor to respond to the Spirit's lead (Rom. 8:14) in this new life in Christ. Now he wants them to pick up the same baton that he is presently carrying for the kingdom –

once he has passed from his current life among them, which he calls his exodus. This same word was used concerning the upcoming death of Jesus, in Lu. 9:31. Peter wants the next generation to carry on with the message concerning Christ and the life described in vss. 5-7, above. The image created by his use of the word *exodus* reaches back to Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, and their journey to "the Promised Land." It speaks of entering into God's rest (Heb. 3:18; 4:1). Barclay comments, "Peter sees death not as the end but as the going out into the Promised Land of God" (ibid p 308).

16. **For we did** (or: You see, we do) **not**

experientially or intimately make known to you the power and presence (or: ability and [the] being alongside; *parousia*) **of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by following forth in** (or: by) **wisely-made myths** (or: in being made wise by myths or fables; or: with fables modified by wisdom; or: to cleverly crafted stories), **but rather, [from] becoming** (or: being made to be; being birthed) **eyewitnesses** (onlookers; spectators) **of that One's magnificence** (or: of that greatness):
Now he specifically reminds them of the core message that they, too, are to **make mention of: the power and presence** (or: ability and [the] being alongside; *parousia*) **of our Lord, Jesus Christ."**

Note that the two words are used together: **power and presence**. The power comes from His being present with us.

They had been **eyewitnesses** (onlookers; spectators) of **that One's magnificence**. Peter, Jacob and John had been with Jesus on the mount of the transfiguration (Mat. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-10; Lu. 9:28-35), and he is here affirming to his listeners the historic factuality of what he and others had **experientially or intimately [made] known to** them. Leahy observes that for Peter's listeners, "Acquaintance with the Synoptic account of the transfiguration is presumed" (ibid p 496). A.E. Knoch

states that, including God, “There were seven persons present” on that occasion (*Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*, Concordant Publishing Concern, 1968 p 363). By referencing this incident, he is also reminding them of what the Voice from the cloud said,

“This Man continues existing being My Son! The Beloved One (or: The One exemplifying and expressing My love) **within Whom I think good thoughts** (or: in Whom I imagine thoughts of wellness and ease; in Whom I appear well; in Whom I approve and of Whom I have a good opinion). **Make it a habit to**

listen, to continue paying attention, and then to [really] hear Him (implies: obey Him)!”
(Mat. 17:5b)

The implication was also that they were no longer to be listening to Moses or Elijah (figures of the Law and the Prophets) who had appeared in the cloud; God's **Son** had arrived and He now had God's message for humanity. The old was passing away; the new had come (2 Cor. 5:17b).

The reference to “**wisely-made myths** (or: in being made wise by myths or fables; or: with fables modified by wisdom; or: to cleverly crafted stories)” could have been to those of Greek,

Persian, Egyptian origins, or even to Jewish stories that turned out to be counterfeits, because they lacked the power for deliverance and transformation. In Titus 1:14, Paul advised,

“not habitually holding to (having [a propensity] toward; heeding and clinging in the direction toward) **Jewish myths** (or: fictions; or, possibly: oral traditions) **and to implanted goals** (impartations of a finished product within; inward directives; commands) **whose source and origin is people** (or: human commandments) **[thus]**

continually being twisted and turned away from the Truth (or: reality).”

And in 1 Tim. 1:3b-4 Paul instructed,

“not to continue teaching different things, nor yet to constantly hold toward myths (or: stories; fictions) and unbounded (= endless) genealogies, which things habitually hold investigations and inquiries alongside which involve speculations and disputes, rather than God's house-administration (management; stewardship).”

In 4:7 of that same letter, Paul also

exhorted Timothy,

“Now you must constantly refuse and avoid (excuse yourself from) profane and old-womanish myths, yet habitually be training and exercising yourself, as in gymnastic discipline, toward reverence (standing in awe of wellness, with adoration; healthful devotion and virtuous conduct of ease, in true relation to God).” (Cf 2 Tim. 4:4)

17. for you see, from the side of (or: [standing] beside) Father God, [He was] receiving honor (value; preciousness) and glory (or: a reputation) from a Voice being carried

to Him by the fitting greatness and majesty of glory and which came from the manifestation which called forth praise (or: = of a Sound or Shout being swept along under the magnificent grandeur of the *Sh'khinah* Presence) **such as follows: "My Son, My Beloved One, is This One** [other MSS: This One is existing being My Son, My Beloved One] **into the midst of Whom I Myself placed delight** [other MSS: within Whom I was well pleased, and find approval; in union with Whom I have good thoughts]." [Mat. 17:5] Why did Peter use this reference to validate what they had spoken concerning the Message of Goodness

that came with Jesus Christ? Why not the Day of Pentecost, or the cross and the resurrection? Why not present a list of other witnesses to the Christ event? Why not John the baptizer's testimony (Jn. 1:32) about the Holy Spirit descending as a Dove upon Jesus at His Jordan River baptism? Why a visionary, apocalyptic occurrence that only three of the disciples of Jesus had witnessed? I offer here my own version of a *midrash* (described by Harvey Cox as an, "imaginary exposition," an "effort to read between the lines of the Bible" – *When Jesus Came to Harvard; Making Moral Choices Today*, Houghton Mifflin Co, 2004 p 87): Could the answer lie in

the fact that what would have been meaningful to the folks in Asia Minor would be the message that spoke of the new reality (Jesus had said, “I am the Path, the Reality and the Life,” in Jn. 14:6) that had broken into history which was that the realm of Spirit was now joined to the realm of creation within the new humanity (Eph. 2:15), and which Paul called a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17)? This news to them was not about fulfillment of Jewish prophecies (which, in fact, Christ had done) or about the coming of the Jewish Messiah (which, in fact, He was), or about the end of the age of the Law (which, in fact, it was), but that all other voices (including the Law

and the Prophets which the Jews possessed) were to be ignored (as far as following their precepts) as His sheep paid attention to only His voice – which now came to people through His Spirit which was embedded within the Words that were spoken to them by His emissaries (the news concerning Jesus and His teachings). Folks were no longer to practice religion in “mountains” or physical temples in physical cities (Jn. 4:21), but now all relationship to, and service for, God was to be done in the new realm of the new arrangement of the new covenant, because:

“God [is] spirit (or: [is the])

Spirit; [gives] Breath; [becomes] Wind; [is] a Breath-effect and Attitude), **and it is binding** (or: necessary) **for the ones continuously worshiping Him to be constantly worshiping in union with spirit and Truth** (in Breath-effect and Reality; within the midst of [the] Spirit and [the] Fact; centered in [life]-attitude and genuineness/actuality)” (Jn. 4:24).

The **Voice** coming to Jesus and His witnesses (the three disciples) called to mind the incident when God called out to Moses from the midst of the burning bush (Ex. 3:4), and the time when Elijah

was told to “Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Yahweh,” and after the strong wind, the earthquake and the fire, “a still small (or: whispering) Voice that was Yahweh, speaking to him (1 Ki. 19:11-18). This same **Voice** had also spoken from the atmosphere when John immersed Jesus (Mat. 3:17). I want to call your attention to the parenthetical paraphrase that is a potential description of the incident: “... glory of a Sound or Shout... of the *Sh'khinah* Presence” which echoes the manifestation of God entering His tent when it was finished in its being constructed (Ex. 40:34-38). This quote of Mat. 17:5, above, informs us (in the bold MS reading) that God

“placed delight into the midst of” His Son. Christ was filled with God’s delight. We find God’s “delight” within Jesus. Other MS traditions use a different preposition, so we see that:

- 1) within Christ God was well pleased and found approval
- 2) God was within Christ, and was well-pleased to be there
- 3) God found approval (from humanity) by being within Christ
- 4) God has good thoughts (*eudokeō*) “in union with” Christ.

18. And we ourselves, being together with Him within the set-apart (or: holy; sacred) mountain, heard this Voice being carried out of heaven (or:

swept along from the midst of [the] atmosphere and sky).

Peter is speaking of the incident and the hearing of God's Voice (recall Saul hearing the Voice on the road to Damascus) when he and the other two were with Jesus on the **mountain**. It is interesting that Peter refers to the spot as **set-apart** (or: holy; sacred). It was the presence of God there, as well as the union of "heaven and earth" that set that place apart. God had "come in a cloud" to them; both a physical cloud of the atmosphere, and in a "cloud of witnesses." We read of this reality in Heb. 12:1-2a,

"Consequently and for this very

reason, then, we also,
continuously having such a big
cloud of witnesses (spectators;
folks bearing testimony; people
with evidence) **environing us**
(lying around for us and [they]
themselves surrounding and
encompassing us), **after at once**
putting off from ourselves all
bulk and encumbrance (every
weight; all that is prominent; or:
getting rid of every arrow point
within us) **and the easily-**
environing (skillfully-
surrounding; well-placed
encircling) **failure** (sin; error;
mistake; shooting off-target;

missing of the point), **we can and should through persistent remaining-under** (or: relentless patient endurance and giving of support) **keep on running the racecourse continuously lying before us** (or: lying in the forefront within us; or: lying ahead, among us), **turning [our] eyes away from other things and fixing them** (or: looking away) **into Jesus, the Inaugurator** (First Leader; Prime Author) **and Perfecter** (Finisher; the Bringer-to-maturity and fruition; He who purposes and accomplishes the destiny) **of the faith, trust,**

**confidence and loyal
allegiance...”**

First it happened on a natural mountain in Palestine, but now it is Mt. Zion, as we read in Heb. 12:22ff. We find an apocalyptic picture of this present reality in Rev. 14:1.

Another reason for Peter referencing this incident is to remind his listeners of the place of Jesus in salvation history. As the giving of the Law at Sinai was a creation story for Israel as a nation, the new hearing of the words of Jesus (Mat. 17:5b) was signaling the new commandments from Jesus which were inaugurating a new creation and the resurrected Israel. This latter was

foretold in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezk. 37:1 ff) where in vss. 13-14a Yahweh tells him,

“And you folks shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, O my People, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall I put My Spirit in you, and you folks shall live...”

Paul confirmed this in Rom. 6:4b-5,

“**just as** (or: in the same manner as) **Christ was roused and raised forth from out of the midst of dead folks THROUGH** (through means of) **THE GLORY** (the glorious manifestation of splendor which calls forth praise; the

notion; the renown; the reputation; the imagination) **of The Father** (or: which is the Father), **thus also we can walk around** (or: we also should likewise conduct ourselves and order our behavior) **within newness of life** (in union with life characterized by being new in kind and quality, and different from that which was former). **For since** (or: You see, if) **we have been birthed** (have become; have come to be) **folks engrafted and produced together** (or: planted and made to grow together; brought forth together; congenital) **in, by, to and**

with the result of the likeness of
(or: the effect of the similar
manner from) **His death, then**
certainly we shall also continue
existing [in and with the effects
of the likeness] of The
Resurrection

(or: which is the
resurrection; or: from, and
with qualities of, the
resurrection).”

Paul adds a further witness to the effect
of the Christ-event and the scope of its
inclusion in 2 Cor. 5:14,

“**[We are] deciding** (discerning;
judging) **this: that** [some MSS
add: since] **One Person** (or:

Man) **died over [the situation of all mankind** (or: for the sake of all); **consequently all people died** (or: accordingly, then, all humanity died).”

In discussing the story of the

Transfiguration, Cox observes,

“Jesus here is being depicted as the new Moses. The allusions begin with the first line [Mat. 17:1], ‘after six days’ [Moses went in Mount Sinai; the cloud covered the mount six days – Ex. 24:16].... Moses also took his three favorite helpers – Aaron, Nada, and Abihu – along with him, at least for the first part of

his ascent. Jesus took Peter, James and John. When Moses reached the summit, a cloud descended on him and a bright light shone (Ex. 24:9-18) as it does here on Jesus. In the genealogies, prophets and charismatic leaders are frequently identified with their distinguished predecessors. Here Jesus is seen with Elijah the prophet and Moses the lawgiver.... The story of the Transfiguration is like another genealogy. It positions Jesus in the succession of Moses” (ibid pp 204-5; brackets added).

Picking up again God’s words to Peter, Jacob and John in Mat. 17:5b, “**Make it**

a habit to listen, to continue paying attention, and then to [really] hear and obey Him,” we find another witness to this succession in Heb. 1:1-2,

“Long ago (or: In the old days), **in many parts** (or: fragments; divided portions; = bit by bit) **and in much-traveled ways** **consisting of many turns and directions, God, having spoken to** (or: by; in; with) **the fathers – in** (= through; in [the words of]) **the prophets –upon [the] last of these days spoke to us in a Son whom He placed** (or: sets) **[as; to be] Heir of all** (or: One who receives all humanity as an

allotment; or: heir of all things;
or: One who received everything
as his allotted inheritance)

**through Whom He also made
the ages**

(or: formed and constructed
the various designated
periods of time [which
compose existence, as well
as God's influence and
activities]).”

Part of the “all” of which Jesus became
the Heir, was the entire history of, and
prophecies concerning, Israel – as well
as all of the rest of humanity all the way
back to Adam (which of course will
include all of humanity within the

oncoming ages, as Paul points out in 1 Cor. 15; *cf* discussion below, p 257).

19. **And so, we continue having** (or: constantly hold) **the Idea which was spoken ahead of time in and as Light** (or: the prior-enlightened Thought and Reason; or: the Prophetic Word) **more confirmed** (validated; established; certain), **by which** (or: in which) **you folks continue doing beautifully** (performing ideally; producing finely), **while continuously holding toward** (= playing close attention to) **[it] as to a lamp continually shining within a parched place – until which [time or occasion] the Day may shine through and a light bearer** [= a morning star]

may rise within your hearts

(or: constantly heeding, as to a lamp progressively making things appear in a dark, dingy or dirty place, until that the Day can dawn, and a light-bringer can arise in union with your core and innermost being),

The Idea which was spoken ahead of time in and as Light was indeed the Prophetic Word given in the Torah, the Writings and the Prophets (i.e., the OT), and all those things were fulfilled in Christ. We read in Lu. 24:27 where Jesus,

“beginning from Moses, and then from all the prophets, He

continued to fully interpret and explain to (or: for) them the things pertaining to (or: the references about) Himself within all the Scriptures.”

Prior to this, He had foretold to His disciples the coming destruction of Jerusalem, in Lu. 21:20-21. Then in vs. 22 He informed them,

“because these are days of executing justice – of bringing about what is fair and right and of establishing what accords with the Way pointed out – with a view to have fulfilled ALL the things having been written (or: for all that is written to be

fulfilled)!”

But the direct Word of the Lord which Peter, Jacob and John had heard on the mount of transfiguration was the “prior-enlightened Thought and Reason” which was **more confirmed** (validated; established; certain) by that personal experience.

It was Peter’s testimony of both the promise and the fulfillment of these things that was the instrument “**by which** (or: in which) **you folks continue doing beautifully** (performing ideally; producing finely).” It was and is the Good News that is “**as to a lamp continually shining within a parched place**” which was the source of their

ability to “perform ideally and produce finely.” The “**Idea**” which had in prior times been proclaimed by the OT was now manifested in the Messiah and proclaimed by His Words; for,

“Long ago (or: In the old days), in many parts (or: fragments; divided portions; = bit by bit) and in much-traveled ways consisting of many turns and directions, God, having spoken to (or: by; in; with) the fathers – in (= through; in [the words of]) the prophets – upon [the] last of these days spoke to us in a Son”
(Heb. 1:1-2a).

In “**continuously holding toward (=**

playing close attention to)” these things – just like “abiding in the Vine” (Jn. 15:1ff) – they were empowered to “continue doing beautifully.”

Notice the imagery that he uses as to where the lamp would continue shining: **a parched place**; a dark, dingy or dirty place. No reference to purity codes here. This is like Jesus saying,

“Those being habitually strong (= people in good health) **normally have no need of a physician** (healer; doctor), **but rather, those continuing to have it badly** (= those who are ill and in a poor condition). **I did not** (or: am not) **come to call just ones**

(righteous ones; those living in accord with the Way pointed out; or: = those who are part of the establishment and do all the right things; may = people who "think" they have no faults), **but to the contrary, outcasts**

(failures; sinners; those who fail to hit the target and make mistakes; riff-raff and ceremonially unclean folks – even criminals; also = those who did not observe the Law as defined by the scribes).”

The final clause is conditional, beginning with the qualifying particle,

“until.” That this was not referring to some far-distant time in the future, but rather until they reached the maturity where **“the Day may shine through and a light bearer [= a morning star] may rise”** WITHIN them. This was going to happen **within [their] hearts** and in union with the core [of their] innermost being.” In this way they would be “the light of the world” (Mat. 5:14) and would manifest to others the image of God (Gen. 1:26), or as Paul put it in 2 Cor. 3:18 where,

“we all, ourselves – having a face that has been uncovered and remains unveiled [note: as with Moses, before the Lord, Ex.

34:34] – being folks who by a mirror are continuously observing, as ourselves, the Lord's [= Yahweh's or Christ's] glory (or: being those who progressively reflect – from ourselves as by a mirror – the glory of [our] Owner), are presently being continuously and progressively transformed into the very same image, from glory into glory – in accord with and exactly as – from [the] Lord's Breath-effect (or: from [the] Spirit and Attitude of [the] Lord [= Christ or Yahweh]).”

Peter's phrase put in apocalyptic

imagery a description of the new creation that is within us (2 Cor. 5:17).

20. constantly knowing this first, that every (or: all) previously enlightened information of Scripture [p72: prophecy and Scripture] is not coming to be unbound upon its own

(or: is not being born of its own unloosing; or: is not becoming its own explaining; or: is not coming into existence upon one's own releasing),

My first, bold rendering indicates that the OT Scriptures must be understood by the unveiling of the Holy Spirit. This is similar to what Paul said of the Jews

reading these same Scriptures without seeing Jesus Christ in them:

“the results of their mental conceptions, intellectual workings and thought processes were petrified (made to be a stony concretion; were hardened and made callous [note: the word became a medical term for being covered with thick skin]), **for until this very day the same head-covering** (veil) **continues remaining** (dwelling; abiding) **upon the reading of the old covenant** (arrangement; thorough placement) – **it** [i.e., the reading of the old, or the old covenant

itself] continues not being uncovered or unveiled.... Still furthermore, until today, whenever Moses should be repeatedly read [e.g., in the synagogue], a head-covering (veil) continues lying upon their heart (= the innermost being of the group). Yet whenever the time should be reached when it [= the heart] can (or: would; may; should; or: shall at some point) twist and turn upon, so as to face toward, [the] Lord [= Christ], ‘the head-covering (veil) is progressively taken from around [it]’” (2 Cor. 3:14-

16).

The “time should be reached” here in 2 Cor. may well be what Peter means in vs. 19, above, concerning the statement, “until the Day may shine through.”

The alternate, parenthetical renderings should also be considered:

1) “is not being born of its own unloosing” speaks of the birthing of the Word within the community, as well as within the individual’s own heart. The overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, the Breath-effect upon our inner primordial waters, brings Christ to birth out of the Seed of the Word that has been planted in our hearts

2) “is not becoming its own explaining” means that we must have the “keys of the kingdom” to unlock the spiritual meaning (which is Christ) from the old covenant writings

3) “is not coming into existence upon one’s own releasing” is similar to 1), above, both of which can be seen in the imagery of the Lamb being needed to open the seals of the scroll in Rev. 5:1-5, for as vs. 3 there instructs us, **“no one** (or: not one person) **within the atmosphere** (or: heaven), **neither upon the land** (or: earth) **nor down under the**

land (earth), had power or was able to open the little book (or: scroll) nor to see or observe it.”

Leahy concludes, “Just as the guidance of the Holy Spirit was needed by the prophets, so it is needed in reading their writings” (ibid p 496). Paul lays this out well in 1 Cor. 2:11-15,

“no one (or: not one) experientially or intimately knows (or: came to know or have insight and exercise "*gnosis*" regarding) the things of God (God's matters), except the Spirit of God (or: God's spirit; the Breath-effect which is God). Now we did not receive (or: do not

accept or take to ourselves; do not take control of or grasp hold of) **the spirit of the System** (the world's spirit and atmosphere; the attitude of the secular or religious realm), **but to the contrary, that spirit** (or: Spirit; Breath-effect; attitude) **[which is] from out of the midst of God – to the end that we can see and know the things being freely and joyously given to and for us in grace** (or: being graciously bestowed, and favorably given in us) **by God, which things we are also habitually speaking – not in words taught by human wisdom**

(or: not centered in learned thoughts, ideas or messages from human wisdom; or: not among those taught in, by or with words and reasons from human wisdom),
but rather in those [words] taught by spirit (or: in union with and among those folks taught from [the] Spirit – from the effect of a Breath and an Attitude),
habitually evaluating, deciding, combining or contrasting spiritual [matters] together by spiritual [means] and with qualities inherent in the Breath-effect

(or: constantly matching or

comparing/contrasting things pertaining to attitude with things in spirit, or of [the] Spirit; or: progressively making collective assessments of pneumatic [concepts] to and for pneumatic people). **But a soulish person** (a human which is dominated by, or living focused on, his breath [= the present transient life], or by those things which characterize the soul [emotions; will; intellect; physical life; internal welfare; the self; the ego]) **does not normally accept** (or: habitually get or welcomingly receive the offer of) **the things of God's Breath-**

effect (or: which have the character and quality of the Spirit of God; pertaining to God's spirit and attitude), **for they are stupidity to him** (foolishness for him; nonsense in him), **and he continues unable and habitually has no power to intimately and experientially know [them] or get insight, because they continue being sifted and held up for close spiritual examination**

(are normally evaluated spiritually above; are constantly brought back for spiritual separation and attitudinal

discernment; are progressively re-evaluated through means of the Breath-effect and comparison to the Attitude; or: are pneumatically discerned). **Yet**

the spiritual person (one dominated by and focused on spirit or the realm of the Spirit, and characterized by the qualities of spirit: the Wind which continuously moves across the land; or: the pneumatic person) **is, on the one hand, continuously sifting and re-evaluating** (habitually separating and deciding from above on; progressively holding things up

for close examination of) **all things and all humanity.**”

Barclay comments that Scripture, “is to be interpreted by the help of the Holy Spirit by whom it was first given” (ibid p 313).

21. for you see, previously enlightened information (or: prophecy) **was** (or: is) **not at any time brought by** (or: in; for; with) **[the] will** (intent; resolve; purpose) **of a human, but rather being continuously carried by** (or: swept along under [the influence of]) **[the] set-apart Breath-effect** (or: Holy Spirit), **people spoke from God** [with other MSS: God’s set-apart (holy) folks speak].

The prophecies of the OT were **being continuously carried by** (or: swept along under [the influence of]) **[the] set-apart Breath-effect** (or: Holy Spirit). It was by God's means and ability that **people spoke from God**. The **enlightened information** (or: prophecy) was not **brought by [the] will of a human**, it was brought by God's will. It did not come for a human intent, in a human resolve or with a human purpose, **but rather** it was swept along under the influence **from God**. Barclay simply says, "the Spirit gave the prophet his message" (ibid p 313).

There are good MS witnesses for both readings of the last clause. Some MSS

omit “set-apart” before **people**/folks; some omit the preposition **from** before **God**, thus having just “God” in the genitive – which I rendered as a possessive, in the bracketed reading. The verb **spoke**/speak is in the aorist, and thus I offer both a simple past and a simple present. So there are different ideas expressed here:

- 1) people spoke from God
- 2) God’s people spoke/speak.

In the MSS, there is no break between this verse, and the next. These two verses should be taken together as the contrast between the real and the false, as Peter’s audience would have heard them.

Chapter 2

This chapter “manifests an extraordinary resemblance to Jude [Judah] 4-13” (Leahy, *ibid* p 496; brackets added; see my comments on that letter in, *John, Judah, Paul & ?*, Harper Brown Publishing, 2013 [hereafter, *JJP&?*] pp 72ff).

1. Yet false prophets also birthed themselves (or: Now of themselves folks who pretended to have light ahead of time, or who had false knowledge and spoke before folks, came to be) **among the People** – as also false teachers will **continue existing** (or: being) **among you folks, ones who will proceed to stealthily introduce** (or: will continue

bringing in alongside or smuggling in) **destructive choices** (or: destructive sects, schools or ways of thinking; sets of principles or courses of action marked by, and which pertain to, loss or destruction) **even repeatedly denying** (disowning; disclaiming) **the Sovereign Owner** (or: Absolute Master) **having purchased them** (or: buying them at the gathering, or market, place), **continuously bringing swift loss, ruin or destruction upon themselves.**

The People is a reference to Israel, as Peter reaches back into its history to base his prediction that just as in the past, so also will it continue the pattern that **false teachers will continue**

existing (or: being) **among you folks,**
ones who will proceed to stealthily
introduce (or: will continue bringing in
alongside or smuggling in) **destructive**
choices. Moses warned the People
concerning false prophets in Deut. 13:1-
5. A curious story about a prophet who
give a false prophecy to another prophet
is found in 1 Ki. 13:18, where the
former claimed to have been given “the
word of Yahweh” by an
agent/messenger. The prophet Micaiah
spoke against the 400 false prophet who
were misguiding the king of Israel (1 Ki.
22:5-38). Jeremiah recorded Yahweh
saying, “The prophets prophesy
falsely.... From the prophet even unto

the priest, everyone deals falsely” (Jer. 5:31; 6:13). Then Jesus made this same prediction that we find here in Peter’s letter when He was speaking to His apprentices, in Mk. 13:22-23,

“You see, false 'Christs' (false anointed ones; counterfeit anointings) and false prophets will continue being roused and raised up (perhaps = come to prominence) and they will be repeatedly providing signs and miracles (wonders; portents) [aiming] toward the accomplishment of leading- astray – if [they are] able – the chosen ones (or: with a view to

the situation for the selected and picked-out folks to wander off [the path] – since [it is] possible and [they are] having power). **So you people continue looking and keep on taking note** (= be on your guard). **I have foretold everything to you** (or: I have declared all things for you beforehand).”

See also Mt. 24:11 where this same prediction is placed in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple – the time of the end of the old age of the Law. Barclay (ibid pp 314-15) points us to OT examples of false prophets:

Jer. 6:14, where they said,

“Peace, peace, when there is no peace” – they spoke what the people wanted to hear

Micah 3:11, “Its priests teach for hire, and its prophets divine for money”

Isa. 28:7, “The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink; they are confused with wine”

Jer. 23: 14, 32, “the prophets of Jerusalem... commit adultery and walk in lies.... They lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness.”

Observe the middle voice of the verb, **birthed themselves**, in their coming to be among the People. God did not raise

them up or give them His Word to proclaim; they initiated their own “ministries.” The **false teachers** will have to **proceed to stealthily introduce**, or smuggle-in, the **destructive choices**. Nyland (ibid p 472) instructs us that the word *hairesis* (**choice**, sect, ways of thinking, etc.) was not used as a technical term (transliterated as “heresy”) until much later than this letter was written. Those “destructive ways of thinking” came to form sects and schools that taught “sets of principles or courses of action” which were “marked by and which pertained to” both “loss” of the Way pointed-out, and often “destruction” of peoples’ lives through the delusions

that were fomented upon them. The idea of a “sect,” or “a way of thinking” can be seen by this word’s use in Acts 5:17,

“Now having arisen, the chief (ranking) priest and all those together with him – the existing sect of the Sadducees – were filled with jealousy (or: with boiling zeal).”

It is seen again in Acts 15:5, **“Yet certain men from the sect of the Pharisees...”** and in Acts 24:5 the Jews applied this term to Paul,

“You see, [we have been] finding this man [to be] a plague and a pest – also repeatedly putting insurrections in motion among

the Jews down through the inhabited land (= the Empire), besides [being] a spearhead (or: ringleader; one standing in the first rank) of the sect (or: party; or: heresy) of the Nazarenes.”

Used in this way, the original meaning of “heresy” would equate to the modern, ecclesiastical term “denomination.” We can observe the beginning of this by Paul’s description of the community in Corinth,

“You see, in the first place, in your repeated coming together within an assembly of the called-out, I am constantly hearing there to be the effects of

tearing and split-effects

(= separations into cliques; divisions) **continually inherent among you folks – and a certain part of it I am now believing!**

Then you see, it also continues to be necessary and binding for there constantly to be choices and options among you folks (or: For there must even be sects, factions or a mixture of doctrinal stances in your midst), to the end that those who have been examined and tested among you may also come to be (or: be birthed) manifested ones (folks shown in clear light)” (1 Cor.

11:18-19).

Paul gave more details on such a situation in Tit. 3:10-11,

“After one, and then a second, putting-into-the-mind (= impartation; admonition) of a person who chooses or promotes a sect or a party (or: of a factious person), progressively decline yourself (or: repeatedly excuse yourself), having seen and thus knowing that such a one has been and remains a person turned from out of the midst (or: twisted inside-out; perverted) and continues missing the target (constantly fails to properly aim

toward the goal; habitually errs; repeatedly makes a mistake), **being continually a person having made a decision corresponding to himself** (or: one separating himself down and out of line; or: self-condemned and sifted to his own level).”

The “**even repeatedly denying** (disowning; disclaiming) **the Sovereign Owner** (or: Absolute Master)” can come in many forms. It can be in making their own decisions – instead of being led by His Spirit – or, running the operations within the local called-out group as though being (in today’s language) a CEO of a business (claims

that I have personally heard from pastors), or trying to impose their own will or views by giving the congregation a “thus sayeth the Lord!” Groups have been abused and destroyed by both. We find the risen Christ addressing a local situation of this nature in one city of Peter’s target audience:

“you are constantly letting-off (tolerating; allowing; pardoning) your wife [other MSS: the woman] Jezebel – she is habitually calling herself a prophetess – and she is continually teaching and deceiving (seducing) My slaves...” (Rev. 2:20).

The qualifying participle, **having purchased them** (or: buying them at the gathering, or market, place), adds to the picture that they (even these false prophets and false teachers) BELONG to Him. Paul refers to this relationship between us and Christ in 1 Cor. 7:23,

“You folks were bought, as at a marketplace: [there was] value and honor involved in the price (or: [you are] of value). Do not continue becoming slaves of humanity (or: Do not repeatedly come to be slaves of people).”

Then in Gal. 3:13 he explains the character and situation of this purchase,

“Christ bought us [back] out (or:

redeems and reclaims us out [of slavery] and liberates us) **from the midst of the curse** (or: adversarial prayer; imprecation) **of and from the Law, while becoming** (or: birthing Himself to be) **a curse** (or: accursed One; an [embodied] adversarial prayer) **for our sakes** (or: over our [situation])..." Cf Rev. 5:9

These folks are still His, but He needs to remake them so that they will properly display His image. Recall the lesson that Jeremiah learned when he was sent to the potter to receive an analogy of how God works with people:

“Now the vessel which he was

making with clay was ruined in the hand of the potter, and he turned back and made it into another vessel.... Can I not do to you, house of Israel, as this potter? declares Yahweh; behold, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand, house of Israel” (Jer. 18:4-6).

So we can be assured that the **bringing swift loss, ruin or destruction upon themselves** will have a redemptive outcome, for “**Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and on into the ages,**

(or: Jesus [is and continues being] Christ [= the Messiah] – the Man

Himself {or: the Very One}:
yesterday as well as today, and
even into the midst of the ages,)”
(Heb. 13:8),

i.e., He does not change and will
continue doing what He is: being our
Deliverer and Savior, for,

“You see, the Son of the Man (=
the eschatological messianic
figure; = Adam's son) **came to**
seek after, and then to save,
deliver and restore what is
existing being lost and
destroyed” (Lu. 19:10).

Jesus had referred to Himself in the
metaphor of buying humanity out of
slavery in Mk. 10:45,

“You see, even the Son of the Man (or: And so, the Son of humanity, as well,) did not come to be given attending service, but to the contrary, to give attending service, and further, to give His soul (or: soul life) [as] a ransom payment – for unbinding and release – for, as, in the place of, and thus on behalf of and which corresponds to, many people.”

The emissaries of Christ were apparently of one mind on this issue, and were in communication with one another concerning these matters, giving out similar warnings to their sheep while

emphasizing different specifics in their general descriptions of these folks. In Judah's letter we read,

4. For you see, some people came in unobserved, from the side – those having been previously written of old into this judgment (or: people having from long ago been written into the effects and result of this decision): [to exist being] impious ones, people continuously changing the grace and favor of God into licentiousness, as well as repeatedly denying and disowning our only Sovereign

and Lord (or: Supreme Ruler and Owner), **Jesus Christ** [= Messiah].

“The stealthy entry into the fellowship shows that they did not at first reveal themselves as they truly were. Verses 5-7, below, give historical examples from Israel's story, and prior to that, of the kind of people to which Judah is referring. But let us first consider the enigmatic clause that describes them in the first part of this verse: "**those having been previously written of old into this judgment** (or: people having from long ago been written into

the effects and result of this decision)." I suggest that this is speaking of "predestination" only in the sense that the decision was made by God in the Garden of Eden. This clause describes the predicament of humanity, the condition of those existing outside the life of Christ. It once applied to everyone" (*JJP&?*, *ibid*).

Both Peter and Judah emphasize God's Sovereignty over humanity. Paul used the metaphor of God's ownership of humanity in 1 Cor. 6:19-20,

“have you folks not seen so as to know that your body (or: the body of you folks) is a temple of

the set-apart spirit (or: a sanctuary belonging to the Holy Spirit; a holy place and a holy of holies which pertains to the Sacred Breath; or: that the body, which is you folks, exists being a divine habitation which has the qualities and characteristics of the Holy Attitude) – **within the midst of you** (or: in union with you folks; or: among you people) – **which you people constantly hold and progressively possess from God? And further, you are not folks belonging to yourselves** (or: Also then, you people do not exist from

yourselves), **for you people were bought, as at a marketplace: [there was] value and honor involved in the price** (or: [you are] of value)

(or: = for you were bought and paid for; or: for from a valuable price you folks were bought at market).

By all means then, glorify God (bring a good reputation to God; manifest that which calls forth praise to God) **within your body** (or: within the midst of the body which you folks are)!”

2. And many will progressively follow out to (for; in; by) their outrageous

behaviors (extravagant or licentious conducts), **on account of whom** (or: because of which ones) **the Way** [other MSS: the glory] **of the Truth and Reality will proceed being blasphemed** (vilified; defamed; misrepresented with abusive slander; or: having its light hindered),

Paul, in Acts 20, made the following prediction:

29. **"Now I myself have seen and am aware that, after (or: with) my spreading forth as dust and ashes** (= going away, so as to be out of reach), **heavy** (= burdensome and oppressive) **wolves will enter into the midst**

of you folks – folks by habit not sparing (or: treating with tenderness or forbearance) the flock,

30. "and men from among you yourselves (= from your own community) will of themselves proceed standing up, repeatedly speaking things having been thoroughly turned and twisted (things that are distorted and not straight), to progressively drag (or: draw; [D & p41 read: turn]) away the disciples behind (thus: after) themselves.

31. "Therefore, constantly keep your wits about you (be

continuously awake, alert and watchful) **while continuously bearing in mind through remembrance that three-year period [when] night and day I did not cease – with tears – repeatedly and progressively placing [thoughts; ideas; information; admonition] in the minds of each one [D & E add: of you folks].**

Here, Peter paints a similar picture about folks who do not continue dwelling in the Vine (John 15:1ff), and so are easily led astray by the **outrageous behaviors** (extravagant or licentious conducts) of those described

in vs. 1 who joined themselves to the called-out, covenant community. Barclay instructs us that the term which I rendered as “outrageous behaviors (etc.),” describes “the attitude of the man who is lost to shame and cares for the judgment of neither man nor God” (ibid p 319). It is because of these, who are not yet followers of Christ, that **the Way** would get a bad reputation. Rom. 2 may have been speaking of such as these.

23. You who are boasting in law (or: [the] Law [= Torah]; or: a law), **through the transgression of** (stepping across the line of; stepping to the side of; deviating from) **the Law, you are**

constantly dishonoring

(devaluing) God,

24. for according as it has been,

and stands, written [in the Tanakh

(Hebrew Scriptures)],

"Because of you, God's NAME

[Yahweh?] is continuously being

blasphemed (vilified;

misrepresented; slandered; given

a false image which hinders the

Light) among the ethnic

multitudes (nations; non-Jews;

Gentiles)." [Isa. 52:5; Ezk. 36:20]

Paul gave Titus instructions on

community behavior **"to the end that**

God's thought and idea (God's Word

and message) cannot be constantly

blasphemed” (Tit. 2:5), and in 1 Tim. 6:1 he wrote,

“Let as many as are (or: exist being) slaves, joined under a yoke, constantly regard (consider; esteem) their own masters (or: owners) worthy of all honor, to the end that God's Name and the teaching may not be repeatedly blasphemed (defamed with a false image; vilified; misrepresented in a way that hinders the Light; spoken of injuriously; slandered).”

Behavior is an important aspect of the called-out life in Christ.

The early designation for those who

followed Jesus was **the Way** (Acts 9:2) and is also a clear reference to Jesus' designation of Himself in Jn. 14:6 as "**the Way** (or: Path), **the Truth** (the Reality) **and the Life** (or: = I am the way to really live)." An echo from Israel's writings in Ps. 119:30, 32-33 may also inform Peter's phrase.

3. **and in greed** (desire to take advantage in order to have more), **by formed** (molded; fabricated, and thus, counterfeit) **words, they will constantly exploit you** (use you for business; market you; use you in trade and travel by sea), **to whom** (or: for which folks) **the sentence** (or: the result of the evaluation; the effect of a separating

process) [**coming**] **from long ago** (or: out of old times; forth from old) **is not continuing inactive** (is not constantly unemployed; is not remaining idle), **and their loss** (or: destruction) **is not nodding in sleep or taking a nap.**

Exploitation usually occurs from the presence of **greed** – in all areas of the dominating, organized Systems of our worlds. **Formed words** (the fabricated, deceitful rhetoric of people and groups) are constantly employed to use people for business interests and to market them – whether it be for local trade or overseas travel and transactions (the semantic meanings of the Greek word used here). We see a graphic picture of

this in Rev. 18:11-14, 19. The investigation of that symbol is for another book.

The desire to possess more is “the cause of false teaching” (Barclay, *ibid* p 318). The last clause of this sentence is a figurative way of saying that the **loss** (of profits and property) and destruction (perhaps an allusion to the coming destruction of Jerusalem that Jesus predicted in Lu. 21) would be happening soon. God's corrections and His righting of situations are for this life here on earth. They may not come according to our desired schedules, but they are **not nodding in sleep or taking a nap**. Jn. 3:36 verifies that, as does Israel's

history. Cf Heb. 10:19, as well as the “field preparation” that is described in Heb. 6:7-8 (see comments in *JJP&?* p 138ff).

4. For since (or: if) God did (or: does) not spare agents (or: folks having a, or, the message) – but who at one point were (or: are) straying from the goal (or: when failing to hit the mark; at missing the target; upon committing error) – but rather gave (or: gives) them over into an act of judging – of being repeatedly pruned (cut back for correction), while being constantly watched over, kept, maintained and protected – giving [them] the experience of Tartarus [Hellenistic

mythological term and concept: the subterranean world; *cf* LXX, Job 40:15 (the marshlands and wild areas around the Jordan River) and 41:23 (the caverns and lower parts of deep waters and the abyss)] **in dark, gloomy pits** (caves; caverns) [other MSS: in ropes (or: chains; bands; cords); = in bondage]. Judah's parallel passage should now be compared:

6. Besides that, those agents (or: folks having or bringing a message) **not guarding** (keeping watch over; maintaining) **the beginning of themselves** (or: the rule of themselves), **but to the contrary, after leaving away**

from (= abandoning) **the personal dwelling place** (one's own abode or habitation), **He has guarded, kept watch over and maintained under gloom** (or: thick darkness) **by imperceptible** (or: in unobservable, but effecting-all) **bonds, with a view to a judging** (a sifting and a separation for evaluating; a making of a distinction and a deciding) **of a great Day** (or: pertaining to or whose source is a great day; or: which is [the] great Day).

“Because of ‘transliteration’ (instead of ‘translation’) of the

Greek *angelos* and rendering its plural "angels" instead of 'agents' or 'folks having or bringing a message,' and due to non-canonical fanciful stories of "angels," this verse has been turned into mythology in traditional interpretations because of reading sections of *The Assumption of Moses* and the *Book of Enoch* into the text of *Judah* which we are now investigating. But another interpretation is viable, which reaches back into the canonical story in the book of Genesis. I suggest that those 'agents' were

the ones that were given dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26) and had a **‘personal dwelling place** ([their] own abode or habitation)’ in Eden. These were Adam and Eve. They did not **guard ‘the beginning of themselves** (or: the rule of themselves),’ but **‘to the contrary, after leaving away from the personal dwelling place [Eden]’** God **‘has guarded, kept watch over and maintained [them; = humanity, their corporate body] under gloom** (or : thick darkness) **by imperceptible bonds.’**
“We find Jesus coming **‘to**

publicly proclaim, as a herald, to (for; among) captives a release and liberation' (Lu. 4:18) and to **'constantly shining in the dim and shadowed places, and keeps on progressively giving light within the gloomy darkness where there is no light (or: within the midst the obscurity of The Darkness where there is no light of The Day; or: = in the ignorant condition or system)'** (John 1:5a). But like these of whom Judah speaks,

'humans love the darkness (or: the men love and fully give themselves to

the dimness of obscurity and gloom; or: mankind moved toward union with the shadow-realm) **rather than the Light, for their works** (deeds; actions) **were continuing to be bad ones** (unsound, wrongful ones; wicked ones; toilsome ones that created bad news)’ (Jn. 3:19).

“Notice that God ‘**maintained**’ and ‘**kept watch over**’ these folks ‘**with a view to a judging of a Great Day**’ – which we see at the cross of Jesus, the beginning of the Day of the Lord. He took the

judgment of humanity upon Himself and gave us His life. But not everyone has yet been existentially given birth into this new creation, for as Paul said, it is **‘every person in his own class and order’** (1 Cor. 15:23).

Humanity cannot see their bonds, for they are **‘imperceptible’** (Greek *a-idiois*: not-seen; unperceived)” (*JJP&?*, ibid pp 75-76).

I have already inserted the LXX quotes from the book of Job, into the translation of vs. 4, above. From this we can see that the word **Tartarus** had been domesticated by the Jews and had come

to have a “this world” application, even if its use was figurative in nature. The different MS traditions of the noun (**pits** versus ropes) in the last phrase have good witnesses for each reading – and it is only a slight difference in spelling that distinguishes these words – and while one describes wild living conditions, as for outcasts, the other implies imprisonment. As to the word **pits**, Barclay instructs us that the word, “[S]iros or *seiros* which originally meant a great earthenware jar for storing of grain. Then it came to mean the great underground pits in which grain was stored and which

served as granaries. *Siros* has come into English *via* Provencal in the form of *silo*, which still describes the towers in which grain is stored. Still later the word went on to mean a pit in which a wolf or other wild animal was trapped.... But there is a very similar word *seira*, which means a *chain*.... The Greek MSS of *Second Peter* vary between *seiroi*, pits, and *seirai*, chains” (ibid p 321; emphasis original; brackets added).

Christ came to set both free from those conditions and make them a part of the Jerusalem which is above (Gal. 4:26).

He described His mission as the inauguration of the Day of Jubilee (the time of restoration to one's former place in society and to one's former possessions) in Lu. 4:18b-19 when reading from Isa.,

“to publicly proclaim, as a herald, to (for; among) captives a release and liberation (a letting go away) and to (for; among) blind folks a seeing again (a recovery of sight), to send away with a mission those having been shattered by oppression, in a state of release and liberation, to publicly and loudly proclaim [the] Lord's [= Yahweh's] year

which is characterized by being welcomed, favorably received and approved.”

Cox informs us that, “Scholars now largely agree that the ‘year of the Lord’s favor’ refers to the Jewish legal provision for a ‘Jubilee Year,’ which was to be celebrated every fiftieth year” (ibid p 109). We find these provisions in Lev. 25:8-12 and Deut. 15:1-5.

Both Judah and (here in vs. 4) Peter use the same word that speaks of **“being constantly watched over, kept, maintained and protected.”** This has a very positive connotation, and Peter adds the description of the **judging** as **“being repeatedly pruned** (cut back for

correction).” This calls to mind Jesus’ parable of the young (immature) kids and their pruning in order to produce the fruit of Love and care for their brothers in Mat. 25:46a,

“these folks will continue going off (or: coming away) into an eonian pruning

(a lopping-off which lasts for an undetermined length of time; an age-lasting correction and rehabilitation; a pruning which brings betterment and which has its source and character in the Age; a cutting off during the ages).”

The judging of humanity began with the story in the Garden of Eden, and the human predicament lasted unto the coming of the Messiah. Even in Jesus' day, we are informed in Jn. 3:36b that,

“the person now continuing being unpersuaded by the Son (or: presently being constantly in-compliant, disobedient or disbelieving to the Son; being repeatedly stubborn toward the Son) will not be catching sight of (seeing; observing; perceiving) [this] life. To the contrary, God's personal emotion and inherent fervor

(teeming passion and

swelling desire; mental bent
and natural impulse;
propensity and disposition;
or: anger, wrath and
indignation) **is continuously
remaining** (is now
habitually dwelling and
abiding) **upon him.**”

Those “**who at one point were** (or: are)
straying from the goal (or: when failing
to hit the mark; at missing the target;
upon committing error)” were Adam and
Eve, and in Rom. 5: 12-21 we are
instructed that Christ has solved
humanity’s predicament so that,
“**where the Sin** (the failure; the
divergence and missing of the

target) **increases** (or: abounded to be more than enough; becomes more intense) **THE GRACE** ("the act producing happiness, which is granted as a favor" – Jim Coram) **at once super-exceeds** (or: hyper-exceeded) **over and above, surrounding to excessive abundance and overflow, to the end that JUST AS the Sin** (the failure; the erroneous act; the deviation and digression which issued in missing the goal) **at one point reigned** (or: ruled as king; exercised sovereign sway) **within, and in union with, the Death, THUS SO** (or: in THIS way) **also**

the Grace and joyous favor
would reign (should rule as king;
can exercise sovereign sway)
through an eschatological
deliverance that created
rightwisedness (or: by means of
being rightly-turned into an
existence with equity in
[covenantal] solidarity of right
relationships which accord to the
Way; through a liberating Justice-
[expression]) [**which leads**] **into**
Life which belongs to, pertains
to and has the characteristics of
the Age (or: eonian life; Life of
the Age [of Messiah]; a life for
the ages) – **through Jesus Christ,**

our Owner (Lord; Master).”

Many commentators have assumed that this verse, along with Judah 6, alludes to the story of “the sons (LXX: agents/messengers) of God” in Gen. 6:1-5. Barclay informs us,

“[I]n later Jewish and Christian thought two lines of thought developed. First, it was denied that the story involved angels at all. The sons of God were said to be good men who were descendants of Seth, and the daughters of man were said to be... daughters of Cain.... There is no scriptural evidence for this.... Second, the whole story

was allegorized.... Philo [said] that it was never meant to be taken literally.... Augustine declared that no man could take the story literally.... Cyril of Alexandria said that it could not be taken literally.... Chrysostom said that, if the story was taken literally, it was nothing short of blasphemy.... Once again, Peter is speaking allusively, in a way that would be clear enough to the people of his day but which is obscure to us" (ibid p 323-4; brackets added).

But Peter may simply be making allusions to old stories, using

apocalyptic imagery to make his point about past and present failures in human behavior.

5. And further, He did not spare [the] original ordered arrangement (a beginning or ruling world of society and culture; or: [the] secular realm), **but rather spared Noah, an eighth** (idiom: = with seven others), **a proclaimer** (herald) **of eschatological deliverance** (and: justice in fair and equitable dealings that accord with the Way pointed out from covenant participation), **when bringing a deluge** (an inundation) **upon a world** (System and society; secular order) **of folks devoid of awe**

(or: in bringing down a washing upon a system of irreverent and impious ones), The story of the **deluge** in the day of Noah can be found in Gen. 7:1; more can be learned of him and of his place in Israel's origin stories from the passages in Gen. 5:29 through 10:32. He is referenced in the prophecy of restoration in Isa. 54, where in vss. 7-10 we find wrath replaced by loving kindness, mercy, redemption and peace:

“For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great mercy and compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with loving kindness – whose end

cannot be seen – I will have mercy and compassion on you, says Yahweh, your Redeemer. This is like the days of Noah to me: Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again go over the land, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says Yahweh, who has mercy and compassion on you.”

Jesus (Mat. 24:37ff; Lu. 17:26ff) cited “the days of Noah” in regard to the soon-

to-come destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70); the writer of Hebrews cited Noah's faith, trust and obedience (Heb. 11:7); and Peter had mentioned God's

“emotional quietness (taking a long time before rushing or being in a heat of passion; long-enduring patience; putting anger far away)” of which Noah **“was continuing to be receiving forth, and taking away from”** (1 Pet. 3:20).

When judgment is needed (and, “when [His] judgments are in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn justice from being turned in the right direction” – Isa. 26:9b), **He [does] not spare**. The picture in the original Gen. 7 account is one of a new creation. Here in

vs. 5, above, the allusion may well be to Christ's act of judgment on the old priesthood and temple cultus that was the death knell of the old creation, the new one (symbolized by the number "8," which is a number of a new beginning) being that which the promised Messiah had brought. The promise to Noah (the "bow in the clouds") was a foreshadow of the Promised Seed of which Paul speaks in Gal. 4.

We are informed here that during the period of the constructing of Noah's ark, he **proclaimed** God's **eschatological deliverance** by the building of the ark – which was the deliverance for Noah and the seven folks with him. The ark

“saved” those who were “left behind” to begin the new creation in Christ, here on earth. The deluge that was to come in the near future of Peter’s day would be through the “flood” of Romans and the fire that burned Jerusalem.

6. and later He correspondingly evaluated and commensurately decided about (or: condemns) [the] cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, reducing [them] to ashes for twisting down ([= for distorting the path of life]; or: by and in an overthrow; to a turning down [of activities or of life]), having placed (or: set) an example (exhibition; a result of a specimen pointed out and set under view) of folks habitually

being about to be

(or: to commit sacrilege without awe) [other MSS: an example of things about to happen to (or: in; among) ones without reverential awe];

Note the present tense of the verb “to be about to” in the final clause. God has habitually brought a judgment (a **corresponding evaluation and a commensurate decision**) into the earth on or for people “**habitually being about to commit sacrilege without awe.**” There have always been “**folks habitually being about to be irreverent.**” The alternate MS reading, “about to happen to/in/among ones

without reverential awe” was likely pointing toward the judgment that was soon to come upon those in Jerusalem who had been irreverent to Jesus and to the temple (they had made God’s house a market place and a den of thieves). Peter notes the God had **placed** the story of these cities in the Gen. account to be **an example** – which we see was here on earth, and in this life. This should instruct us as to the nature of His judgments. E.g., in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, His judgment altered a situation of the life of that city in the first century AD, turning the historical “habitation” of Yahweh (“My Father’s house,” as Jesus termed it)

away from physical stones located in a literal city to “living stones” of a “spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2:5) in a “heavenly city” (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:10).

Here, again, let us compare Jude, and the comments in *JJP&?*:

7. As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them [= Admah and Zeboyim – cf Deut. 29:23], in like manner (or: turn) to them, being given to fornication and outlandish prostitution, and then going away after different flesh (= unnatural vice; or: = a different expression of alienation that was

formed by the existing System),
**are continuously lying before [us
as] – an example** (a specimen; an
effect of a thing pointed out or
presented to sight) – **continuing in
undergoing an experience of
justice** (the Way pointed out;
fairness and equity; what is right)
from fire pertaining to the ages
(or: of eonian, or age-lasting, fire;
of a fire of undetermined duration
whose quality and character are
the Age [of the Messiah]).

“He returns to Genesis for another
example. Again it is a story of
judgment that happened to people
that simply ended their lives early

here on earth. There are many such examples in the OT Scriptures. God brought justice to Sodom and Gomorrah just as He did with Egypt in the time of Moses. It was justice **"from fire pertaining to the ages,"** in other words, pertaining to life here on earth during the ages. That fire did not continue burning, once the fuel (what it was burning) was burned up. An interesting thing is that Jesus also referenced that story in Matt. 10:

14. **"Also, whoever may not welcome and receive you men, nor even listen**

**to your words or hear
your message, as you are
going outside, from out of
the house or that city,
shake the dust off your
feet.**

[note: Hospitality in those times and countries involved having a servant wash the feet of their guests; further: Jews did this when they left a Gentile country, so this would indicate that this town was being regarded as polluted and unholy, and in the same category as the Gentiles;

comment: this could be a metaphor to shake off that incident, so as not to let their “humanity” cling to them]

15. "Assuredly – I now say to you folks – it will be more endurable in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in [the] day of separation and decision, than in that city (or: it will be more supportable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in a day of judging, than for that town)!"

“So we see that the physical

judgment in Gen. 19:24 was not the "end" for those people, even though it was eonian, or age-lasting, fire – or a figure of the fire that pertains to the judgment that would come in the Age of the Messiah. We can read of what Paul revealed of this fire to test the work that people have done in building the community (i.e., God's temple) in 1 Cor. 3:9-17. There, in vs. 15 we see that,

"If anyone's work will be burned down, he will incur a loss (sustain the damage; forfeit [it]), yet he himself will be saved (rescued and

delivered; healed and restored to health; returned to his original state and condition), **and as in this way – through Fire!**"

“God had Ezekiel use Sodom as a figure for comparing Jerusalem's "abominations" and to speak of the judgment that was going to come upon Jerusalem (Ezk. 16:48-55). Jerusalem's final destruction (in the story of Israel) came in AD 70 through the Romans. These are specimens of eonian fire that **"are continuously lying before [us as] an example."** Judah is simply saying

that God periodically brings judgment in the earth.” (ibid)

The dative phrase, “**for twisting down,**” is a literal rendering of the noun which expresses the opposite of “edification” or “a building up.” From this literal word-picture, I parenthetically offered the interpretive paraphrase, “= for distorting the path of life.” The “twisting down” of the principles of life and growth brought a severe destruction. A more common rendering is also on offer: “by and in an overthrow,” which would modify the action, the **reducing [of them] to ashes**. Also possible is the literal rendering, “to a turning down [of activities or of life].” God stopped the

direction of the life in those cities, by turning their entire existence down – in a judgment that parallels the deluge in Noah’s day and area. These references to God’s historic judgments may be a subtle allusion to another historic destruction that was soon to happen on the Babylon of Peter’s time (from where he was writing these letters – 1 Pet. 5:13; *cf* Isa. 1:21; Rev. 17:4-6; Lu. 11:50-51).

Ezk. 16:46-56 makes symbolic comparisons between Jerusalem and Sodom. Jerusalem’s unfaithfulness to Yahweh is described as being a prostitute in Ezk. 16:24-37, calls Sodom her “younger sister” in vs. 46, and then

speaks of “bringing again... the captivity of Sodom and her daughters” (vs. 53) which will end with “Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate” (vs. 55). The prophet was made to see that God’s judgments are not “forever.” In fact, in Mat. 10:15 (cf 11:23, 24; Lu.10:12) Jesus instructs us that,

“Assuredly – I now say to you folks – it will proceed being more endurable in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in a day of separating and deciding, than in that city (or: it will be more supportable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in a day of

judging, than for that town)!”

Jesus was, I suspect, using hyperbole to stress how serious were the consequences of towns refusing the ministry and preaching of His disciples when He sent out the twelve. When the Romans later came to put down the Jewish rebellion in the Jewish war (AD 66-70), many towns of Judea were also wiped out. But this very act of comparing the destruction of those towns to that of Sodom and Gomorrah sheds light back on the history of God's judgment in Gen. 19.

7. and yet, He drew to Himself right-living Lot (or: He Himself rescues Lot, a just one; or: He, for Himself, rescues

Lot, an equitable person), **a person being constantly worn down under the unrestrained and unprincipled folks (or: acts) in the midst of [their] outrageous (extravagant; licentious; indulgent) conduct (mode of living).** Here Peter continues the story found in Gen. 19. There were traditions about Lot that varied over time. *The Wisdom of Solomon* presents a discussion of Wisdom, personified, and in 9:17 we read,

“Now who has known Your counsel, except You give Wisdom, and send Your Holy Spirit from above?” Then, referring to Lot, 10:6 instructs us,

“During the full destruction of the irreverent folks that were without awe, She delivered the just man who fled from the fire descending on The Five Cities” (LXX, JM).

Here, Peter simply states that God Himself rescued Lot, drawing him to Himself, and for Himself. These variations are the potential renderings of the middle voice of the verb “draw-to/rescue.” Peter also supplies a synopsis of what Lot went through with the men of Sodom as recorded in Gen. 19:4-11, which informs us about what he describes here in vs. 7. He assumes that his listeners are familiar with the story, and extrapolates from the Gen. account,

and perhaps from tradition, the wearing effect that those

unrestrained and unprincipled folks

(or: acts), and their **outrageous**

(extravagant; licentious; indulgent)

conduct (mode of living) had upon Lot.

8. **For you see, by seeing and by**

hearing (or: with a look and in listening

to) **[this] from day to day, this fair and**

just person continuously dwelling in

their midst kept on testing and

distressing – as by using a touchstone

– [his] just and equitable soul (or:

inner being) **by [their] lawless works**

(or: actions and deeds which are apart

from custom).

Here he expands upon what life in

Sodom was like, and how it **kept on testing and distressing** Lot's inner being. We should note how Peter uses the word **test/distress** which I expanded with a literal explanation: **as by using a touchstone**, which was a stone used to test metals, such as gold. The verb is *basanizō* which is used figuratively:

- a) of the effect of severe bodily affliction or sickness (Mat. 8:6)
- b) of physically or emotionally stressful situations, such as rowing amidst a storm (Mk. 6:48)
- c) of being on the receiving end of a prophet's ministry (Rev. 11:10)
- d) of the pain of childbirth (Rev. 12:2)

e) of being in God's purifying, transforming Fire (Rev. 14:10; 20:10; cf Mal. 3:2-3; 1 Cor. 3:13-15)

f) of being tested and distressed by lawless actions of other people (2 Pet. 2:8).

The process of the testing (the noun *basanismos*) is used only in Rev. 9:5; 14:11; 18:7, 10 and 15.

The test, distress or pain itself (*basanos*) is used to describe diseases or maladies in Mat. 4:24, and then is found referring to God's Fire in the parable of the rich Jew in Lu. 16:23, 28. The unfortunate KJV and NASB rendering of this noun as "torment" (as

does the NIV, NRSV in vs. 28) in this parable has given an unwarranted distortion of the figurative picture in the parable, as well as in the apocalyptic visions in Rev. 14:10 and 20:10, evoking the mental image in the minds of modern readers as describing a situation of God torturing someone. The other NT uses of this word should inform its meaning in those symbolic pictures. Peter is simply describing the distressing situation that Lot experienced in Sodom as a reference point for his listeners of the distresses which they might undergo, while reminding them that as God delivered Lot and his daughters from the destruction of his

city, so too will He deliver His
rightwised, called-out communities
when His judgments are in the land.

9. **[The] Lord [=Yahweh], having seen, thus knows to (or: knows how to) continuously drag out of danger (or: rescue) a reverent person (one standing in devout goodness, in awe and in virtuous conduct with ease and well-being from relationship with God) from out of the midst of a trial (or: ordeal; [other MSS: trials]), yet to constantly keep in custody, guard, watch over and maintain unjust folks (people who live contrary to the Way pointed out; unrightwised folks) [who are] being repeatedly pruned (or: being**

progressively corrected), [**which is leading**] unto a day of evaluating for making a decision [**about their progress**] (or: of judging [condition]), So now Peter arrives at the point to which he had been leading: the Lord “**knows to** (or: knows how to) **continuously drag out of danger** (or: rescue) **a reverent person** (one standing in devout goodness, in awe and in virtuous conduct with ease and well-being from relationship with God) **from out of the midst of a trial** (or: ordeal; [other MSS: trials])” – and notice that the deliverance is from out of the midst of a TRIAL, and ordeal. This corroborates our analysis of the NT

meaning of *basanizō* and its cognates. They are to take comfort that God will bring them through whatever may come along. They are to continue to trust the Lord. Here we can recall Ps. 34:17 (CVOT),

“The righteous cry out, and Yahweh hears. And from all their distresses He rescues them.”

The other side of the above pictures from Israel’s history is that **unjust folks** are not beyond the reach of His hand. In fact, even though we may not be able to observe how this is happening, we see here that these folks are “**being repeatedly pruned** (or: being progressively corrected).” During this

pruning and correcting He **“constantly keeps in custody, guards, watches over and maintains”** these folks – and note the positive side of the semantic range of this word: “watches over and maintains.” This calls to mind the time where Jesus informed His listeners in Mat. 5:45,

“your Father – the One within [the] atmosphere and in union with [the] heavens – ... is repeatedly making His sun to rise back up again upon bad (evil; wicked; worthless) folks as well as [upon] good (virtuous) folks, and He is habitually sending rain upon fair and

equitable people (those in right relationship; those within the Way pointed out; just ones; rightwised ones) **as well as [upon] unfair and inequitable people** (those not in right relationship; those not in the Way pointed out; unjust folks).”

As with everyone else, this Sovereign oversight of “unrightwised folks” continues leading “**unto a day of evaluating for making a decision [about their progress]** (or: of judging [condition]).” His swelling passion for them continues dwelling upon them (Jn. 3:36).

10. **yet especially** (or: most of all) **the**

people continually passing from one place to another after flesh (= aspects of the natural realm; = expressions or experiences of the estranged self or the human nature that has been conformed to the System) **in defiling** (polluting; staining) **lust** (over-desire; full passion), **even habitually thinking disparagingly** (scorning; despising; down-thinking) **of lordship** (ownership; constituted authority). **[These are] presumptuous folks** (audacious ones), **self-pleasing people** (willfully arrogant ones), **continuously slandering** (defaming; speaking injuriously about; obscuring the light of; vilifying) **reputations**,
The folks to which Peter is referring in

the first clause (**people continually passing from one place to another after flesh**) may have been the Judaizers who followed Paul in his work among the Gentile converts, of whom he spoke in Gal. 6:

12. **As many as continually want (intend; will; purpose) to make a good impression (a pleasing appearance; a fair face, front or facade) within flesh [i.e., in a flesh system or religion], these are habitually urging, or trying to compel or force, you folks (or: making you feel obliged) to proceed to be circumcised – only so that they may not be**

continually pursued and persecuted for (or: in; with) the cross of Christ Jesus (or: by the execution stake that pertains to the Anointed Jesus).

13. For not even the folks being presently (or: currently getting) circumcised (or, as a middle: habitually circumcising [people]; requiring [the practice of] circumcision; [other MSS: having been circumcised]) are themselves habitually keeping (guarding; protecting; observing; maintaining) [the] Law, but even so, they constantly want and intend you folks to proceed to

be circumcised, so that they may have cause for boasting in your flesh [ritual or religion].

This verse is another of the striking parallels with Judah (Jude), and so we will begin by reading Jude 8 and the comments which are on offer in *JJP&?*, p 77:

8. In like manner, indeed, these dreaming ones (folks continuing in sleep, or with imaginary experiences) **also pollute flesh** (= their or others' bodies; or: = the estranged human nature). **They are continuously setting aside lordship** (or: ownership systems) **and are repeatedly blaspheming**

(speaking injuriously of and slandering; vilifying; obscuring the light of; misrepresenting)

reputations (or: opinions; notions; glories; manifestations which call forth praise).

“So just as Jerusalem and Sodom ‘**pollute[d] flesh**’ so do these folks that had slipped into their community. And how were they ‘polluting’ the community? By ‘**polluting flesh,**’ or ‘**setting aside lordship**’ or ‘**blaspheming reputations.**’ The ‘flesh’ was often a figure of the natural life or ‘the estranged human nature.’ This may have been immoral living (a

characteristic of some versions of Gnosticism that reasoned that if the material world was evil then it did not matter how you treated it or what one did with his body), or false teachings that led them astray. By setting aside ownership systems they were setting themselves up as being above local customs and laws. They made themselves to be people of special privilege. Speaking injuriously, misrepresenting people, vilifying folks and obscuring the light of a person's reputation or of what they taught were all examples of

‘blaspheming [someone's] **reputation.**’ This could also be just in the form of putting other peoples' ‘notions’ or ‘opinions’ down. What is being described is an absence of Love. Notice that to ‘obscure the light of a manifestation that is supposed to call forth praise’ can refer to what these folks do to people, or to the light of the community.

“Judah characterizes them as **‘dreaming ones,**’ or ‘folks with imaginary experiences.’ Thus, he is likely referring to the type of religious behavior such as Gnosticism produced. Wheaton

states that ‘*Dreamings* suggests that the false teachers may have claimed to receive some of their teaching by means of visions’ (ibid. p 1276).”

As to the term “**self-pleasing people** (willfully arrogant ones),” R.C. Trench says, “The man thus obstinately maintaining his own opinion, or asserting his own rights... is reckless of the rights, feelings, and interests of others” (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2000, p 327). Barclay adds to this that such a person is “stubbornly and arrogantly and even brutally determined on his own way” (ibid p 330).

11. **whereas agents** (or: messengers; folks with a/the message) [**who**] **are being greater in strength and power** (or: ability) [**than these folks**], **are not normally** (or: habitually) **bringing slanderous separating** (or: defaming decision-making; injurious discriminating; or: a light-obscuring judicial process) **down on or against them before** (or: beside) [**the**] **Lord** [=Yahweh].

It will be worthwhile to consider the comments on “the ruling agent” in Jude 9 and 10,

9. **Yet Michael** (The One Who is like God), **the ruling agent** (the first, chief, or original

"messenger), **when making a distinction** (a discernment; a thorough separation) **to the adversary** (or: the slanderer; the one who thrusts things through folks or situations, and thus causes divisions; the “devil”), **reasoned** (deliberated; spoke thoroughly; discoursed [as in using the Socratic dialectic method]) **concerning the body of Moses. He did not assume to bring a blasphemous or villainous judging upon [him]** (or: to bring in addition a judging characterized by an abusive distinction or a slanderous

decision; or: bring an added evaluating which hindered the light), **but rather, He said, "The Lord [=Yahweh] might hold you in added honor** (or: set a value upon you; put respect upon you; award you)."

“Several early church fathers, including Clement of Alexandria and Origen, said that Judah has here quoted the *Assumption of Moses*, and thus most commentators agree. This is an early first century Jewish work of non-canonical apocalyptic literature. Recall that Paul cites Hellenistic literature: Aratis, in

Acts 17:28, quotes of Menander in 1 Cor. 15:33 and Epimenides in Tit. 1:12. But Paul also reinterpreted the story of Sarah and Hagar in Gal. 4. We saw Ezekiel and Jesus making other use of Sodom in the comments on vs. 6, above. The question then arises: should this non-Biblical story about Michael, Moses and the adversary be taken as cosmological or ontological reality, or like Paul's use of Greek plays and poetry – as a literary tool? I suggest that Judah is using this Jewish literature to make his point.

“For Michael (found in Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1 and in Rev. 12:7 – both examples of apocalyptic literature: highly figurative and symbolic) I have parenthetically inserted the Hebrew meaning of the name, since we know so little about this character in those two stories. The eighteenth century Bible expositor John Gill says of this name, "By whom is meant, not a created angel, but an eternal one, the Lord Jesus Christ; as appears from his name Michael, which signifies, 'who is as God'" (John Gill's Exposition of the Bible, from

BibleStudyTools.com). Also, I gave a translation of *arch-angelos*, "**the ruling agent** (the first, chief or original messenger)," to help us decipher this symbol in the story. Creation's first and ruling agent was Adam, in the Genesis story of creation. He was made in God's image – and thus was "like God" in form if not in character. So we have once again entered into God's story of humanity – not into a myth about "spiritual hierarchies" such as we find in dualistic pagan religions. In the figurative setting which forms the preamble to the book of

Job, we find God "**making a distinction**" about Job to the adversary (Hebrew: *satan*), and "**reasoning** (deliberating; discoursing)" with the adversary concerning Job's character and situation. I suggest that this is a parallel image. The point of the picture which Judah is painting here is about "speaking respectfully of people" – especially leaders, and he is using this Jewish myth to do so.

Michael "**did not assume to bring a blasphemous or villainous judging upon [him].**" Not blaspheme satan? No, not even

this tool of God. Paul tells us to "Bless, and do not curse."

Furthermore, the "**body of Moses**" most likely does not refer to his physical body any more than "the body of Christ" refers to His physical body in the writings of Paul. Here Judah uses it as a tool of his illustration. John Gill, in referring to this phrase in this verse, states, "it is best of all to understand it of the law of Moses, which is sometimes called Moses himself, [*cf* John 5:45; Acts 15:21; 21:21; 2 Cor. 3:15]; and so the body of Moses, or the body of his laws, the system of them; just

as we call a system of laws, and of divinity, such an one's body of laws, and such an one's body of divinity" (Gill, *ibid.*).

“Now let us consider the word that Michael used. It is from *epi*, upon, and *timaō*, to hold in respect, to honor, to value, to award – and thus you see the combined parenthetical amplification in the translation. It is also used in negative connotations, and thus can mean, to assess a penalty upon, or, to respectfully reprove, admonish or chide. But there is no reason not to keep the core meaning of the

root: honor, value and respect – especially in an honor/shame-based society such as we find in our first century contexts. Since this passage is contrasting Michael's actions to the negative actions of those who "came in unobserved," I chose the positive translation of *epitimaō* – perhaps turning the *Assumption of Moses* account on its head" (*JJP&?* p 77-79)."

10. Yet these folks constantly blaspheme (slander; speak injuriously of; villainize; hinder the light of) **what indeed they have neither seen nor**

understand (or: know; perceive),
but what they naturally
(instinctively; by generation; by
sprouting and growing) **are**
continuously acquainted with
(or: are versed in; became
masters of), **in these things they**
are progressively being
corrupted (spoiled, ruined).

“So now you see his point of the literary citation in vs. 9. It was for extreme contrast. These false teachers hinder the Light of the message of goodness, ease and well-being (the Gospel) and slander what others teach about the Truth of Jesus Christ. They use

their "**natural**," fleshly reasoning [Rom. 8:7, "**the result of the thinking** (disposition; thought processes; mind-set, outlook) **of the flesh** (= the estranged inner being) **[is; brings] enmity, alienation and discord [streaming] into God** (or: hostility unto, or active hatred with a view to, God)..."] and with this "**they are progressively being corrupted**" (*JJP&?*, *ibid* p 77-79).

12. **But these, as irrational** (wordless; unreasoning) **living ones** (or: animals), **being creatures of instinct having been born unto capture and then corruption**

(decay; ruin), **within which things – being continuously ignorant – they are constantly blaspheming** (speaking slander, insult and abusive speech; injuriously vilifying; or: hindering the Light) **within their corruption** (decay), **and they will be progressively ruined** (spoiled; caused to decay; corrupted),
When speaking of those who are guilty of injustice in Jerusalem and Judea, Jeremiah says of them,

“You have planted them;
moreover, they take root, they advance; moreover, they yield fruit. You are near in their mouth, yet far from their innermost being. But You, O Yahweh, You know

me; You examine me and have tested how my heart is toward You. Pull them away like a flockling to slaughter, and sanctify them for a day of killing” (Jer. 12:2-3; CVOT).

The prophet was speaking of some of the Jews (God’s people) of his time. He felt that they should be culled from the people of Israel. I suggest that Peter is referring to the Jews and Judaizers, once again; those of God’s old covenant people who were adversarial to the new covenant as expressed in Jesus and His followers. They continued being **ignorant** concerning the coming of the Messiah; they were constantly speaking

slander of Him and of His followers – they were “hindering the Light.” Their corruption was described by Jesus in Mat. 23:27-28 thusly,

“you continue closely resembling whitewashed (i.e., smeared or plastered with lime) tombs (sepulchers; grave sites), which indeed, from outside, continue being made to appear in the prime of beauty, for a time – yet inside they contain a full load of bones of dead folks, as well as every uncleanness.... inside you continuously exist being men glutted and distended, full of opinionated

answers (or: perverse detail-oriented scholarship; hyper-criticism and judgmentalism; well-sifted wicked interpretations) **and lawlessness** (= practice which is contrary to the Law [Torah]).”

Jesus continues on in this passage describing the Jewish leadership of His time, and the soon-coming destruction (ending in AD 70):

31. "As a result, you are continually giving evidence in yourselves (testifying to and for yourselves) that you exist being sons of those that were murdering the prophets,

**32. "And so, you, yourselves...
Fill full the measure of your
fathers!**

**33. "[You] snakes! [You]
offspring (brood) of vipers
(poisonous serpents)! How can
you flee and escape from the
judging which has the qualities,
character and significance of
the valley of Hinnom (= the
sentence to the city dump [Greek:
Gehenna]; the deciding which
pertains to the waste depository of
the city)?**

**34. "Because of this – look and
consider! – I, Myself, am
continuing in commissioning and**

sending off to you people prophets, wise people and scholars (scribes; theologians of the Law). Of them, [some] you folks will proceed to be killing, and [some] you will proceed to crucify (hang and put to death on stakes). Further, of them [some] you people will continue severely whipping (scourge; lash) within your synagogues, and then you, yourselves, will continue pursuing and persecuting [them] from city to city (or: town to town),
35. "so that upon you, yourselves, can (or: should)

come all [the] just (equitable; rightwised) blood being continuously poured out (or: spilled) upon the Land – from the blood of rightwised (just; fair; in-right-relationship) Abel, until the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah (or: Baruch), whom you people murdered between the Temple and the altar.

36. "Assuredly, I am now saying to you people, it will progressively move toward this point, and then arrive – all these things! – upon this generation!

37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

The one repeatedly killing the prophets, and habitually stoning the people sent off with a mission to her. How many times (or: How often) I wanted (intended; purposed; longed) to progressively gather your children together upon [Myself] in the manner in which a hen normally gathers her chicks together under [her] wings – and you did not want [it] (or: you do not intend [it]). [*cf* Ruth 2:12; Ps. 17:6; 36:7; 57:1]

38. "Look, and think about this! 'Your House is progressively left [to be] a wilderness (desert;

desolate place) **for you people**
(or: is now abandoned to you).”
[Jer. 22:5]

Their inner decay corresponded to the waxing old and soon disappearance of the Law, as we read in Heb. 8:13,

“In thus to be saying ‘new [in kind and quality],’ He has made the first (or: former) ‘old,’ and that [which is] progressively growing old and obsolete (failing of age; ageing into decay), [is] near its disappearing (vanishing away).”

But this is all a part of the Good News that arrived on the scene with Jesus. He took to the grave the old covenant, its

Law, and Israel (along with all humanity – the first Adam) so that He could raise them all up into the new creation – each person in his own class and group (1 Cor. 15:22-23). Or, as Paul said in Rom. 11:32, **“For you see, God encloses, shuts up and locks all mankind (everyone; the entire lot of folks) into incompliance (disobedience; stubbornness; lack of being convinced), to the end that He could (or: would; should) mercy all mankind (may make everyone, the all, recipients of mercy)!”**

13. **being folks habitually wronging themselves** (or, reading as a passive: being wronged; suffering injustice)
[other MSS: will be ones getting for

themselves] – **a wage of unrighteousness** (inequity; injustice; wrong; nonobservance of the Way pointed out) – **folks continuously leading or governing, while considering the luxury** (or: softness and daintiness; delicate living; effeminateness) **in daytime** (in broad daylight) **a pleasure** (enjoyment; gratification). [They are] **spots** (or: stains) **and disgraceful flaws [that] are continuously living within luxury amidst their delusions** (or: deceptions) [other MSS: love-feasts] – **folks repeatedly feasting** (or: banqueting) **together with you folks** –
The called-out, covenant communities

were not seamless or homogeneous groups. We saw, above and in Judah, how others attached themselves to these congregations. We see here that Peter points out that they were **“folks repeatedly feasting (or: banqueting) together with the communities”** (note that the communities were inclusive in character). As Paul put it in Phil. 3:18-19,

“For you see – I was often telling you about them, yet now I am also presently weeping (lamenting) in saying it – many continue walking about (i.e., are living their lives) as enemies of the cross of the Christ (the

Anointed One's execution-stake and suspension-pole), **whose goal** (eventual end; closing act; final stage; result; finished discharge) **[is] ruin and loss** (or: waste and destruction), **whose god [is their] cavity** (or: belly) and **[whose] reputation** (or: glory; opinion) **resides within their shame** (disgrace; embarrassment) – **people continually thinking about** (habitually being intent on; constantly minding) **the things existing upon the earth** (or: = folks whose minds are earthbound).”

Notice that Peter describes their actions

as **“wronging themselves.”** This rendering comes from reading the verb as a middle voice. Then he metaphorically speaks of their receiving **a wage of unrighteousness** as recompense for their works. But the verb can also be read as a passive voice, and so the parenthetical rendering offers: “habitually being wronged or suffering injustice [as] a wage of inequity and nonobservance of the Way pointed out.” We reap what we sow right here and now. Israel’s history testifies to this, and Jesus warned His fellow countrymen that this would continue to happen to them.

These **folks** were **“continuously leading**

or governing, while considering the luxury (or: softness and daintiness; delicate living; effeminateness) **in daytime** (in broad daylight) **a pleasure** (enjoyment; gratification).” This would describe either the rich or those in leadership who had the means to live in such a way. It certainly did not describe the poor or the outcasts. But on another level of interpretation, it calls to mind Christ’s description of the spiritual condition of the community in Laodicea,

“Because you are habitually saying, ‘I am rich and have acquired wealth and continuously have need of nothing’ and you have not seen

to know (or: are not aware) that you continue being wretched (or: miserable; in hardship) and pitiful and poor and blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17).

The **delusions** (or: deceptions) to which Peter refers can be observed in what the Lord said to Laodicea (which, incidentally, was in the area to which Peter was writing). In regard to their “inequity” in the way in which they were living, Christ said to them,

“I have seen, and thus know (am aware of) your [singular] works (acts), that you are (continue being) neither cold nor boiling hot (or: zealous): O that you

***were being cold, or boiling hot
(zealous)! Thus, because you
continue being lukewarm
(tepid), and are neither boiling
hot nor cold, I am about to
vomit you out of My mouth”
(Rev. 3:15-16).***

The Lord's decision for what would be best for them was going to happen then and there – unless they changed their thinking, and thus, their resultant behavior. They were about to be treated just like He treated the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem when He removed the leadership in God's reign from them.

In contrast to those that are here

described as “**spots** (or: stains) **and disgraceful flaws**” (referring to the image of Christ portrayed by the community, and its reputation within the surrounding culture), in 3:14, below, he admonished his listeners “**be eager to be found [being] spotless folks and flawless ones in Him** (or: with Him; for Him), **in peace and in union with harmony from the joining.**” We are also reminded of Eph. 5:26-27 where Paul speaks of the cleansing work of Christ, which is what these folks need:

“**that He may set [them] apart** (separate [them]; consecrate and make [them] holy), **cleansing** (purging) **[them] by the bath of**

the Water [that is] within a result of a flow (or: in union with a gush-effect; or: in the midst of a spoken word, a declaration, or an utterance), **so that He Himself could place beside Himself** (or: should present to and make to stand alongside in and with Himself) **an inwardly-glorious and honorable** (or: held in honor and high esteem; in-glorious-array; or: inwardly-reputable; centered-in-glory) **called-out community – [which] is continuously having neither spot** (or: stain), **nor wrinkle, nor any of such things, but to the**

contrary – to the end that [they] would continuously exist being set-apart (holy; different from the ‘ordinary and profane’) and flawless (unblemished; or: unblamable).”

Then in Judah (Jude) 24 we have hope held out to these folks,

24. Now in and by (or: with; to) Him being powerful and able to keep and guard you folks from stumbling (or: tripping) and from harm, and then to stand you flawless and blameless (or: unblemished; without defect or stain) in the presence of His glory (or: down in sight of the

manifestation of Him which calls forth praise and yields a good opinion and reputation; or: down in the center of a view of the glory which is Him) **in extreme joy** (in the center of a much-jumping exultation; in union with body-moving celebration).

"**Him** is in the dative case, and is normally given just the preposition 'to' when treating this as a doxology of praise, 'to Him.' But I am drawn to the "**in Him**" that the message of goodness so often emphasizes. He is the realm of our existence in this new creation, and it is through union

with Him and His corporate body that we receive His power and ability. Also, focusing our attention on Him as the instrument – the ‘**by Him**’ – helps us not to look to our own strengths and abilities, but to keep in mind that He is the One that keeps and guards us from tripping and stumbling, and protects us ‘**from harm**’ – which is the present-day reality of our ‘salvation (being kept safe).’

“In Rom. 16:25, Paul makes a similar closing,

‘**Now by the One** (in the One; to the One) **being**

continuously able and powerful to set you steadfast (to make you stand firm and settled) **in accord with** (or: corresponding to; in the sphere of; in line with) **my message of goodness and well-being...**'

In Eph. 3:20, he gives an even more glorious view,

'But by (or: Now in) **the One being continuously able and powerful to do** (make; form; create; produce) **above and beyond all things –**

surpassingly above, over and beyond things which we are repeatedly asking for ourselves or are normally grasping with the mind (apprehending; imagining; considering; conceiving) – in accord with (or: down from; corresponding to) the power and ability [which is] continuously operating (making itself effective; energizing itself; working and developing) within us, and in union with us.’

Again, we see that this power and

ability is resident within the covenant community – within us!

“The ‘**and then**’ does not necessarily mean ‘some time in the future.’ It is the next step of His present action upon us. He is the friend who ‘steadies us’ along the path when uneven ground (= situation that is not fair, or surprises us) makes us lose our balance. After guarding us from stumbling off our path, He then ‘**stand[s] [us] flawless and blameless in the presence of His glory**’ which is the realm of His at-hand kingdom and present (*parousia*) sovereign influence

and activity. And this brings us
'**extreme joy**. Now the word
amomos (**flawless/blameless**) is
characteristically a sacrificial
word; and it is commonly and
technically used of an animal
which is without spot or blemish
and is therefore fit to be offered to
God (William Barclay, *The Daily
Study Bible Series, the letters of
John and Jude*, Rev. Ed.,
Westminster Press, 1976, p 207).
So why is it used in regard to the
called-out folks? Just to make
them look good? No, Judah is
inserting the covenant
communities into the narrative of

the crucified Messiah indicating that they are to continue His story – and do the works that He did by living what Daniel Kirk calls a ‘cruciform (cross-shaped)’ life. ‘The phrase *in Christ* means, among other things, that the story of Jesus becomes the story of God's people. This means that we participate both in the reconciling death of Jesus, and in the reconciled new creation’ (J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans, Resurrection and the Justification of God*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2008, p 26).

“Consider the other options parenthetically inserted after **‘in the presence of His glory.’** The first one: ‘down in sight of the manifestation of Him which calls forth praise and yields a good opinion and reputation,’ can be repeatedly seen through the good works of the covenant community. It is all about ‘right here,’ folks – not about in the next life or some ‘otherworldly’ sphere that tradition usually calls ‘heaven.’ The new creation brought heaven into union with earth and so our entire existence here is now understood to be a realm of spirit.

The Second Human, the Christ, is humanity anointed with His Spirit. The anointing always applied to people here on earth; the Christ is a human condition and relationship to God. This (His presence, and union with Him) is what brings ‘**extreme joy.**’

“The last option emphasizes being centered down-in (*kata-en*), the meaning of ‘within a view of’ (-*ōpion*), and rendering the genitive form of ‘Him’ as apposition:

‘down in the center of a view of the glory which is Him.’ He is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7).

“Next we can observe the amplifications of ‘**in extreme joy**’ which both show that the excitement brings bodily movement and celebration. What our Messiah has done is pure goodness” (*JJP&?*, *ibid* p 84-86).

14. people always having bulging eyes very full of an adulteress (= for nothing but adultery), **and being unceasing regarding sin and error; people by habit using bait to entrap unstable souls** (= people); **folks constantly having a heart that has been exercised** (trained in gymnastic discipline) **regarding greed** (desire for advantage and riches); **children of a cursing** (or:

having the qualities and character of [the] curse).

With this description being located in the context of all these echoes (above, and in the following verse) of Israel's historic mistakes of turning to other gods and relying upon pagan nations (there referred to as adultery and prostitution – as the quotes from Ezk. 16, above, demonstrate), we are well advised to read this verse with eyes unveiled to see the spiritual (or, figurative) meanings of Peter's words. Idolatry, in its many forms, has always been a distraction to God's people. This verse is echoed in Rev. 17-18 where old covenant Jerusalem was pictured as riding the

beast (a figure of an empire – see Dan. 7) of Rome. The economic injustice of that system was one reason why Jesus told the poor and outcasts that in the reign of God, that He was then bringing, that this reign (kingdom) was now theirs (Lu. 6:20b), instead of being in the hands of the elite of Jerusalem (Mat. 21:43). In Jn. 11 we see the fear of that elite losing their “position” with Rome (the beast), and thus within their own society,

47. Consequently, the chief (or: ranking) priests and the Pharisees gathered [the] Sanhedrin (= convoked a council of the leaders of the Jewish religious and political culture),

and they began to say, "What are we presently doing, seeing that this man is repeatedly doing many signs?"

48. "If we let him go on in this way (or: If we disregard him in this manner; or: Suppose we thus abandon, neglect or leave him alone), they will all progressively put trust (will continue believing) into him, the Romans will proceed to come, and they will progressively take away both our place and our nation (= political station, culture and corporate ethnic identity)."

Folks who were not firmly established

in living the life of Christ or in understanding the Scriptures – those who Peter describes as **unstable souls**, here – have been **entrapped** by religion both in the times of Israel’s history (read, e.g., Ezk. 34), during Christ’s ministry (they had been as sheep without a shepherd – Mk. 6:34; Jn. 10:12), and in the organized system of Christianity ever since. That is why the figurative name of the great prostitute in Rev. 17-18 was called:

“A MYSTERY (A SECRET; a matter that to gain the knowledge of which initiation is necessary) – BABYLON the GREAT: The Mother of the Prostitutes and of

The Abominations (Detestable Things) of The Land (or: from the earth).” (17:5)

In Rev. 11:8, this “Great City” has other figurative names applied to it:

“The Great City – whatever, spiritually, is normally being called (or: named) ‘Sodom’ and ‘Egypt’ – where also their Lord was crucified,”

and of course we know that He was crucified in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem which then was, in the 1st century AD, is contrasted to the new Jerusalem (which is above, who is our mother – Gal. 4:26). But that Jerusalem that was destroyed was called the

“Mother” of the Prostitutes which she birthed: the many forms of Judaized Christianity which mixed Law with Grace in the two thousand years since 70 AD. That history has seen many systems that bred **folks constantly having a heart that has been exercised** (trained in gymnastic discipline) **regarding greed** (desire for advantage and riches), and has produced, “**children of a cursing** (or: having the qualities and character of [the] curse)” who were forced (either by legal means or by doctrine) to live under the Law, for,

“You see, however many people continue their existence from the midst of observances and

works of Law (= Everyone who lives by deeds and actions based upon the Torah) **are continuously under a curse**” (Gal. 3:10a).

These children would also be any who were not “abiding in the Vine” (Jn. 15:1ff) for it is in existentially living in Christ that we live in the enjoyment of the effects that Paul presents in Gal. 3:13a,

“Christ bought us [back] out (or: redeems and reclaims us out [of slavery] and liberates us) **from the midst of the curse** (or: adversarial prayer; imprecation) **of and from the Law.”**

15. By practice leaving behind [other

MSS: at one point abandoning] [**the; a** **straight path** (road; Way), **they were** (or: are) **led astray** (or: caused to wander), **following out the path** (road; way) **of Balaam of Bosor** [other MSS: Beor] **who loved [the] wage of, or from, injustice** (inequity; wrongdoing; unrighteousness; nonobservance of the Way pointed out).

The first clause has the participle in the present tense, which pictures a way of life: **by practice leaving behind [the, or, a] straight path** (or, road; = the Way of Christ).” This means that they have abandoned active living in union with the Vine, and have been **led astray**, or caused to wander off the Path into which

they had been placed, and are no longer rightwised (turned in the right direction) toward Christ (who they were called to follow) and the Father, their ultimate destination (Rom. 11:36). They have taken a detour, until their Father intervenes in whatever way He sees will be best. Other MSS have the participle in the aorist, which simply speaks to a point of deviation in the past (like Adam's behavior in the Garden). This reference of the second half of the verse reaches back to Nu. 22ff where the king of Moab repeatedly endeavored to get the prophet Balaam to curse Israel (which had just been delivered from Egypt). In Nu. 31:16 Moses reported that

it was “through the counsel of Balaam” that,

“the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab. These invited the people to sacrifices of their goddesses, and the people ate and bowed down to their goddesses. Thus Israel yoked itself to Baal of Peor [which means: ‘master of the generative organ’ – Rotherham; or, ‘lord or owner of the opening’ – Bullinger] and Yahweh’s anger was kindled against Israel” (Nu. 25:1-3a).

[note: the pronoun “their” is feminine, so I rendered the noun “goddesses;” the other alternative

is to take the pronoun as referring to the women, and thus read, “their gods”]

One of Christ’s complaints against Pergamos, in Rev. 2:14, was that,

“you have there those continuously strong to be retaining the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to thrust a snare in the sight of the sons of Israel to eat things offered to forms (or: sacrificed to idols), and thus, to commit prostitution (= idolatry).”

Today we look at prostitution as primarily a social, ethical and moral issue – and when the one is married, it

becomes a matter of breaking trust: a matter of betrayal. But in the Scriptures it has an added issue of idolatry as the two references, above, as well as the earlier reference to the Mystery/Secret Babylon all point out. Paul dealt with this same issue at Corinth. Some members of the called out community continued attending banquets at idol temples. He addresses the issue in 1 Cor. 8, and this same issue may underlie the topic of prostitution in 1 Cor. 7:12-20, where being joined to a prostitute is contrasted to being “joined to the Lord” and to being the temple of the set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit). Ben Witherington III sheds light on this,

“Several temples in Corinth had dining rooms where feasts were held on many occasions, including birthdays. Temples were the restaurants of antiquity. There is archaeological evidence at the Asklepion in Corinth of a dining room with couches along the four walls and a table and brazier in the center. Paul distinguishes between eating at home and eating in temples and strictly forbids the latter (10:14-23).... It is clear that women who were associated with banquet settings were seen in the popular imagination as prostitutes” (*Conflict &*

Community in Corinth, A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1995, p 188, 194).

In the context of 1 Cor. 10:14-23 where Paul addresses eating things sacrificed to idols (vs.19) he had opened this passage (vs. 14) by saying, “**Be habitually fleeing away from the idolatry.**” Then in vs. 22 he rhetorically asks, “**Or are we proceeding to cause the Lord’s emotions to boil over the side?**” Witherington points out that in vs. 7 Paul had cited the incident of Ex. 32:6 (the story of the golden calf) and when he quotes this verse (“**The people sit down to continually eat and drink, and**

they stand up to repeatedly engage in amusement”) he immediately says in vs. 8, **“Neither may we continue practicing sexual immorality (prostitution) just as some... and twenty-three thousand fell in (or: on) one day [a reference to Nu. 25:1 ff].”**

Witherington concludes that, “He uses this text for its special relevance, in particular its allusion to sexual play or amusement after the idol feast” (ibid p 221).

In the ancient world prostitution and idolatry were often connected. So this verse, rather than being a random warning about moral purity, is primarily informing and expanding the previous

verse concerning “**having bulging eyes very full of an adulteress** (= for nothing but adultery).”

We also find Balaam referenced in Judah (Jude) where he is cast in association (by his deeds) with two others of negative reputation in Israel’s story:

11. Alas (or: Tragic is the fate) **for them, because they pass along by the way of Cain, and they are** (or: were) **poured out to the wandering** (or: deception) **of Balaam's wages, and they lose and destroy themselves in Korah's contradiction** (opposing idea; anti-word; message in place of the Logos).

“But let us consider these negative comparisons. Cain was judged, but was also shown mercy and a measure of protection (*cf* 1 John 3:12). Balaam, a non-Israelite prophet of Mesopotamia was hired to curse Israel, but Yahweh caused him instead to bless Israel, and among the oracles attributed to Yahweh are prophecies considered to be Messianic (Nu. 24). Israel eventually killed him. Visionaries and prophets can sometimes proclaim truth and be held in high esteem by the community, but they can also lead folks astray into pagan ideas and

corrupt practices. What they say should be judged by the group (1 Cor. 14:29). Korah's story (Nu. 16) was one of rebellion against the community leadership which God had established. Here he is cited to represent those within the communities that brought "**contradiction** (opposing idea; anti-word; message in place of the Logos)" which would cause division among the members. Nonetheless, his punishment was only an early death. We should not read more into the accounts of their punishment than what the stories tell us" (*JJP&?*, *ibid* p

79).

Balaam's "love of wages" calls to mind the words of Paul in 1 Tim. 6:10a,

“for a root of all the bad things (the worthless qualities; the injurious situations; the poor craftsmanship; the ugly personalities; the malicious desires) **is the fondness of silver** (= love of money; = covetousness) ...”

The last part of the phrase which describes the object of his “love” was, in reality: a **“wage of, or from, injustice** (inequity; wrongdoing; unrighteousness; nonobservance of the Way pointed out).” On offer here is first

a genitive rendering (**of**) and then an ablative (**from**). Some love various aspects of inequity, wrongdoing, etc., and some love what they get from behavior that is nonobservance of the Way pointed out. Some love both. These are simply the fruit of both human estrangement and of the disconnect from one's awareness of God and from other people. These folks, like Israel of old, need deliverance once again. But like those of Heb. 6:4-8, they may need to have their "field" burned over (see *JJP&?*, *ibid* p 138-140).

16. But he had an exposure and a rebuke leading to conviction regarding his own transgression of law: a

voiceless yoke-animal – emitting a sound in a voice of a man – hindered (or: checked) the insanity (madness; being beside one's thinking) of the prophet.

Peter refers his audience to the incident in Nu. 22, and from the lack of detail that he shares about it we can conclude that he assumed that they knew the story. In vs. 7, there, we read that the elders of Moab and Midian had come “with the fees for divination” to pay Balaam to curse Israel. Then God came to Balaam (vs. 9) and asked, “Who are these men with you?” – i.e., What’s going on? Balaam explains, and God informs him that he is not to go with them and not to

curse the People, “for they are blessed” (vs. 12). Balaam reports God’s decision to the men and sends them on their way. But Balak now sends “the princes of Moab” (folks with greater social distinction than the first group) and offers greater rewards. He has them stay the night with him so that he, “may know what more Yahweh will say” to him about their offer. God tells him to go ahead with them (implying agreement to do what they ask), but only say what He says to say (vs. 20). So the next morning Balaam went with them.

Now thus far, it looks like God has given His approval for Balaam to do what we can see that Balaam was really wanting

to do (as vs. 15, above, points out to us). But to the reader's (and Balaam's) surprise, Balaam's accepting God's apparent OK on the deal, and so then going with the princes, aroused God's anger (vs. 22a), and we are next told of the incident alluded to by Peter in this verse. As Balaam is riding his donkey along the path,

“the agent of Yahweh stood in the path [to block his progress] as an adversary (Hebrew: *satan*) against him.... Now the donkey saw the agent of Yahweh standing in the path with his sword drawn in his hand, so the donkey turned aside out of the path and went into

the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the path. But the agent of Yahweh stood in the narrow path between the walls of the vineyard, so when the donkey saw the agent of Yahweh, she pressed herself into the wall, pressing Balaam's foot against the wall – so he struck her again! Next the agent of Yahweh went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the agent of Yahweh, she fell down under Balaam, and Balaam's anger heated up and he beat the

donkey with a staff. Then Yahweh opened the mouth of the donkey and it said to Balaam, ‘What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times?’ ... [Balaam responds and the donkey rehearses its past faithfulness to him]. Then Yahweh opened Balaam’s eyes and he saw the agent of Yahweh standing in the path with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed down and prostrated himself’ (vss. 22b-31).

Next the agent has a discussion of the matter with Balaam, and the story continues on.

The yoke-animal hindered (or:

checked) **the insanity** (madness; being beside one's thinking) **of the prophet**, and Yahweh's agent – who became a satan to Balaam – **exposed and rebuked Balaam leading to conviction regarding his own transgression of law.** The law which he transgressed was Yahweh's instruction to him in Nu. 22:12, which Balaam tried to get Yahweh to change. This story instructs us that God has no problem in using His creation to “speak” to us. It also shows us that God will not approve of doing what is wrong to others, even though He allows us to proceed with our plans – usually to our own hurt or loss. The reminder of this incident from Israel's history should

instruct all of Peter's listeners: both the majority of the community, and "these people" (vs. 17, below) to whom he is applying the story of Balaam.

17. These people are (or: exist being) springs without water and clouds (or: mists; fogs) being constantly driven by (or: under) a storm (or: a squall), for whom the gloom of the darkness has been maintained (guarded; kept and watched-over) for an indefinite period of time.

Peter continues with more descriptions of these folks. It will be helpful to read a more expanded version of these thoughts in Jude 12-13, so let us consider that passage along with my comments there

in *JJP&?*:

12. These folks are sharply-cleft portions of rocks (or: reefs; = menaces) in your love [relationship]s (or: love-feasts and table fellowships; movements toward acceptance), repeatedly feasting well together, by habit fearlessly shepherding themselves. [They are] clouds without water, being swept along by winds; wasted autumnal trees – unfruitful, twice-died, uprooted;

13. wild waves of the sea, continuously foaming out (or: vomiting forth) their shames (or:

disgraces). **Wandering and deceived stars, for whom the gloom of darkness** (shadowy dimness; obscurity void of Daylight) **has been maintained** (guarded; kept and watched-over) **unto an indefinite time period** (or: an age).

“The metaphor ‘**sharply-cleft portions of rocks**’ would speak of an uncomfortable environment for having ‘table fellowship.’ But this word can also refer to ‘reefs’ that are concealed beneath the surface of the water, ‘a hidden danger’ (David H. Wheaton, *The New bible Commentary, Revised*, Wm.

B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1967 p 1276) that is a menace. These folks joined in with their gatherings, but had a habit of **‘fearlessly shepherding themselves**. This would echo the story of Korah, just mentioned. These false teachers wanted to lead and feed themselves and thus were creating a clique within the community.

“The next set of metaphors shows that these folks are unstable and are not producing the water of life or fruit of the Vine. **‘Twice-died’** would mean that although they had at first received resurrection life

from Christ, they have strayed from the path of Christ and are now **‘wandering and deceived’** so that they have ‘died on the vine.’ Either the weeds of life choke them, or their soil is too shallow. They are no longer **‘folks having been rooted (or: having taken root) and now established and placed on a foundation within the midst of and in union with Love (or: having been grounded and rendered firm, centered in love)’** (Eph. 3:17). Like the folks who began following Jesus (the Light) but later returned to Judaism (the

Darkness which they loved – John 3:19), these self-proclaimed ‘lights’ were simply ‘**deceived stars**’ that were wandering back into ‘**the gloom of darkness** (the shadowy dimness and obscurity which is devoid of the Light of the Day)’ of their various religions (whether Judaism, Gnosticism or paganism). Cf 1 John 1:6, Matt. 7:15-20, and Lu. 6:39 which speaks of ‘the blind leading the blind.’

“That he terms them ‘**wild waves of the sea**’ shows that they lack peace, and this metaphor is usually used to characterize the

pagans that were outside of the covenant of Israel, those who have not yet been submitted to Yahweh (Isa. 57:20). And the next picture, ‘**continuously foaming out** (or: vomiting forth) **their shames** (or: disgraces),’ speaks to their Gnostic teachings of licentiousness and antinomianism (being without custom or sense of propriety; opposition to law). “But note the good news: just as Yahweh maintained Israel during her wilderness wandering, and maintains humanity (vs. 6, above), watching over us until our class arrived (1 Cor. 15:23), this

darkness will last only for an age – or, for ‘**an indefinite** (i.e., undefined) **time period.**’ And please note that this is a ‘**time**’ word: it does not refer to ‘eternity’ or endlessness. Our Father always judges to bring about positive change. *Cf* Heb. 6:4-8, where the fire burns off the field of weeds and thorns (and once the unwanted material is burned up, the burning process ends), making it ready for another planting of good seed” (ibid pp 79-80).

Peter has a slightly different expression in the first clause, emphasizing the

instability of the clouds and mists which are driven by the winds and which easily disappear, and then adding that they are **springs without water**. They give no refreshing and no life. They are the opposite of how Jesus said of Himself, and which would then be applied to His body – the called-out communities:

“If ever anyone may continue being thirsty, let him be habitually coming toward (or: face to face with) Me, and then let the person continuously trusting and progressively believing into Me be constantly (habitually; repeatedly) drinking!

[*cf* Isa. 12:3; 55:1]

(or: let him be progressively coming to Me and keep on drinking. The person habitually being faithful unto Me,)

Just as the Scripture says, 'Rivers (or: Floods; Torrents) of living water will continuously flow (or: gush; flood) from out of the midst of His cavity (His innermost being or part; or: the hollow of his belly; [used of the womb]).' [*cf* Isa. 58:11; Ezk. 47:1; Joel 3:18; Zech. 13:1; 14:8] **Now this He said about (or: with regard to) the Breath-effect (or:**

Spirit; Attitude; [other MSS: Holy, or set-apart Spirit; Sacred Wind]) **of which** (of Whom as a source; [other MSS simple read: which]) **they – those trusting and believing into Him – were about to be continuously and progressively receiving”** (Jn. 7:37-39a).

So the listeners would have concluded that these folks were not being **“continuously or repeatedly filled full in spirit** (within [the] Spirit; within the midst of [the] Breath-effect; in the sphere of attitude; in union with [the] Breath)” (Eph. 5:18b). This description, in vs. 17 above, calls to mind Jer. 2:13,

and thus may give us a clue to the folks to which Peter may also have been targeting with these words:

“For My people have done twofold wrong:

They have forsaken Me, the Fount of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns which cannot even hold water.”

(Tanakh)

Connecting what Judah 12 reveals concerning “**love relationships**, or, love-feasts and table fellowships” with the “**spots (or: stains) and disgraceful flaws [that] are continuously living within luxury amidst their delusions (or: deceptions) [other MSS: love-**

feasts] – **folks repeatedly feasting** (or: banqueting) **together with you folks**” in vs. 13, above, we can read in Harvey Cox’s work an observation on the tradition of the liturgy of Communion and a definition of the kingdom of God which present a contrast to these spots and yet still remind us of the inclusion found in Jesus’ life:

“[It] is a symbol of the ultimate goal of a restored human community, [which in turn is] the purpose of the Incarnation....

Jesus spent his earthly ministry breaking the social and cultural taboos that had excluded certain type of people (prostitutes, lepers,

tax collectors) from sharing meals with respectable, pious people. For Jesus, this was an act of symbolic restoration: inclusive table fellowship modeled an inclusive humanity. It prefigured the messianic feast foreseen by the previous prophets. The ultimate feast is unconditionally inclusive. As the Protestant theologian Karl Barth once remarked, the church should be ‘the provisional demonstration of God’s intention for the whole human race’.... the kingdom of God [is] the healed and restored human community.... [yet] the kingdom of God [which]

Jesus announced was not for people who never did anything wrong. It was for ‘sinners,’ for those who – mostly – tried their best to do the right thing, often failed, but accepted the forgiveness of God and of others, forgave others, and themselves, and started over” (ibid p 257-8; brackets added).

18. For you see, in continuously uttering over-swollen (inflated; over-weighted; extravagant; pompous) things pertaining to empty purposelessness (vanity; futility; fruitless nonsense; worthless nothingness), they are constantly using bait to trap – in the

midst of cravings (or: full passions) **of flesh** (= alienated human nature) **by outrageous** (or: licentious) **behavior** – **those folks scarcely** [other MSS: actually] **fleeing from** (or: barely or just now escaping from) **the people habitually twisting themselves up in deception** (or: being repeatedly turned back and forth in wandering), Leahy suggests, “Apparently the influence of the false teachers succeeded in corrupting some recent converts” (ibid p 497). We can recall Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, admonishing the crowds,

“Besides [this], he gave full testimony, completely laying out

the facts of the case, with different thoughts and ideas, and by many more words. Then he kept on calling one after another to his side, repeatedly urging, encouraging and admonishing them, while saying, "You folks can be rescued and kept safe, away from this generation which has become warped and crooked from drying out ([cf Jn. 15:6]; or, and as an imperative: Be restored to health and wholeness – be at once saved – as you are separated from this perverse generation)!" (Acts 2:40)

It will help to break down the colorful descriptions of this Asiatic rhetoric to unpack the deceptive scene that it describes. These “dry springs and squall-driven clouds” (vs. 17) are spouting-out doctrines or philosophies or imaginations that Peter describes as “over-swollen, inflated or extravagant.” They “over-weight” certain words or ideas out of proportion to the context in order to fit them to their imaginative schemes. They speak in a pompous manner that makes them seem very intellectual, they or use scholarly terms to overawe ordinary folks. Yet Peter describes their teachings as **“things pertaining to empty**

purposelessness (vanity; futility).” The noun used here is the same one that Paul uses in Rom. 8:20,

“For you see, the creation (or: that which was formed, framed and founded) was placed, arranged and aligned under subjection in the empty purposelessness (or: subordinated to vanity and by futility; made supportive to fruitless nonsense: in worthlessness, for nothingness),”

So their teachings and doctrines are drawn from the old order of creation that exists in an untransformed state of bondage and darkness (i.e., before the

coming of the Light – Jn. 1:4-5, 9). Their appeal (the hook of their **trap**) is to the alienated human nature in folks – the old Adamic inner law that Paul describes in Rom. 7:23,

“yet I constantly see (or: observe) a different principle (or: law), within my members, [which is] by the Law (or: custom; or: [= Torah]) repeatedly taking the field to wage war against my mind (or: warring in opposition to, and in the place of, the law of, and which is, my mind), and repeatedly taking me prisoner and leading me into captivity within the principle

(or: in union with the Law) **of the Sin** (the failure; the error; the miss of the Target; the deviation from [Torah-keeping]) – **the one continuously existing** (or: now being) **within my members.**”

Their false concepts and unenlightened interpretations of Scripture were dealing “**in the midst of cravings** (or: full passions) **of flesh**” and their “platform antics” provided entertainment by **outrageous behavior**, or their moral behavior within the community was licentious. Their traps usually only worked on folks who have not been taught or grounded in the Word; those who only feed on “milk” (1 Cor. 3:2) or

have not had their spiritual **“organs of perception trained”** (Heb. 5:14). These are **“those folks scarcely fleeing from the people habitually twisting themselves up in deception”** – they are still babes in the kingdom life. They have **“barely or just now escaped from the people that are being repeatedly turned back and forth in wandering,”** i.e., they are newly born from out of the masses of lost humanity for whom the Good Shepherd continually searches, until He finds them (Lu. 15:4).

19. while constantly promising freedom (or: liberty) to them, they themselves continuously subsist inherently being slaves of the

corruption (the ruin; the decay) – **for you see, by whom** (or: by what) **anyone has been, and now exists being, made inferior** (or: less), **to this one** (or: by this thing) **he has** [some MSS add: also] **been enslaved, and now exists as a slave.**

That these folks “**continuously subsist inherently being slaves of the corruption** (the ruin; the decay)” informs us that their existential reality has not yet been changed. They are still in the first Adam. Paul addressed this situation in Rom. 6:16,

“Have you not seen and thus know (Are you not aware) **that to whom** (for whom; or: in what)

you habitually place yourselves alongside, presenting and providing yourselves as slaves into submissive, obedient hearing, you folks are, and continue being, [his or its] slaves – to whom (in what; for which) you habitually submit in obedient hearing – whether of failure (of sin; of missing the target) into death, or of submissive, hearing obedience into fair and equitable dealings of rightwised relationship in the Way pointed out ([covenant] justice).”

Paul had just explained in Rom. 6:14

that,

“your sin (your failure; your missing of the target) **will not continue exercising mastery** (or: You see, deviation from the goal shall not exert ownership and rule as your lord), **for you folks are not under Law** (or: do not exist being subject to [Torah] or custom), **but rather under Grace** (or: the Act which produced happiness, which was granted as a favor).”

This was what Paul meant when he said in Gal. 5:1,

“For the [aforementioned] freedom, Christ immediately set

us free (or: [The] Anointed One at once frees us in, to, for and with freedom)! **Keep on standing firm, therefore, and do not again be habitually held within a yoke of slavery** (or: a cross-lever [of a pair of scales] whose sphere is bondage)

(or: Continuously stand firm, then, in the freedom [to which the] Anointing sets us free, and let not yourselves be progressively confined again by a yoke pertaining to servitude)!”

He expanded this thought in vs. 13 of

that same chapter, which stands in stark contrast to what the false teachers in vs. 18, above, were promoting:

“For you folks were called upon the foundation of (on the basis of; for the purpose of) freedom, [my] brothers. Only not (or: Just not) the freedom [which is leading] into a starting point (or: unto an opportunity, occasion or incentive; to a base of operation) for (to; in; by; with) the flesh [comment: = circumcision with the flesh ordinances and ceremonial laws of Judaism; or: = personal license for the estranged human nature], but to the

contrary, through the Love be continuously slaving for one another (serving and performing the duties of a slave to each other).”

In Jn. 8:34, Jesus taught folks,

“It is certainly true (Amen, amen). **I am now saying to you that everyone habitually doing the failure** (constantly making the mis-shot; repeatedly performing the sin; progressively producing error) **is** (or: exists being) **a slave of the failure** (the error; the sin; the mis-shot; the mistake; the deviation).”

Abiding in Christ (John 15:1 ff) is the

way that we have escaped corruption, and this continues to be the new reality of Christ's body. Paul put it this way in 1 Cor. 15:53,

“For it continues being necessary (it is habitually binding) for this perishable and corruptible to at some point plunge (or: sink) in and clothe itself with (or: slip on; put on) incorruption and imperishability.”

In the next verse of that passage he quoted Isa. 25:8, affirming that, **“The Death was drunk down and swallowed into Victory (or: overcoming)”** and that Christ has given to us this same Victory

(vs. 57). It is in this light that Paul admonished his listeners in Rome to, **“clothe yourselves with (or: enter within and put on) the Lord, Jesus Christ, and stop (or: do not continue) making forethought (constructing provision; planning ahead; performing provident care) into excessive desires of the flesh (= into rushing upon emotions which pertain to the inner self or the estranged humanity; = into the setting of feelings and longings upon something of the human nature that is oriented to the System)”** (Rom. 13:14).

This, again, stands firmly against what the false teachers of vs. 18, above, had been preaching, and proclaims the goodness, ease and well-being that comes from deliverance from the Law and from the first Adam.

20. For if, while fleeing from the stains (pollution; defilements) of the ordered System (dominant world of religion, society, culture, economy and politics; or: secular realm), within an accurate (or: full; added) intimate and experiential knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but yet being interwoven (intertwined) back again in (or: by; with; among) these things, they are continuing to be inferior (less; or:

they are repeatedly worsted), **the last things** (situations; conditions) **have come to be** (or: have been birthed) **for them** (to them; in them; with them) **worse than the first ones.**

We should note the active participle, **while fleeing from** (which refers back to 18b, above), in its association with the following passive participle, **being interwoven** (intertwined) **back again in** (or: by; with; among). It is this second activity, which comes from the pressures, thinking and seeming rightness or “allow-ability” or logical reasoning from the very **ordered System** that folks are fleeing that once again ensnares these folks so that they once

again become **inferior**, under its dominance.

Observe that the “fleeing” happens **“within an accurate (or: full; added) intimate and experiential knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”**

It is the distorted “knowledge” from the dominating systems of religion and culture (via these false teachers) that, when “intertwined” with the “accurate, intimate, experiential knowledge” of Christ, once again become the instrument of ensnarement – the “hook” of their trap.

The last clause of this verse is practically a quote of Mat. 12:45b, in which Jesus spoke concerning the 1st

century generation Jewish leadership,

“At that time it continues journeying on its way, and then proceeds taking along with itself seven different spirits (attitudes; breath-effects; winds) more good-for-nothing and useless (base, wicked, knavish, grievously oppressive and evil) than itself, and upon entering, it settles down and continues dwelling there in the house. So the last [circumstances] of that person becomes progressively worse than the first ones. Thus in this way will it also proceed being with (or: for; in; to) this

good-for-nothing and wicked generation.”

Another description of a person's life becoming entangled with the wrong seeds blowing into their field is seen in Heb. 6:

4. For you see, those once being enlightened, besides tasting (= experiencing) the heavenly gift (or: the granted bounty from the One [holding sway] upon the atmosphere) and after being born (or: coming to be) common-holders (partners; sharing possessors; joint-participants; associates; partaking members) of set-apart spirit (or: of a holy

Breath-effect; or: of [the] Holy Spirit),

5. and then tasting (= experiencing) a beautiful gush-effect of God (or: an ideal result of the flow from God; or: God's fine speech; an excellent declaration pertaining to God; a profitable thing spoken, which is God) – **besides abilities and powers of an impending age,**
6. and yet then falling by the side (or: falling aside along the way), **[are] powerless and unable to be repeatedly renewing again into a change of mind: [they are] continuously**

suspending back up (or: hanging on a pole; crucifying) again in, with, to, for and by themselves the Son of God, and [are] constantly exposing [Him] to public shame/disgrace.

7. For you see, a piece of land (or: ground; soil; = a field; or: a territory) which is drinking (= soaking in) the rain often coming upon it, and producing vegetation (pasture; produce) fit for and useful to them through whom it is habitually being cultivated, [is] also continuously sharing in and partaking of a blessing from God;

8. but when repeatedly and progressively bearing forth thorns and thistles [it is] disqualified (worthless; unable to stand the test [for planting a new crop]) **and [is] close to** (or: near) **[the] curse** (or: a down-prayer and a corresponding wish against [the situation] is at hand), **the end** (the resultant situation) **of which [the thorns, briars, thistles and the field is] into [a time of] burning** (or: = the field ends up being burned off).

[comment: this is a time-honored agricultural practice for preparing a

field for planting a crop –
the competition has been
removed and the ground has
been enriched by the ash]

Peter had begun this letter with a
reference to the young Christians who
were “fleeing” the System’s
entanglements. Let us review 1:4 at this
point,

**“[It is] through means of which
things – the precious and
greatest effects of the promises
– [that] He has been freely
given to us, to the end that
through these [gifts], you folks
would come to be people of
common-being from a divine**

essence and nature while fleeing from the corruption (ruin; decay) within the dominant System [which is] in the midst of passionate cravings (rushing emotions; lusts; violent over-desires).”

Then 1:5-7 give the antidote.

This could also be an allusion to community members who have returned to the inferior life of the old covenant, as it were “falling out of grace” (Gal. 5:2-4).

21. For it were better for them (or: it was existing better to and in them) to have not known (not to have come to an experiential full knowledge of) the Way

(road; path) **of the fair and equitable dealing** (justice; righteousness; or: = covenant participation) **than, fully knowing, to turn below** (or: back) **from out of** [other MSS: to bend back, into the things which are behind, from] **the set-apart implanted goal** (holy impartation of the finished product and destiny within; sacred inward directive) – **the one being given over** (committed; delivered alongside) **to them.**

The reason for this statement is explained in the quote of Heb. 6:6, above: They “[are] **powerless and unable to be repeatedly renewing again into a change of mind.**” When a person has known the Way, the Truth and

the Life, and yet become deceived into returning back to their former life, they must encounter the necessary fires to burn off the weeds and briars before their “field” will be ready to once again receive the Good Seed of the kingdom. Jesus said something similar to this in Jn. 15: 22,

“If I did not come and speak to them, they would not have been holding failure (or: were having no sin or error). But now (at this time) they continue holding nothing which like a specious and deceptive cloak appears in front around their sin

(or: they are not continuing

to hold that which is put forward to hide the situation concerning their failure; they are not habitually having an excuse or pretense about their deviation, error and miss of the target).”

He made this same point by an allusion to the owner-slave situation in His time and culture,

“Now that slave who by experience is knowing and personally understanding his owner's (his lord's; his master's) will and intent – and yet is not preparing (or: making ready) or

performing with an aim toward his [owner's] will or intent – will proceed in being flayed (severely whipped) [with] many lashes.”

Since Judah (Jude) speaks to similar situations as does our present chapter in Peter's letter, let us consider an opening admonition by Judah,

3. Dearly loved friends, while progressively making all haste and performing every diligent effort to proceed in writing to you concerning our common, communal deliverance

(or: the rescue, salvation, health and wholeness

belonging equally to several
of us, and in which we
share and participate as
partners; [Aleph & others
add: and life]), I

**possessed a compressed and
constraining necessity to write
to you, progressively urging and
encouraging [you] to be in the
habit of strenuously contending
(or: to continue adding to
the contest; to be repeatedly
on top, in combat of the
public games; to repeatedly
fully participate in the race
course) by the faith, in the
trust and**

with the loyalty and confidence having been once for all given over to, for and in the set-apart folks (or: sacred groups).

“The way he addresses them recalls 1 John 3:2 & 4:1. Although a general letter, because of what he affirms in vs. 1, he knows that the recipients of this letter are folks that are loved by God, as well as by himself. In regard to the remaining part of the verse, Barclay writes, ‘It had been Jude's intention to write a treatise on the faith which all Christians share; but that task had to be laid aside in view of the rise of men whose

conduct and thought were a threat to the Christian Church' (ibid. p 158). David H. Wheaton suggests that this was also due to 'activities of false teachers' (ibid p 1275). Especially considering the last half of the verse which sounds similar to such as 1 John 2:24, "**As for you folks, let what you heard from [the] beginning be continuously remaining** (abiding; dwelling; staying) **within you,**" it seems likely that he is writing to combat some form of Gnosticism.

“Although he has just spoken peace to them, in vs. 2, now he

encourages them **‘to be in the habit of strenuously contending.’** We should note the metaphor that Judah employs: it is not one of war, but of the public games – a wrestling, participating in athletic contests, a running or an adding to the contest with folks who had come into their group or communities. The issues that needed to be addressed were conduct and ideas. They are admonished to do this **"by the faith,"** or **‘in the trust,’** and **‘with the loyalty and confidence’** which had been **‘once for all’** given over to them. By, in, and

with these aspects of ‘what [they] heard from [the] beginning,’ they were to overcome these opponents to their covenant living. Cf 1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:5-8. The path of following Jesus the Messiah is one of interaction both inside the community and outside in the society at large. Here the contest is within the covenant group. And it has continued this way for 2000 years.

“A word should be said about **‘our common, communal deliverance,’** even though Judah did not go into a teaching on this. That he uses the phrase is itself

instructive. Our ‘**deliverance**’ is held in common, or, as I amplified this phrase: ‘the rescue, salvation, health and wholeness belonging equally to several of us, and in which we share and participate as partners.’ The adjective is *koinos*, a cognate of *koinonia*. Our salvation is not individual or personal: it is ‘**communal**, belonging equally to several of us, and in which we share and participate as partners’” (*JJP&?*, *ibid* p 74).

You may have noticed that I offered two renderings to this verb: **to turn below** (or: back). The idea of “back” (given in

the parenthetical alternative) is represented by the other MS traditions which have good MS witnesses. The bold rendering, **turn below**, is the reading chosen by Nestle-Aland and by Westcott and Hort in their eclectic texts. They have the verb “to turn” prefixed by the preposition *hupo-* which means “below,” or “under.” The picture expressed by this compound verb means to turn from what is above (the upward, “heavenly,” call) to that which is below. To turn from resurrection life back to the grave.

22. **Now it has walked** (or: stepped) **together for them** (to them; in them) – **the true proverb** (saying; byword): "a

dog turning about upon its own vomit," and "a sow (or: hog), into a rolling (wallowing-place) of mire, bathing itself!"

“The author combines a reference to Prov. 26:11 and one to the Story of Ahikar (see 'Non-canonical Early Christian Writings,' pp 1144-49) to give the picture of the dog and the pig both returning to filth of their own making” (Thompson, *ibid* p 933).

The theme of a “return to the former” is clearly evident in his completion of this section of the letter.

Chapter 3

1. **O beloved and unambiguously accepted ones, this [is] already a second letter [that] I am writing to you, within which I am thoroughly arousing (raising through; thoroughly awakening) your complete thought process (intellect, comprehension and the things going through the mind) which has been evaluated in sunlight (or: your sunlight-separated, sincere understanding), in union with a putting in mind (or: a remembrance) [and]** Peter now lifts the hearts of his listeners, assuring them that they are **loved and unambiguously accepted**. This plural adjective indicates that it applies to the

whole group, or groups – this is written to the entire called-out community, not just to select individuals. I expanded the rendering of *agapē* by adding

“unambiguous acceptance,” from Paul Tillich’s definition in his *Systematic Theology*. This is how God receives us, no matter how “distorted or demonized our condition” (Tillich).

He has been speaking to their intellect – **[their] complete thought process** – and has been **thoroughly arousing** “the things going through the mind (*diánoia*).” By addressing their “comprehension,” he is “thoroughly awakening” their thinking **which has been evaluated in sunlight** – which

means that their reasoning is no longer in darkness, but has been illuminated by the Light of Christ. The parenthetical expansion, “your sunlight-separated, sincere understanding,” gives another view of how the presence of Christ (or the Spirit) has transformed the way they view their worlds. Barclay says of the word *eilikrineia* (separated, evaluated and judged by the light of the sun): “It may mean that which is sifted until there is no admixture of chaff left; or it may mean that which is so flawless that it may be held up to the light of the sun” (ibid p 337). This process is what Paul referred to in Rom. 12:2 about being, **“progressively transformed**

(transfigured; changed in form and semblance) **by the renewing** (or: in the renewal; for the making-back-up-new again) **of your mind** [with other MSS: from The Mind; of the intellect; pertaining to the faculties of perceiving and understanding; of the mindset, disposition, inner orientation and world view] **into the [situation and condition for] you folks to be habitually examining in order to be testing and, after scrutiny, distinguishing and approving what [is] God's will** (design; purpose; resolve; intent): **the good and well-pleasing, even**

perfect (finished, complete and destined)!”

Peter has been “raising [their] intellect through” (as it were a ‘resurrection’) in the midst of “**union with a putting in mind** (or: a remembrance),” along with what he continues saying in the next verse. How easily things can be “out of mind” or forgotten, and we all need reminders – which is the purpose for most of the NT letters.

2. to be born in mind (or: to be called to mind), **about the flowing declarations** (or: gush-effects; results of the flow) **having been spoken beforehand by the set-apart** (or: holy; sacred) **prophets, even** (or: as well as) **the sent-forth**

representatives (emissaries) which pertained to you folks, of the implanted goal (impartation of the finished product and destiny within; inward directive) of, from and which is, the Lord and Savior (Deliverer),
So all of what he has just said in chapters 1 and 2 are **“to be born in mind (or: to be called to mind)”** along with his first letter and the teachings which they had originally received from **the set-apart prophets, i.e., the sent-forth representatives** of Christ. The conjunction can also be rendered “as well as,” which would separate the functioning of prophets and emissaries, and the former could also be referring to

the OT prophets which spoke of the coming Messiah. On this latter view, Barclay says of Peter,

“He believed in *the unity of Scripture*. As he saw it there was a pattern in Scripture; and the Bible was a book centered in Christ. The OT foretells Christ; the gospels tell of Jesus the Christ; and the apostles bring the message of that Christ to men” (ibid p 337; emphasis original).

Note the present and personal phrase in vs. 2 concerning **the flowing declarations... which pertained to YOU FOLKS**. This letter involves “the **implanted goal**” that had come to them

via the proclamation of the message about the coming and work of the Messiah. This Word-delivered “impartation of the finished product [i.e., Christ]” and inner destiny for them had created the “inward, or inner, directive **of, from and which is, the Lord and Savior.**” It was Christ within and among them – which was and is the expectation of the Glory (i.e., God’s presence), and which comes from the manifestation (the resurrection of Christ and the deliverance from God) which calls forth our praise (Col. 1:27).

3. while continuing in knowing this first, by experience, that upon [the] last (or: final [phases]) of these (or:

the) **days mockers** (scoffers) **will continue coming and going – in mocking** (scoffing; deriding), **according to their own cravings** (or: in correspondence to their personal full passions), **folks continually traveling from one place to another** (or: = people normally ordering their lives according to their personal desires) – The setting for what the author is saying is: [the] **last**, or final [phases], **of these** (or: the) **days**. The definite article (the) in Greek was originally used as a demonstrative (a “pointer”) to specify or indicate something specific that the speaker had in mind, and corresponds to our English “this” or, here, in the plural,

“these.” They were living in the conjunction (the meeting “ends”) of the former age of the Law and the first Adam with the new age of the Spirit, given in grace, and the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45).

What the rest of vs. 3, above, describes is what Peter’s readers continued **“knowing... by experience.”**

They were living in the last of those days and had been experiencing them. So they had encountered the “mockers and scoffers.” Peter assured them that these folks **“will continue coming and going.”** Here I conflated the meanings of the verb (to come; or, to go), since it means both, and the durative future supports

this interpretation of the word. History has also proved this to be the case. We have all seen folks that operate **“according to their own cravings** (or: in correspondence to their personal full passions).” The last participial clause in the present tense also supports our translation of the previous verb. They are **continually traveling from one place to another**. I have offered a parenthetical paraphrase of the last half of the verse which covers a broader category of the general public that might not seem to fit the literal, graphic term “cravings” or “full passions,” even though that is strictly what the word means. It is the word for “desire” with

the intensifier (*epi-*) prefixed to it.

Judah recorded similar comment which will fill out the picture even more:

18. that [the sent-forth folks] said to you, "Upon [other MSS: Within (or: During; In union with)] [the] last of the time folks will repeatedly be (or: there will constantly exist) mockers (those acting or playing in the manner of children; sporting, using childish gestures), continuously passing from one place to another according to (or: in correspondence with) their irreverent strong passions (or: their full desires and lusts of

things not having the qualities of things approved by God)."

"This appears to have been a quote that Judah remembered Jesus having said, or which the Spirit brought to mind. Judah was relating this saying to the people to whom he was writing – not to some distant time in the future. He was talking about the folks that were at that time within their very community – as this whole letter has pointed out. This was to happen **‘upon (or: within) the last [part] of the time.’** They were in ‘the last times,’ as Paul had pointed out in 1 Tim. 4:1,

‘Now the Spirit (or: Breath-effect) **is explicitly saying that within subsequent seasons** (in fitting situations and on appropriate occasions which will be afterwards) **some of the faith** (or: certain folks belonging to this trust) **will stand off and away [from the Path, or from the Community]** (or: some people will withdraw from this conviction and loyalty), **habitually holding toward** (having a propensity to) **wandering**

and deceptive spirits (or:
straying and seducing
breath-effects and attitudes)
**and to teachings of
demons**

(to teachings about and
pertaining to, or which are,
demons [note: a Hellenistic
concept and term: =
animistic influences]; or: to
instructions and training
which come from animistic
influences [= pagan
religions]).’

1 John 2:18 says virtually the
same thing,

‘O undeveloped ones or

folks of the age to be educated (or: servants, little boys and little girls who might be hit in training and for discipline), **it continues being** (or: is progressively) **a last hour** (= an *eschaton* of the Day, or the closing moment [of the age])... **we constantly know by experience that it continues being a last hour** (= a closing moment [of the age])'" (*JJP&?* ibid p 82).

4. even saying, "Where is the promise of His presence? For since the fathers

were put (or: lulled) to sleep, all things (or: everything) constantly remain(s) thus (in this way or manner) throughout, from [the] beginning of creation (the framing; the reduction from a state of disorder)."

On the question first posed by the opponents to the fulfillment of Scripture, Barclay instructs us concerning vs. 4, here,

“That was a form of Hebrew expression which implied that the thing asked about did not exist at all. ‘Where is the God of justice?’ asked the evil men in Malachi’s day (Mal. 2:17). ‘Where is your God?’ the heathen demanded of

the Psalmist (Ps. 42:3; 79:10).

‘Where is the word of the LORD?’ his enemies asked Jeremiah (Jer. 17:15). In every case the implication of the question is that the thing or person asked about does not exist” (ibid p 338).

This would have been the question of those who knew what the OT had **promised**, and that it concerned the **presence** of the Messiah. But the Jews of that era – who had not accepted Jesus as being the Messiah – could see no outward change of circumstances. They were expecting a Messiah that would establish a kingdom of this world system

– not a crucified Messiah that would be resurrected to live within and among a body of people, and that would change the inner person of the heart. Much of Christianity today has fallen into the same error as those 1st century Jews: expecting a literal presence of Jesus. They forget that Paul informed us that we no longer know Him according to the flesh, and in fact in the new creation of His present kingdom we no longer know each other after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16). Jesus made a statement to His disciples in reference to His eschatological presence in Mat. 10:23,

**“Now whenever they may
continue chasing you or be**

repeatedly persecuting you in this [particular] city, proceed taking flight (escaping) into a different one, for, truly – I now say to you folks – you can under no circumstances complete the circuit of (or: finish [visiting]) the cities (or: towns) of Israel until the Son of the Man (humanity's son; = Adam's son; or: = the awaited Messianic figure) should go (or: comes; can come and then go).

Mark 8:38-9:1 gives a more complete statement of this, and ties it more directly to that generation and to what

was soon to happen, of which even those in Asia Minor would hear and then be affected:

“Furthermore, whosoever may be ashamed of or embarrassed because of Me and My messages (Words; Thoughts; Ideas) within the midst of this adulterous and erring (failing; mis-shooting; sinful; deviating) generation, the Son of the Man (or: the son of mankind; the Human Son) will also continue being ashamed of and embarrassed because of him – whenever (at the time that) He may come within the midst of

His Father's glory (or: in a manifestation which calls forth praise for His Father) **along with the set-apart agents** (or: holy messengers; sacred folks with the message).’ **Then He continued saying to them, ‘Truly** (or: Assuredly; Amen; Verily), **I am now saying to you folks that there are certain ones** (or: some) **of those standing here who under no circumstances can taste** (may test by sipping; = experience; partake) **of death until they can** (should; may) **see God's kingdom** (God's reign and influence as King; the sovereign

activity which is God) **being present, having already come within the midst of power and ability.**””

But Jesus had made it clear that,

“The reign (or: kingdom; royal rule; sovereign activities and influences) of God is not proceeding in coming with a careful keeping watch from the side

(or: by means of or accompanied by attentive or intensive observing; [note: this word was used of watching the symptoms of an illness, as well as about

making observations of the sky]; = with visible signs).

Neither will folks continue saying, 'Look here!' or, 'There!' You see – now consider this, and understand – God's reign (kingdom; royal rule; sovereign influence and activity) **continually exists inside you folks** (or: is on the inside of you people; or: = is within your community)” (Lu. 17:20-21).

5. You see, it continues unnoticed and unrecognized – [by] those folks habitually desiring this [to be the case] (or: = they deliberately ignore the fact) – **that skies** (or: atmospheres; heavens)

and land were continuously existing from long ago (or: = from ancient times) – from out of the midst of water, and through water – being made to stand together (being placed or put together) by (or: in; with) the Word (Logos; thought and idea; reason) of God (or: which is God),

6. through which [very waters; or: directives of His Word] the ordered System (world of culture and relationships) of that time destroyed (or: lost) itself, being washed down (inundated; deluged) by water.

He is referencing first, in vs. 5, the natural creation in Gen.1, and then, in vs. 6, the destruction that came during the

time of Noah in Gen. 7. As the inserted brackets of vs. 6 indicate, the “**through which**” can have either “water” or “the Word” as its antecedent, in vs. 5. The phrase, “**by the same Word** (or: in the same Logos),” in vs. 7 would seem to indicate the latter.

We read of “the world of culture and relationships... **being washed down** (inundated; deluged) **by water**” in 1 Pet. 3:20-21,

“to and for those being at one time unconvinced (unpersuaded; disobedient; noncompliant) **within [the] days of Noah, when** (or: while) **he was continuing to be receiving forth, and taking away**

from, out of God's state of emotional quietness (taking a long time before rushing or being in a heat of passion; long-enduring patience; putting anger far away) **while [the] ark was progressively being prepared and equipped** (constructed to readiness) – **into which a few folks, that is, eight souls** (= people), **were brought safely through [the] water** (or: were brought safely through, by means of water), **[into] which, also, an echo of correspondent form** (or: a copy; an antitype; an impress which answers back; in place of

the type or pattern) **is now progressively delivering** (rescuing) **you folks** (or: repeatedly bringing you to safety): **immersion** (submersion and envelopment which brings absorption and permeation to the point of saturation) – **not [the] putting off of [the] filth** (removal of dirt) **away from [the] flesh** (= not baptism or bathing of the physical body, or the removal of the alienated false persona), **but rather – the result of a full inquiry into the midst of God** (or: the effect of an added request unto God; or: = a further quest

into “the Divine Mystery” – Paul Tillich) **made by a good conscience** (from an excellent joint-knowing; in relation to virtuous co-knowledge). **[It saves you and it is made] through means of [the] resurrection of Jesus Christ.”**

Barclay concludes here, “What Peter means is that the world was created out of water and is sustained by water; and it was through this same element that the ancient world was destroyed” (ibid p 339-40).

7. Yet at the present time the heavens and the earth (or: the atmospheres and skies, as well as the land), **by the same**

Word (or: in the same Logos) – **having been collected and being stored up as treasure, by** (or: in; for; with) **fire** – **continuously exist, being constantly kept** (watched, guarded and maintained) **with a view to a day of separating for deciding** (or: with the character of evaluating for judging), **as well as of loss, ruin or destruction which pertains to the irreverent humans** (or: of people devoid of reverential awe toward God). Now he has returned to **the present time** (of the 1st century) and instructs those folks about a situation that was at hand: the soon to come destruction and burning of Jerusalem in AD 70 which had been foretold by Jesus in Mat. 24

and Lu. 21, then seen in vision by John in Rev. 18:18. In the genre of apocalyptic literature that was popular among Jewish writers of those times, **the heavens and the earth** was a phrase that referred to the entirety of their world and way of life. For the Jews, the temple (God's dwelling place) was the embodiment of "the heavens," or, that which ruled the land, and "the earth (or: land)" was a figure for the people.

The metaphor of **fire** symbolized the involvement of God in human affairs, and this reference has to do with the then coming "**day of separating for deciding** (or: with the character of evaluating for

judging)” that would bring “**loss, ruin or destruction which pertains to the irreverent humans** (or: of people devoid of reverential awe toward God).” Jesus spoke metaphorically concerning Jerusalem’s destruction when He said, “**Your House is progressively left [to be] a wilderness** (desert; desolate place) **for you people** (or: is now abandoned to you)” (Mat. 23:38; *cf* Jer. 22:5). There were numerous times and references to numerous occasions when the prophets foretold of God’s coming with correcting judgment to Israel during her history as a nation. In Isa. 64:10-11 the prophet said to Yahweh,

“Your holy cities are a wilderness; Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem, a destruction. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised You, is burned up with fire and all our pleasant things are laid waste.”

In the next chapter (Isa. 65) Yahweh answers that restoration follows the judgment, and in vs. 17 promises, “I create new heavens and a new earth...” then in vs.18 explains what he meant: “I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy,” and we learn from the rest of that chapter that things will be different in the new arrangement. Paul spoke of the new creation where the new

had come (in Christ) in 2 Cor. 5:17. He spoke of the new kingdom (God's sphere of sovereign influence and activity) as not involving material things, such as food and drink, but rather as being,

“eschatological deliverance into fair and equitable dealing which brings justice and right relationship in the Way pointed out (being turned in the right direction; rightwisdom; also = covenant inclusion and participation), **peace** (a joining with harmony; = shalom) **and joy** (or: happiness; rejoicing) **within set-apart Breath-effect** (or: in union with and amidst a dedicated

spirit and a sacred attitude; or: in [the] Holy Spirit)” (Rom. 14:17).

Isa. 65:24 pictured this symbolically as a wolf and a Lamb feeding together, and as the Lion eating straw like the ox. This union of natures was apocalyptically portrayed in the visions of Ezekiel and John where the new humanity is seen having four faces that reflect the unity of all of creation (Ezk. 1:5ff; Rev. 4:6b-9, which is also an echo of Ps. 150:6, where “everything that has breath praises Yahweh”).

The metaphor of fire was in common use in Israel, most often as a figure for God’s interaction in human affairs – usually in corrective action upon His

people. We read in Ps. 50:1-4,

“He speaks and calls [to the] earth
from the rising of [the] sun unto its
setting.

From Zion, a consummation of
loveliness ([the] perfection of
beauty), God shines forth.

Our God shall come, and He
certainly will not be silent;

Fire shall devour before
Him, and round about Him
it is very tempestuous.

He will summon the sky
(or: heaven) above, as well
as the land (or: earth) to
thoroughly
decide about (discerningly)

adjudicate and judge) His people.” (MT w/LXX)

Isa. 66:15-16 gives another picture of His dealings with people:

“For consider! The Lord (= Yahweh) will come as Fire – and His chariots [are] like a storm-wind – to restore His maintenance of what is right (or: to give away from out of His justice), in a rush of passion, along with a rebuke (or: repudiation) in a flame of Fire. For you see, within the midst of (or: in union with) Fire the Lord (= Yahweh) will progressively judge all the Land, and in His sword, all flesh – many

shall be wounded and traumatized by the Lord” (LXX, JM).

Then in Mal. 4:1 we read of “the Day that comes that burns as a furnace,” but in the previous chapter, 3:2b informs us that “He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ alkali,” and 3:2 explains the purpose for all of this fire: “Therefore will He sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and will purify the sons of Levi and will smelt them, as gold and silver; so shall they belong to Yahweh...” (Rotherham). This was identified in 3:2a as “the day of His coming... when He appears.” He came to set the world “to rights” (as N.T. Wright likes to express it) and to make changes which would

inaugurate the new creation with “heaven and earth” (= the temple and the people) now being the body of the Messiah. Joel 2:30 spoke of “wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and columns of smoke (etc.; = the new exodus led by Christ),” and Peter said in Acts 2:16, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” It all began on the Day of Pentecost; it finished in AD 70.

The fire which produces loss, in certain cases, echoes Paul’s reference to people’s work in their attempts to build upon Christ’s temple, but they used inappropriate material: wood, hay and stubble. His fire will burn all this up

and,

“he will incur a loss (sustain the damage; forfeit [it]), **yet he himself will be saved** (rescued and delivered; healed and restored to health; returned to his original state and condition), **and as in this way – through Fire!”**
(1 Cor. 3:15).

8. Yet now this one thing [p72: But in this] – **let it not continue unnoticed, escape your detection, or be hidden from you – beloved ones, one day beside the Lord [is] as a thousand years, and yet a thousand years [is] as one day.**

Peter reminds his audience of what was

written in Ps. 90:4,

“For a thousand years [are] in
Your eyes like yesterday’s day
when it [has] passed, or [like a]
vigil in [the] night” (CVOT).

The dimension of time and the
dimensions of space are irrelevant in
matters of kingdom reality and spiritual
Life in Christ. Those in the Qumran
community spoke of the apparent delay
of some of God’s actions. In a comment
on the prophecy of Habakkuk 2, the
teacher writes,

“then God told Habakkuk to write
down what is going to happen to
the generation to come; but when
that period would be complete He

did not make known to him.... For a prophecy testifies of a specific period.... If it tarries, be patient, it will surely come true and not be delayed” (1QpHab 7:1-10, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, A New Translation*, Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., & Edward Cook, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, p 119).

The character and manner of the coming of the Messiah, and then the giving of the Spirit, should teach us that literalism has no place in the interpretation of prophecy, beyond the fact that it will in some manner be actually fulfilled. Backward glances at history can reveal

how prophecies were fulfilled in a literal, historic context, but projections into the future are futile.

9. The Lord [= Yahweh] is not continually delaying the promise, as certain folks consider delay as being negligence, but rather is constantly patient (long of emotion, slow in passion, pushing anger far away, even-tempered and long before rushing heatedly; or: passionately persevering until the goal is reached) unto you, constantly not intending any folks to be lost (or: to destroy themselves), but to the contrary, [for] all people to make room, allow space, give way and progress into a change of mind (or: =

repentance and a return to God).

God's **promise** to send the Messiah had come, and so, too, would the promise about the destruction of Jerusalem come at the time that He had planned for it. He gave the Jews who rejected Jesus as the Christ an entire generation (approximately forty years) to yet accept Him. We see God's heart and **intent**: that **all people** would **make room** and **allow space** for Him, and would thus **give way and progress into a change of mind**. At some point in their existence, all will indeed bow in allegiance to Him (Phil. 2:10). With this "constant intending" on God's part in mind, we should recall that Paul affirms that He is,

“the One continuously operating (effecting; energizing) **all things** (or: the whole) **in accord with** (or: down from; in line with; in correspondence to; following the pattern of) **the deliberated purpose** (intent; design; plan; determined counsel) **of His will** (or: resultant decision of His resolve; effect of His desire)” (Eph. 1:11b).

In contrast to God being thought as **delaying** and **negligent** in fulfilling His promises, Peter makes an affirmation that reaches back into Israel’s history where in Ex. 34:6 Yahweh proclaimed to Moses what He Himself is like, and in

the LXX uses the same word **patient** (etc.) that Peter trumpets here. There, in vs. 5 it records that, “the LORD descended in a cloud...” and then in vs. 6b-7a we read,

“The LORD God [is] compassionate and merciful, PATIENT (long of emotion, slow in passion, pushing anger far away, and long before rushing heatedly; or: passionately persevering until the goal is reached) – even greatly full of mercy and dependably true, real, genuine – as well as continuously maintaining eschatological deliverance,

watching over the Way pointed-out, guarding community and preserving right in relationships, and then attentively observing for justice and repeatedly doing mercy unto thousands while repeatedly (or: progressively) taking away (removing) acts of lawlessness, of injustice (disregard for what is right), as well as failures to hit the target (mistakes; errors; deviations; sins)...” (LXX, JM).

In his entry on this word “patient; long of emotion” (*makrothumia*) and its cognates, J. Horst comments on this Ex. 34 passage, “The divine attitude, God’s

dealings with men, have become the content indissolubly linked with *makrothumia*.... [It] is a gift of God, not an arbitrary cultivation of the virtue of self-control.... It is the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22...” (*TDNT*, Vol. IV, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1967, pp 376, 378, 383; brackets added). This word “can even be a predicate of *agapē*... (1 Cor. 13:4)” (*ibid* p 384). It is the first definition of Love in the verse that he cites:

“The Love (or: This unrestricted acceptance) is habitually even-tempered, taking a long time to be in a heat of passion (is constantly long-enduring, long-

suffering and patient; it keeps on putting anger far away; it continues slow to progress toward feelings which cause violent breathing or rushing emotions) – **it continues being usefully kind.**”

From this, Horst maintains that “the power behind [*makrothumia*] is love” (ibid p 384; brackets added).

Paul admonished folks to, “**continually be even-tempered and tolerant** (patient; long-passioned unto the goal while keeping anger far away; long before breathing violently) **toward everyone** (or: all mankind)” (1 Thes. 5:14c). Horst’s article (ibid p 375) pointed me to the final parenthetical

rendering on offer here, regarding God's work and His steadfast commitment to reach His goal: "passionately persevering until the goal is reached."

What a picture of our God, especially as He describes Himself in the passage in Ex. 34, quoted above. Cf Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11b; 3:12; also 2 Cor. 6:6

Finally, in 3:15a, below, Peter instructs his listeners how to consider this *makrothumia* of God"

“make it a habit to consider the long-suffering patience (even-tempered pushing anger far away; long-waiting before rushing heatedly; passionate persevering unto the goal) of our Lord [=

Yahweh, or Christ] [**to be; as**]
deliverance (salvation;
wholeness and health).”

Putting all this together with the affirmation of His **constant intent** that is expressed in the last part of vs. 9, above, should leave in us an insight that yields an experiencing of grateful awe. Barclay insightfully expresses it:

“Finally, there is another echo of a truth which so often lies in the background of NT thought. God, says Peter, does not wish any to perish. God, says Paul, has shut them all up together in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all (Rom. 11:32). Timothy in a

tremendous phrase speaks of God who will have all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). Ezekiel hears God ask: ‘Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, and not rather that he should return from his way and live?’ (Ezk. 18:23). Ever and again there shines in Scripture the glint of the larger hope. We are not forbidden to believe that somehow and some time the God who loves the world will bring the whole world to himself” (ibid p 343).

10. So the day of the Lord [= Yahweh] will continue in arriving as a thief [i.e., suddenly and without notice], in which

[day] the heavens (or: atmospheres; or: skies) **will continue passing by with the noise of sudden movement, but yet rudimentary, elementary principles**

(or: basic component and parts of a system arranged in rows, or a grid; e.g., the elements and assumptions of a religious or intellectual system),

being progressively heated as with a burning fever, will continue being progressively loosed (unfastened; unbound; or: nullified; destroyed). **And then land** (or: soil; ground; earth; or: = a territory) – **along with the things produced** (or: actions; deeds; workmanships; accomplishments) [note:

God's and/or man's] **within the midst of it – will continue being found** (or: discovered; found out) [*p72* adds: being progressively loosed (or: destroyed); A reads: will be burned up]!

This is an apocalyptic prediction (*cf* Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001) of the final days of the old covenant when God would come in the destruction of Jerusalem (via the Romans in AD 66-70, just as He had via the Assyrians and Babylonians in Israel's history) and of loosening and nullifying, or the **passing by**, of the **rudimentary, elementary principles** of the former age and religious systems (temple cultus; purity

codes) of the Law which defined ancient Israel (and the Jews) as a nation and a culture. Our God is a consuming Fire that reveals human works (e.g., 1 Cor. 3:13-15) and purifies (Mal. 3:2-3).

Peter was describing the effect of what Jesus described in Mat. 24:2ff, and His response to His disciples' inquiry (vs. 3) regarding when those things would happen, and what would be the sign of His presence. Peter's descriptions may also be an allusion to the apocalyptic picture in Nah. 1:5,

“The mountains quake because of Him, and the hills melt and dissolve; the land is upheaved by His presence...”

Frederick J. Murphy observes, “The commentary on the prophet Nahum contains numerous *historical* references” (*Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*, Baker Academics, 2012, p 220; emphasis mine).

The symbolic picture of the temple’s destruction (i.e., **the heavens**, which was God’s home among His people) passing with **the noise of sudden movement** is further explained by Barclay in giving the uses of the Greek word (*roizēdon*): “That word is used for the whirring of a bird’s wings in the air, for the sound a spear makes as it hurtles through the air, for the crackling of flame of a forest fire” (ibid p 344). The birds

would be the Roman eagles on the standards of their armies as they surrounded Jerusalem; the spear's sound speaks of the attack by Rome's legions; the fire speaks of the burning of Jerusalem.

The discovery (from **being found within her midst**) is a poetic reference to the unveiling of Jerusalem's sins and deviations during this time of God's judgment upon her. The "**land and ground being found**" means that the city will be wiped away and burned, as described figuratively in Heb. 6:8. It would also be the fulfillment of Jesus' words in Lu. 11:50,

"So thus, the blood of all of the

prophets... would at some point be searched out to be required and exacted from this generation.”

Then in Lu. 21:20 He affirmed,

“Now later, when you folks see Jerusalem being continuously surrounded by encamped armies, at that time realize and know from that experience that her desolation has drawn near and is now present.”

As to the phrase **“arriving as a thief,”** the resurrected Jesus described His coming to the called-out community in Sardis in the same way (Rev.3:3b). He would come to Jerusalem in the same

way (Rev. 16:16). The apocalypse of Mat. 24 records Jesus using this same term in vs. 43, using it as referring to Himself in vs. 44.

11. With all these people thus, then, being presently loosed, one after another (or: being in the process of being progressively unbound; or: with all these things being continuously dissolved in this way), **in what sort of way is it continuously necessary and binding for you folks** [other MSS: us; other MSS have no personal pronoun here] **to constantly subsist** (or: humbly rule or supportively possess)? **Within set-apart** (or: holy; sacred), **upturned modes of behavior and [lives of]**

reverence (devout ease, virtuous conduct and goodness from relationship with God)!

The form of the word **these** is both masculine and neuter, so I have rendered it as both **people** and “things.” With the coming of Christ **people** were then **presently loosed, one after another**, but at the same time the old existence and old arrangement was “being continuously dissolved” – or as Paul put it in 2 Cor. 5:17,

“...[**there is**] a new creation (or: [it is] a framing and founding of a different kind; [he or she is] an act of creation having a fresh character and a new quality): **the**

original things (the beginning [situations]; the archaic and primitive [arrangements]) **passed by** (or: went to the side).

Consider! New things have come into existence (have been birthed; or: It has become new things; or: He has been birthed and now exists being ones of a different kind, character and quality).” [note: *cf* Rev. 21:5]

So, because of this change and loosing, they should live their lives **within set-apart, upturned** (i.e., toward the realm of the Spirit and the enthroned Messiah) **modes of behavior.**

12. – **while constantly being receptive**

toward (or: continuing with expectation with regard to) **and eagerly speeding along** (or: progressively hastening after) **the presence of God's Day** (or: the presence, which is God's day; or: the presence of the day which has the quality and character of God and which is God), **through which skies and atmospheres** (or: heavens) – **being continuously on fire – will continue being loosed** (or: untied)! **And so [the body of] elements** (rudimentary principles and assumptions; component parts of the system), **now being continuously intensely hot and burning, [are] presently being progressively melted down** (or: liquefied).

Their lives should be instruments that **eagerly speed God's presence** (that is within them and among them, since they are God's temple) to those around them. As Paul spoke of running a race (Phil. 3:14) they should "progressively hasten after" the presence of **God's Day** – a day "which has the quality and character of God, and which is God." They were "children of the Day" (1 Thes. 5:5) – even though "**the days** (= present times) **are of a bad quality** (or: a gush of misery; unsound; harmful; or: in a sorry plight; or: toilsome)" – Eph. 5:16. The apocalyptic picture of **skies and atmospheres being continuously on fire** and rudimentary assumptions,

component parts of the religious and political arrangements being **progressively melted down**, is describing the Jewish world (as they presently knew it) coming to an end. This description is an expansion of the picture given in vs. 10, above. *Cf* comments on Eph. 1:3, p 78, below.

13. **Yet we, according to** (or: down from and in line with) **the effect and result of His promise, are habitually receptive toward fresh skies and continue with expectation, face to face with atmospheres new in kind and quality** (or: keep an opinion with regard to new heavens) **and a land** (or: soil; ground; earth) **new in kind and quality,**

within which [situations; conditions] a rightwising eschatological deliverance (or: righted existence of living in covenant relationships of the fairness which accords with the Way pointed out; liberated participation in the justice and equity of the new arrangement) **is presently and permanently settled down** (is continuously dwelling and at home).

But Peter and his listeners were by habit **receptive toward** the new creation and the new covenant arrangements where they had been “**made alive together by** (or: joins us in common life with, for and in; [p46, B: within; in union with]) **the Christ.... and He jointly roused**

and raised (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us]) **together within the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens within and in union with Christ Jesus** (Eph. 2:5-6).

They were now **face to face with atmospheres new in kind and quality** that presented them with **fresh skies** and kept them with opinions that were shaped by the new heavens (i.e., the rule of Christ via the Spirit, in the kingdom of the heavens – as Jesus described in His parables). And God's **rightwising, eschatological deliverance** (the work and resurrection of Christ) is constantly

resident within this new world of the Second Humanity – the resurrected existence that is the life of the ages which has **settled down** and continuously dwells within Christ.

14. Wherefore, beloved ones, while continually being receptive toward these things, be eager to be found [being] spotless folks and flawless ones in Him (or: with Him; for Him), in peace and in union with harmony from the joining [= shalom].

(or: On account of which, accepted folks, in continuing with an expectation that is face to face with these [occurrences], eagerly speed along to Him unblemished

and blameless folks to be found centered in peace; or: ... through which loved folks are continuing expecting these [situations]. Let folks [who are] by Him absent of spot and blemish be found within the midst of peace and joining).

I have presented three different readings of this verse. The first is an admonition toward living a set-apart life that reflects God's image and is appropriate for those who presently are existentially **in Him**, and who exist **in peace and in union with harmony**. They were counseled to be **receptive toward these things**, and to be found by others as folks that live in the new creation.

The second reading recognizes them as being “accepted” by God and as having an expectation that was at that time face to face with God’s invasion of their world – via the Christ, the giving of the Spirit, and the soon to come judgment upon (and: decision about) Jerusalem. These members of His body were to “eagerly speed to Him” folks that His death had cleansed – so that they could be found to be centered in His peace. The third reading treats vs. 14 as a continuation of vs. 13 by rendering the conjunction “through which.” Because of the last phrase of vs. 13, “loved folks are continuing expecting” these aforementioned situations to develop. So

let everyone who has been transformed by Him to be spotless lambs that have placed their bodies beside the acceptable Living Sacrifice (Christ – Rom. 12:1-2), be found living within the midst of His peace. These admonitions refer to our present existence, in Him, right hear and right now.

Leahy point out that **spotless** and **flawless**, “is the negative form of the pair of epithet applied to the false teachers in 2:13,” above (ibid p 498). As there, although referring to individuals who create “spots” on the community reputation, so here, the reputation of the entire community is in view. The communities are spotless and

flawless because they are **“in Him, with Him and for Him.”** This description of their reputation and how they are presented to the surrounding culture calls to mind Paul’s description of these same communities:

“an inwardly-glorious and honorable (or: held in honor and high esteem; in-glorious-array; or: inwardly-reputable; centered-in-glory) called-out community – [which] is continuously having neither spot (or: stain), nor wrinkle, nor any of such things, but to the contrary – to the end that she would continuously exist being set-apart (holy;

different from the ‘ordinary and profane’) **and flawless** (unblemished; or: unblamable)” (Eph. 5:27).

The last phrase, “**in peace and in union with harmony from the joining**” gives his listeners a picture of what he means by “spotless” and “flawless.” This phrase describes the new creation, of which Paul spoke in 2 Cor. 5:17, and then described in Eph. 2:14-16,

“You see, He Himself is our Peace (or: continuously exists being our joining and harmony [= Shalom]) – **the One making** (forming; constructing; creating; producing) **The Both [to be] one,**

and within His flesh (= physical being; or: = system-caused crucifixion) **is instantly destroying** (unbinding; unfastening; loosing; causing to collapse) **the middle wall of the fenced enclosure** (or: the partition or barrier wall): **the enmity** (cause of hate, alienation, discord and hostility; characteristics of an enemy), **rendering useless** (nullifying; rendering down in accord with inactivity and unemployment) **the Law** (or: the custom; = the Torah) **of the implanted goals** (or: concerning impartations of the

finished product within; from commandments; which was inward directives) **consisting in decrees** (or: prescribed ordinances), **to the end that He may frame** (create; found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder) **The Two into One New** [*p46 & others: common*] **Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making** (progressively creating) **Peace and Harmony** (= shalom); **and then should fully transfer, from a certain state to another which is quite different, The Both –**

centered in, and within the midst of, One Body in God (or: make completely other, while moving away from what had existed, and fully reconcile The Both, in one Body, **by, to, with and for God**), **through the cross** (execution stake) – **while in the midst of Himself killing the enmity and discordant hatred** (or: killing-off the characteristics of enemies within it).”

15. And so, make it a habit to consider the long-suffering patience (even-tempered pushing anger far away; long-waiting before rushing heatedly;

passionate persevering unto the goal) of **our Lord** [= Yahweh, or Christ] [**to be; as**] **deliverance** (salvation; wholeness and health), **according as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you, in accord with** (or: down from) **the wisdom being given to him** (or: by him),

Note Peter's association of God's **patience** – and, by extension, Christ's **long-suffering** of the cross – with God's **deliverance** (the work of the cross and then the resurrection). Barclay notes that “Peter here cites Paul as teaching the same things as he himself teaches” (ibid p 347). Peter is tying-in what he is saying with Paul's presentations of the

message of God's goodness, ease and well-being (the gospel). His "passionate persevering unto the goal" for humanity is indeed Good News. This is how He is our Savior, our Redeemer. The relentless love (which is our Good Shepherd) is making long His passion to find the final lost sheep. This same love pushes anger far from Him, and we find peace in His even temper during our struggles amidst the volatile emotions of estranged humanity. His long-suffering patience with us endears Him to us as He progressively draws us.

16. even as in all the letters, habitually speaking in them concerning these things, in which certain things are

misunderstood (or: imperceptible to the mind; hard to understand), **which the unlearned folks and unstable ones** (unfounded ones; people not set fast and firm) **repeatedly distort, as by twisting them out of place on a rack – as also the rest of the writings** (or: Scriptures) **– toward their own loss** (or: ruin; destruction).

Even in Peter's day people were misunderstanding what Paul taught, and it takes the unveiling of our minds to perceive and understand what he wrote. Much theoretical wood, hay and stubble needs to be burned out of Christian traditions. Theologians and modern scribes have **repeatedly distorted and**

twisted Paul's message of grace and the finished work of Christ. Law-laden doctrines have brought much **loss** and destruction to the body of Christ, and for humanity. As Paul put it in Rom. 1:22, "[So] **continuously claiming** (asserting; alleging with pretense) **to be wise ones, they were made to be dull** (sluggish; moronic; stupid; foolish)." And in 1 Cor. 1 Paul makes the following argument:

18. **You see, the message** (the word; the Logos) **of the cross** (or: the idea from, and the concept pertaining to, the execution-stake/suspension-pole) **is and continues being, on the one hand, stupidity** (nonsense;

foolishness) **to** (or: for; in) **those folks presently and progressively destroying themselves** (or, as a passive: being habitually lost or progressively undone); **yet, on the other hand, it is and continues being God's power** (or: the ability of and from God; the power which is God) **in us, to us and for us: in the folks being presently delivered**

(or: for those being continually rescued, repeatedly saved and progressively restored to health and wholeness; or: to

the ones being now salvaged and progressively restored to their original state and condition).

19. For it has been written, and thus stands,

"I will undo (untie and loose away; destroy) **the wisdom and cleverness of the wise ones, and I will set aside** (or: displace; invalidate) **the intelligence** (comprehension; understanding) **of the intellectual** (intelligent; comprehending) **people."**

[Isa. 29:14]

20. Where [is] a wise one?

Where [is] a scribe (one learned in the Scriptures; the scholar)?

Where [is] a collaborating seeker (a co-investigator; a discussor; a learned sophist; a reasoner) **of this age? Does not God prove** (or: make) **stupid** (foolish; nonsensical) **the wisdom** (cleverness; learned skill) **of this ordered arrangement** (controlling System; world of culture, religion, economy and government; realm of the secular)?

21. For since, in view of the fact that – within the Wisdom of God

(or: centered in the wisdom whose source and origin is God; in the midst of the wisdom which is God) – **the ordered arrangement and System of secular and religious culture did not come to have an intimate, experiential knowledge of God through means of this Wisdom** (or: You see, in as much as – in union with God's wisdom – the world of mankind did not recognize, or have insight into, God through means of [human] wisdom), **God delights and considers it profitable**

(thinks it thoroughly competent and easy; imagines it well-done) **to deliver** (or: save; rescue; salvage and restore to health, wholeness and their original state and condition) **the folks habitually trusting, progressively believing and constantly being loyal, through the stupidity of the proclamation** (or: the aforementioned foolishness of that which is proclaimed; or: the dullness of the effect of heralding; or: the "nonsense" of the result of the message preached),

22. in as much as, both Jews constantly request (habitually demand) signs, and Greeks (those of the Hellenistic culture) constantly seek (habitually try to find) wisdom!

23. Yet as for us, we are constantly proclaiming (habitually heralding) Christ: One having been terminally crucified (hung from a pole; executed on a stake) – indeed, a trap-spring (or: a snare; thus: an obstacle or cause for stumbling or being ensnared) to (or: with; for; among) Jews (those of the Jewish culture and religion); yet

stupidity (foolishness; nonsense)
to (or: for) **[the] multitudes**
(among [other] ethnic groups; in
[the] nations; with the non-Jews),
24. and yet [it is] Christ: God's
power and ability, as well as
God's wisdom

(or: and so [we see the]
Anointed One – a power
from, and which is, God, as
well as understanding
insight and skillful
cleverness from, and which
is, God), **to, for, in, with**
and among those [who are] the
called (or: invited) **people!**
25. Because God's stupid thing

[or: plan; idea] (or: the foolish act of God; nonsense from God) **continues being wiser than mankind** (humans; people), **and God's weak act [is] stronger than mankind** (humanity; people).

17. You, then, beloved and accepted ones, being ones by repeated experiences previously acquainted [with this] (or: knowing beforehand by experiences), **be constantly on watch, guard, and keep yourselves in custody, lest – at some point being carried** (or: led) **away together by the deception** (or: in straying; or: to deceit) **of the unestablished** (unprincipled; inordinate; lawless) **folks – you could fall out from**

your own state of fixed firmness (or: steadfastness).

I suggest that Peter, as well, is admonishing Christians of his day to guard against the Judaizers that brought the deception (see my *Just Paul, Comments on Romans*). As Paul referred to those who continued with Law observance as having fallen out of grace (Gal. 5:4), Peter warns that his listeners **could fall out from [their] own state of fixed firmness**. This whole letter was addressing present concerns that Peter had for all of the called-out communities. The mixing of the old with the new would burst the bag (i.e., the body of Christ) that held the new wine of

the Spirit and Life of Christ (Mk. 2:22). Other errors that were spreading during this period were the varieties of Gnosticism that fomented “elitism” and led folks astray in their perceptions of the new reality by philosophically separating “spirit” from “matter” (His creation), causing folks to focus their attention away from living the cruciform life and bearing God’s image and character to the world around them. In a recent internet post, Richard Rohr described what the early Eastern Orthodox fathers termed *theosis* (a cognate of *theos*, “God”) which affirmed Paul’s “in Christ” and “God all and in all” teachings and which were the exact

opposite of both the Judaizing of his day, and the developing Gnosticism:

“This is in fact the supreme goal of human life and the very meaning of salvation--not only later, but now and later. *Theosis* refers to the shared deification or divinization of creation, particularly with the human soul where it can happen consciously and lovingly.... Full salvation is finally universal belonging and universal connecting. Our word for that is ‘heaven’” (Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations, “The Fathers of the Eastern Church: Theosis,” 05/13/2015).

18. So be continually growing and increasing within grace and in union with favor, as well as [in] intimate, experiential knowledge and insight of (or: from, and which is) our Lord (Owner; Master) and Savior (or: Deliverer; Rescuer; Restorer to health and wholeness), Jesus Christ (or: Anointed Jesus; = Jesus the Messiah). By Him (or: To Him) [is] the glory (or: In Him [is] the manifestation which calls forth praise; For Him [is] the reputation) both now and on into the midst of a Day that lasts for an indefinite period of time, and which is [the] Age
(or: unto a day whose character and quality is [the] Age; or: into

the midst of a day whose source is [the] Age [of the Messiah]; or: to a day which belongs to [the] Age; into a Day which is an age).

It is so (or: Count on it; Amen)!

His letter concerned their continual **growing and increasing within grace and in union with the favor** which they were presently enjoying and which brought increasing **intimate, experiential knowledge and insight of, and from, our Lord**. That interior knowledge in fact IS our Lord (genitive of apposition). The glory (etc.) is **by Him, in Him, to Him and for Him** from the time that Peter wrote this, on into the midst of the **Day**, which is Christ and

lasts on into the indefinite time periods of the **Age** of the Messiah. We, today, and our descendants in the oncoming tomorrows, live in this Day and continuously receive from Him – as a branch receives life and nourishment from the Vine (Jn. 15:1ff – one of my favorite metaphors, if you had not noticed). So if we desire to experience “the glory of God,” we find it in Him, and He is within and among His covenant communities:

“Consider! God's tent (the Tabernacle of God) **[is] with mankind** (the humans), **'and He will continue living in a tent** (dwell in a Tabernacle) **with**

them, and they will continue being (will constantly exist being) His people, and God Himself will continue being with them”
(Rev. 21:3).

Then John was carried away, by a Breath-effect, **upon a great and high mountain** (Zion, again?) and was then shown another vision by one of the seven agents who,

“showed (points out to) me the set-apart (or: holy) city, Jerusalem, progressively (or: habitually; or: presently) descending out of the atmosphere (or: heaven), from God – continuously having

(holding; or: = bringing with it)
the glory of God (God's glory;
God's reputation; or: God's
appearance; or: the opinion from
God)" (Rev. 21:10b-11a).

John's visions conclude like they began:
with Christ and the seven-fold called out
congregation, now pictured as a city, the
Jerusalem which is above (Gal. 4:26),
described thus,

**“And God's throne – even the
Little Lamb's – will continue
being (or: existing) within Her
[i.e., the City], and His slaves
will continue rendering sacred
service to Him, and will
constantly see His face, and His**

Name [is; or: will be] upon their foreheads. And night will no longer continue existing. And so they continuously have no need of the light of a lamp, or even the light of the sun, because [the] Lord [= Yahweh] God will continue giving light upon (or: will constantly illuminate) them, and they will continue reigning (performing as kings) on into the ages of the ages (or: the indefinite time periods of the eons).” (Rev. 22:3-5).

There is no night in this city because the city exists in the **Day** to which Peter referred, in vs. 18 above, **that lasts**

congruent to the same time frame of which we just read here in Rev. 22:5. Yes, **by Him** and **in Him** is the **glory** – and Paul defined that glory,

“which is (or: exists being) Christ within you folks, the expectation of and from the glory

(or: which is [the] Anointed in union with you people: the [realized] hope of the manifestation which called forth praise; or: which is [the] Anointing [and the Messiah] within the midst of you folks – the expectation which is the glory)” (Col. 1:27b).

DELIVERED UP (Handed Over) OR GIVEN FORTH (Provided)

The title of this study provides a contrast between “delivered up” or “handed over,” and two options of the other end of the semantic range, “given forth” or “provided,” of the Greek adjective *ekdoton* – which is found only in Acts 2:23, in the NT. The first two options are the more common renderings. Other options on offer will be found in my translation, below. The adjective comes from the verb *ekdidomi*, which is the verb whose basic meaning is “to give,”

prefixed by the preposition *ek-* which gives the added meaning “forth, out of the midst, from, from out of,” etc.

The traditional reading of Acts 2:23 is that in His determined counsel and foreknowledge, God delivered Jesus up to be crucified. The adjective, rendered in this reading as “delivered up” or “handed over,” is conventionally read as a verb. The action was God’s; the act of Jesus being crucified was “by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God.” In other words, God was complicit in Christ’s death. This begs the question, Did God need Christ’s death? Penal substitution theory answers, yes. But is this the correct understanding?

My purpose here is not to address this theory of atonement, but rather to brush away the theological dust from this ancient text and to consider other options in reading this verse of Peter's first public sermon.

The verb *ek-didomi* had a wide range of contextual uses. Here I will only provide the positive uses as a contrast to the traditional, negative reading of “delivered up” or “handed over.” For starters, *ek* does not normally signify “up” or “over.” The more common verb that is used for “handed over” is *para-didomi*. I have included in my parenthetical rendering “surrendered” as a representative of the negative uses. But

on the positive side, *ek-didomi* has among its uses the following examples:

a) given forth (note: this is a neutral rendering, but in the translation below, it is modified by the prepositional phrase in the dative “**in/by...**”)

b) lent out (as a loan or a lease – meaning lent to mankind for their release and life)

c) provided out of the Midst [of God] – for our benefit; for our healing

d) given out [in marriage] – a use found in secular literature (*cf* Liddell and Scott)

e) given from the midst [of one’s house] – as providing for the poor and

needy

f) issued forth [in birth] (again, this use found in Liddell and Scott)

But the syntax allows for another reading. The word “This” that opens vs. 24 is in the same case and number as the adjective in question, so I have on offer, “**This** [plus the adjective] **One**.” Here are additional options for the adjective:

g) Fully-given (here rendering *ek-* as an intensifier)

h) Emerged (e.g., entered upon the scene)

i) Emptied (as, e.g., of rivers – Liddell and Scott).

Here is my expanded rendering of Acts 2:22-24,

“Men! Israelites! (or: Men of Israel!) Continue listening and hear these words! Jesus the Nazarene, a mature Man having been fully pointed out unto you and continuing publicly exhibited and demonstrated [to be] from God [D* reads: proved unto us, after testing and examination, and thus approved, from God] – in powers and by abilities, together with miracles (wonders; omens; portents) and signs which God did and performs through Him within your midst – just as you yourselves have seen, and thus are aware and know.

This Man, given forth (or: lent out; provided out of the Midst [of God]; given out [in marriage]; given from the midst [of one's house]; issued forth [in birth]; or: surrendered; or: **This Fully-given, Emerged and Emptied One**) **in and by the specific, determined, bounded** (limited) **plan** (intended purpose, design and counsel) **and foreknowledge** (intimate knowledge which was experienced beforehand) **of God** (or: whose source and character was God; or: which pertained to and was God), **you folks – through the hand** (= agency) **of**

people not bound by the Law (= folks without knowledge of and not living in accordance to the Torah) – **took up and assassinated by fastening [Him] to [an execution stake (or: a cross)], Whom God resurrected** (raised up; caused to stand back up again), **after loosing** (untying; = releasing and freeing from) **the birth-pangs** (or: -throes) **of the death** (or: the Death; [or, with D and other witnesses: after destroying the cords of the Unseen {Hades}]) – **corresponding to the fact that it was not possible for Him to be held fast by it** (or:

it was not continuing to be powerful or capable for Him to be possessed under its strength).”

Verse 22 informs us that Jesus had been “fully pointed out” and “publicly exhibited and demonstrated” as being a Person “**from God.**” Then it goes on to give examples of how God “did and performs” the miracles through **Him.** Verse 23 then explains that Jesus was “given forth in the specific plan and foreknowledge of God,” but these men had Him executed. Or, we can read it that God “issued Him in birth” (the incarnation), and then they killed Him, etc.? He was “given out” from the Father’s house, as the Bread of Life. He

was “provided out of the Midst [of God]” as the Messiah, in God’s “intended purpose.” He was “given out [in marriage]” to the called-out covenant communities. He was the **Fully-given, Emerged, Emptied One** in “the determined design and intimate knowledge which was experienced beforehand.”

Verse 24 concludes with God’s action, once again: Christ’s resurrection. The expression here, “**the birth-pangs** (or: -throes) **of the death**,” may give witness for option f), above. So how does your theology read these verses?

What is the Time-frame of Acts 3:21?

“until times of a movement away from all things that have been firmly put down, set and established and until the periods of successive events which occur in passing moments, moving all mankind away from having been placed and positioned down as well as from the state or condition of all things that had been determined from an indefinite period of time (or: from a [particular] age)”

The answer to the question that this study

investigates will be in accord with how each person that asks it understands such phrases as, “the time of the end,” the “end of the age,” or, “the consummation or conjunction of the ages,” or, “the eschaton.” What Peter said in this verse, and the context of his impromptu sermon, will normally be interpreted as belonging to one of these categories of eschatology. But let us consider his words and the situation when he and John came out of the temple area and into the portico, and then addressed the crowd of Jews that were reacting to the miracle of the healing of the lame man.

Acts 3:

9. And so all the people saw [the

man] continuously walking around and praising God.

10. Now they began to recognize him, and were fully perceiving that this man was the one customarily sitting for gifts of mercy (alms) at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple complex – and they were filled with wondered astonishment and ecstasy, being internally put out of their normal position of understanding things – upon the thing having stepped together with him (= at what had happened to him).

11. [conflated with D:] So as

Peter and John proceeded going out, and with his continued going out with them, clinging (firmly holding fast) to Peter and John, the entire [crowd of] people – overawed and out of their wits – ran together to them at the portico (or: porch) normally called Solomon's Colonnade [note: built on a remnant of the ancient Temple].

12. Now Peter, upon seeing [this], gave a decided reply to the people: "Men! Israelites! (or: Men of Israel!) Why do you folks continue amazed with wonder upon this [occurrence;

or: man]? Or, why do you continue staring and gazing intently at us – as if by our own power and ability or godliness (religiousness; devout conduct; piety) [we] had been making him to be walking around?

13. "The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob – the God of our fathers – brought glory (a manifestation which calls forth praise) and a good reputation to His Servant (or: Boy) Jesus, Whom indeed you folks turned over (gave aside; [D adds: unto judgment]) and renounced (or: disown; denied) before Pilate's

face – [he] having decided to be releasing that One!

The basis of Peter's explanation for the incident begins with a statement that Yahweh "brought glory and a good reputation" to Jesus – even though they (note plural pronoun: "you folks") had turned Him over and renounced Him before Pilate. We should observe here that Peter lays this action upon all the Israelites that were present – he is not just putting the blame on the Jewish leadership. All of the actions in the Christ Event will be seen to be corporate actions.

14. "But then you yourselves renounced (disowned; denied)

the set-apart and fair Person
(the holy and just One Who
personified the Way pointed out;
this consecrated and rightwised
One), **and instead you demanded**
for yourselves an adult man
[who is] a murderer – to be at
once graciously surrendered to
you, as a favor.

Again, he emphasizes “you yourselves”
as being the ones who “renounced,
disowned and denied” **the set-apart**
and fair Person. They had chosen a
murderer to be released – someone who
Peter here affirms to be guilty of sin, a
breaker of the Law – as they disowned
“the holy and just One Who personified

the Way pointed out (i.e., God's justice and flawless observation of the Covenant).” They denied “this consecrated and rightwised One.” So Peter is rehearsing current events – the context, so far, is only a couple months in their past. He has also laid out before them the guilt of their unjust act. There is blood on their hands.

15. "So you folks killed-off the Inaugurator of the Life (or: Life's Originator; this Author, Founder, Leader, Prince and Initiator of the Life) – Whom God raised up out from among the midst of dead folks, of which and of Whom we ourselves are

**witnesses, and continue being
both evidence and testimony.**

Here Peter does not lay the blame on the Romans, who were indeed the instrument (the beast upon which the Jerusalem leadership was riding – Rev. 17:3ff), but addressing these “men of Israel” he says, “So YOU FOLKS killed-off the Inaugurator of the Life.” Notice that I translate the definite article that is in the Greek text. He is “the (or: ‘this’ – giving the article its original demonstrative function) Author, Founder, Leader, Prince and Initiator of THE Life.” Peter is not pointing back to Genesis, but is speaking of “the Life of Christ,” and “resurrection life” that

Jesus brought to humanity. Jesus informed us in Jn. 10:10b, “**I Myself come so that they can progressively possess** (would continuously have; could habitually hold) **Life**,” and in 10:28a, “**I Myself am continuously giving eonian life** (age-enduring life; life having the qualities and characteristics of the Age [of Messiah]; a life from, of and for the ages) **to and in them**,” and then in 11:25a, “**I am the Resurrection** (or: the standing back up again; the Arising) **and the Life.**” Then in the second half of this verse Peter continues the same context of the Christ Event, pointing to the resurrection of Jesus, saying, “**Whom God raised up**

out from among the midst of dead folks.”

16. "Consequently, by the faith from (or: in the trust which has its source in; with the loyalty and reliability of) His Name, His Name at once made this person firm, solid and stable – whom you now continue watching and gazing at, and have seen so thus know – and the faith, trust, loyalty and faithfulness that [is] through and by means of Him both gave and gives to him the entire allotment of whole and complete soundness... in front of you all!

Peter now explains to the crowd that “His Name” had healed the man. It had happened “by the faith from His Name,” or, “in the trust which has its source in His Name,” and the healing came “with the loyalty and reliability of His Name.” These different prepositional phrases represent the potential functions of the ablative-genitive case of the noun “faith/trust/etc.” John was given further insight regarding His Name in the letter that he was to send the called-out community in Philadelphia, that through being joined to the Vine (Jn. 15:1ff), who IS The Overcomer (Jn. 16:33; *cf* 1 Cor. 15:54, 57), they would have written upon them, **“My God’s Name, and the**

name of the City of My God: 'The New Jerusalem' – the one habitually descending from out of the atmosphere (or: heaven), from God – and My new Name” (Rev. 3:12). Peter and John bore His Name, and all which that Name represents. We who also abide in the Vine also bear His Name. Selah.

All that had happened to the man (i.e., his healing) was “through and by means of [Christ].” The imparted “faith, trust, etc.” had the effect of giving to him “**the entire allotment of whole and complete soundness.**” This word is used only here in the NT. But a cognate is found in 1 Thes. 5:23 where Paul

speaks of their, “**whole allotment** (= every part) – **the spirit, the soul and the body.**” See also Jas. 1:4. These words are formed by adding the adjective “whole; entire” to the noun that means “an allotted share or possession.” So Peter’s choice of words in describing the man’s gift of healing tells us something of what the Christ Event ushered-in. They were living in a sphere of having “the entire allotment,” which in this case was manifested as “whole and complete soundness” of this man’s body.

17. "And so now, brothers, I have seen and so know that you acted and committed [it] in

accord with and down from ignorance (lack of knowledge) – **even as also your rulers** (chiefs; leaders) [**did**].

As Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:19b, that God is, “**not accounting to them** (not putting to their account; not logically considering for them; not reasoning in them) **the results and effects of their falls to the side** (their trespasses and offenses),” so here, Peter makes allowances for them, due to their “ignorance (lack of knowledge).”

18. "**But what God fully announced-down in advance** (or: before) **through the mouth of the prophets** (those who have light

ahead of time and speak before people) – [the situations which] **His Anointed One** (or: Christ) **was to experience and suffer – He thus, and in this way, fulfilled.**

What they had done had actually acted-out what was foretold by the OT prophets concerning Israel's Messiah. It was a part of "the Way pointed out" – i.e., to lay one's life down for one's friend. And this is what Jesus did, for the whole world. Notice, again, that our context is still the Christ Event.

19. "Therefore, at once change your way of thinking (change your frame of mind and point of

view; pass beyond the known; [by customary use this implies: and return to Yahweh]), **and turn around toward [the situation for] your failures** (errors; times of missing the target; sins; deviations) **to be anointed out and wiped forth from your midst, so that seasons of cooling again, as well as fitting situations and fertile moments of refreshing could, should and would come from [the] face of the Lord [= Yahweh or Christ],**

With all this explained to them, Peter admonished them to “at once change [their] way of thinking and [their] frame

of mind and [their] point of view.” I owe to Jean-Yves Leloup (*The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, Inner Traditions, 2002, p 56) the insight on the Greek verb, *metanoēsate*, being rendered: “pass beyond the known.” It can also be rendered, “give after-thought; have an after-perception.” As noted in the verse, by its customary use for Israel, this also meant that they should turn to Yahweh for His mercy as displayed in the Christ Event, for as Paul informs us,

**“For you see, God encloses,
shuts up and locks all mankind
(everyone; the entire lot of folks)
into incomppliance (disobedience;
stubbornness; lack of being**

convinced), **to the end that He could** (or: would; should) **mercy all mankind** (may make everyone, the all, recipients of mercy)!”
(Rom. 11:32).

Now Peter meant that these particular Israelites should do this right then and there. He goes on to instruct them to **“turn around toward [the situation for] their failures (etc.) to be anointed out and wiped forth from [their] midst.”** What would they gain from this, beyond their times of ‘missing the target’ being washed away? His purpose clause that immediately follows gives us the answer: **“so that seasons of cooling again, as well as fitting situations and**

fertile moments of refreshing could, should and would come from [the] face of the Lord [= Yahweh or Christ].” That would be an immediate response to the change of thinking and their focusing on their needy situation. Now lest Peter be misconstrued as preaching a form of “works righteousness,” recall what Paul said about the entrance of faith and trust, which are in fact Christ Himself, entering into people:

“the faithfulness (or: the trust and faith; confidence; loyalty) [comes or arises] from out of the midst of, or from within, hearing, yet the hearing [comes] through a gush-effect of Christ,

even through the result of a flow which is Christ (or: through Christ's utterance; through something spoken concerning Christ; or: by means of a declaration which is anointed, or from Christ; through a word uttered which is Christ; [other MSS: God's speech])” (Rom. 10:17).

We should not miss the plural noun of which I have conflated three rendering: a) **seasons**; b) **fitting situations**; c) **fertile moments**. These offer us some of the nuances of the Greek *kairos*. But just how long would these seasons be? How many fitting situations would Yahweh

send? When are the fertile moments of His sheep? It would appear that these folks were in one of these at that very moment – but the plural noun indicates that there would be more of them. So our eschatology might just need to be a bit open-ended. Of course, one could argue that these seasons and situations for those particular men to whom Peter spoke these words might have been “fertile” only until A.D. 70, as they were being invited to enjoy the “cooling and refreshing” of the movement of God’s Spirit upon and among them, as we see recorded in the rest of the book of Acts, as well as in the other NT letters. But for the rest of humanity in the centuries that

have followed, we have records of “seasons of refreshing” throughout the history of the “church.”

The metaphor, “[**the**] **face of the Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ],” speaks of His being present – and of their being in His presence. It is from His presence among and within us that these seasons, fitting situations and fertile moments “**come.**”

20. "**and that He would send forth in** (or: to; for; with; by; among) **you folks the One having been handpicked beforehand to be ready and at hand, Christ (= Messiah) Jesus,**

Now this verse is a continuation of vs. 19 and is simply a further explanation of

the “seasons, etc.” to which he was referring, indicating that God, via His Spirit, would send the very Christ/Messiah to them whom they had just hung on a pole. Paul speaks to the same situation in 2 Cor. 3:16, **“Yet whenever the time should be reached when it [= the heart] can (or: would; may; should; or: shall at some point) twist and turn upon, so as to face toward, [the] Lord [= Christ], ‘the head-covering (veil) is progressively taken from around [the heart of Israel]’”** – and then they will behold him, as 2 Cor. 3:18 describes. This verse was speaking about the 1st century context that Peter was at that time

addressing.

21. "Whom indeed it continues necessary and binding for heaven to welcome, accept and embrace (or: for [the] atmosphere to grant access, admit, receive and take to itself) until times of a movement away from all things that have been firmly put down, set and established and until the periods of successive events which occur in passing moments, moving all mankind away from having been placed and positioned down as well as from the state or condition of all things that had been determined

from an indefinite period of time (or: from a [particular] age) – **of which things God spoke** (or: speaks) **through [the] mouth of His set-apart prophets** (those sacred folks who spoke light ahead of time).

Observe that this verse is a continuation of vs. 20. The “Whom” refers to Jesus, the Messiah. But what are we to make of the first clause? First of all, we must keep in mind that the relationship of Jesus to the heavens has a subordinate modifier that begins with “**until times**” – plural. Furthermore, Peter does not use the same word here that he used in vs. 19 (seasons, etc.), but uses a term to

indicate “time” – the Greek *chronos*. Next, before unpacking this verse we should consider Peter’s immediate reference to Israel’s history and the prophecy that Moses gave concerning the Messiah that would come and would function as a Prophet; vs. 23 alludes to the fact that this Prophet would also rule Israel, and in connecting both vss. 22 and 23 to Christ, we should probably consider this as a reference to His enthronement. Recall that the resurrected Jesus told His disciples that, “**All authority** (or: Every right and privilege from out of Being) **is** (or: was) **given to Me within heaven and upon the earth** (or: in sky and atmosphere, as well as on

land)!” (Mat. 28:18).

Just what is Peter referring to by his use of the word, “heaven”? Does this clause mean the Jesus must be kept somewhere away from the earth until these “times” come about? Here we should be instructed by traditional Jewish perception of the temple being God’s house, and thus, by extension the temple was an eschatological term for “heaven” (which comes all the way down to earth, as does the sky and atmosphere – as indicated in the parenthetical expansion, above). God’s house, His temple, is now His body (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16). Yahweh told Moses to build a tent (the tabernacle) so that He could dwell

among Israel (Ex. 25:8; *cf* Deut. 23:14a). In the new creation, as described in Rev. 21:1ff, we learn in vs. 3 that, **“Consider! God's tent (the Tabernacle of God) [is] with mankind (the humans), and He will continue living in a tent (dwell in a Tabernacle) with them, and they will continue being (will constantly exist being) His people, and God Himself will continue being with them.”** Now Paul instructs us that this situation already exists, for, **“since someone [is] within Christ** (or: So that if anyone [is] in union with [the] Anointed One; or: And as since a Certain One [was] in Christ), **[there is] a new**

creation (or: [it is] a framing and founding of a different kind; [he or she is] an act of creation having a fresh character and a new quality): **the original things** (the beginning [situations]; the archaic and primitive [arrangements]) **passed by** (or: went to the side). **Consider! New things have come into existence** (have been birthed; or: It has become new things; or: He has been birthed and now exists being ones of a different kind, character and quality)” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The resurrection of Christ inaugurated the new creation, and that new tent in

which God dwells is termed by Paul as God's temple – the called-out, covenant communities. It is binding for these communities **“to welcome, accept and embrace, to grant access, admit, receive and take to itself”** for Rev. 2:1b informs us that He is constantly walking around amidst the communities, and Rev. 3:20 describes a situation in Laodicea where He was seeking admittance to their group. Jesus told His disciples, **“You see, where there are two or three people that have been led and gathered together into My Name, I am there (in that place) within the midst of and among them”** (Mat. 18:20). Paul instructs us that,

“He jointly roused and raised
(or: suddenly awakens and raises)
[us] up, and caused [us] to sit
(or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us])
together within the things
situated upon [thus, above] the
heavens within and in union with
Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6).

Many other examples could be given to demonstrate that Christ's presence is now here with and within us. But let us move on to the next word that has had much written about it and which most have put off into the future. It is the noun, *apokatastaseōs*, which is used only here in the NT. The verb form has a basic meaning: to set down or to place in

correspondence to [something]. This word is qualified by the prepositional phrase *pantōn*, and then further qualified by the remainder of the verse. Although the noun phrase has been translated “restitution of all things” (KJV), and the NRSV renders the phrase “universal restoration,” a close analysis of the elements of the Greek word yields potentially different understandings of what Peter meant by using this phrase amid a context that has been speaking of his own time. This noun is composed of *apo-*, *kata-*, and *staseōs*. *Apo* signifies movement away from; *kata* has the basic meaning of down; *staseōs* means a placing or a setting. Here are the

renderings on offer:

- a) **a movement away from all things that have been firmly put down, set and established**
- b) **moving all mankind away from having been placed and positioned down**
- c) **moving all from the state or condition of all things that had been determined.**

The first offer would refer to the firmly set down and established Law of the Mosaic Covenant: God was moving everything away from the Law of the old covenant. The second offer would refer to humanity's release from prison and resurrection from the dead. The third

offer speaks to what was the human predicament that resulted from Adam's disobedience. The movement was away from an existing situation. But this movement is not necessarily "back," as in restoration. The movement is into the new, which is the better (Heb. 7:19, 22; 8:6; 10:34; 11:35).

The form of the word "all" is both neuter and masculine, thus the rendering "all things" and "all mankind." Both readings work here. I have also offered an alternative to the rendering "**until times**": **until the periods of successive events which occur in passing moments.**

Taking all these renderings into consideration, the picture seems to be speaking of the Christ Event of the 1st century, rather than a future “universal restoration.” This gloss of the NRSV, as well as the traditional “restoration of all things” (NASB), seems to inject a future time context that the Greek does not demand or even necessarily indicate. The plurality of “times” could well allude to the growth of the reign/kingdom in the figure of the Stone that “became a great mountain and filled the whole land/earth” (Dan. 2:35c). Paul uses a similar noun which proclaims the same truth, but that is based on the word *allos* (other), in 2

Cor. 5:19,

**“God was existing within Christ
(God was and continued being in
union with [the] Anointed One)
progressively and completely
transforming [the] aggregate of
humanity (or: world) to be other
[than it is]**

(or: progressively bringing
[the] ordered System into
another level or state;
repeatedly changing [the]
universe to correspond with
other [conditions;
perceptions]; progressively
altering [the] ordered
arrangement of culture,

religions, economy and government to be in line with another one; habitually and progressively changing [the] secular realm [of humanity] from enmity to friendship; reconciling [the] world [of mankind]) **in Himself, to**

Himself, for Himself and by Himself, not accounting to them (not putting to their account; not logically considering for them; not reasoning in them) **the results and effects of their falls to the side** (their trespasses and offenses), **even placing within us**

the Word (the Idea; the Reason; the message) **of the corresponding transformation to otherness** (or: the full alteration; the change from enmity to friendship; the conciliation).”

When Christ came, His ministry, death, resurrection and then the judgment of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 fulfilled all that had been written in the OT concerning Israel (Lu. 21:22). But His resurrection and enthronement began something new (2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:5), and there are no definite indications (with the possible exception of 1 Cor. 15:24-28, depending upon how one interprets this apocalyptic language) that the new which Christ

inaugurated and inhabits will ever end. A parallel idea to this verse, and to this whole sermon, is described in Heb. 3:18-4:6 where the metaphor of Israel entering into the Promised Land is employed: moving from the wilderness wandering and desolation (which ended in the death of the unbelieving generation) into the Rest (Christ) flowing with milk and honey and vineyards (Christ, the Vine). In the book of Hebrews, they are exhorted not to return to the works of the Law, but to remain in the works of the Messiah and His better arrangement (or: covenant). Continuing on with Acts 3:

22. **"Indeed, Moses said,**

'[The] Lord [= Yahweh] God will proceed raising up for (or: to; among) you folks a Prophet from out of the midst of your brothers, as (or: like) me. You people will continue listening to His [words] and hearing (= obeying) Him in regard to (or: in accordance with) all things – as much (or: as many) as He may be speaking to you folks!

23.'So it will continue being [that] every soul (= person) which may (or:

should; or: will) **not listen to or hear** (= obey) **that Prophet will progress being completely brought to destruction** (or: ruin and loss) **from out of the midst of the People.'** [Deut. 18:15-16]

24. **"Now all the prophets also fully announced these days, from Samuel on, and as many as consecutively (in order according to succession) spoke.**

Here, again, following what is presented in vs. 21, we see that Peter is speaking of **THESE DAYS**, as being the things of

which the prophets fully announced.

25. "You yourselves are the sons of the prophets and of that which was thoroughly set in order and arranged through the covenant, which God fully arranged (or: covenanted) to, and with a view toward, your fathers (= ancestors), progressively saying to Abraham,

'And so, within and in union with your Seed, all the families (or: kinship groups; clans; tribes) of the earth (or: land) shall proceed being blessed and will continue having words of

**goodness, ease and well-being
spoken to and about them.'**

[Gen. 22:18; 26:4]

**26. "To you folks first, God, in
raising up His Servant, sent Him
forth continually blessing you
and repeatedly speaking words
of goodness, ease and well-being
within the [situation for]
constantly and progressively
turning each one away from
your misery-gushed situation of
worthless conditions, laborious
works, painful relationships,
malicious deeds (or: from these
wicked plans as well as from the
evil thoughts and dispositions of**

you people)."

In these last two verses, the context is Peter's time, but the quote of Gen. 22 and 26 speak of a durative future where God's blessings **will continue**, and now Peter reprises vs. 19, with a conclusion that describes their situation, conditions and activities ("misery-gushed" [a literal rendering], etc.). Note that he says that God "**sent Him forth...**" The entire passage speaks of the 1st century Christ Event, and specifically to the men to whom Peter was speaking.

The Conclusion of Peter's
First Proclamation in
Jerusalem,
The Immediate Reaction by
His Audience, and
The Implications of the Results
for Those Who Joined the
Movement

We find Peter's closing remarks of his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost, and the situation which developed, in the last part of Acts 2:

36. **"Therefore, let all [the]**

house of Israel, for a certainty and without slipping or tripping, come to progressively know by intimate experience that God made and creates Him [to be] both Lord (Master; Owner) and Christ ([the] Anointed One; [= Messiah]) – this Jesus, whom you folks put to death on a stake (publicly suspended from a pole; crucified)!"

37. Now, upon hearing [this], they were pierced down to the heart (the core of their being), and so said to Peter and the rest of the commissioned and sent-forth folks (or: emissaries),

"Men... brothers, what can or should we do?"

38. So Peter at once affirms to them, "At once change your way of thinking (your frame of mind and point of view; [by customary use this implies: and return to Yahweh]). Then at once let each one of you folks be immersed (baptized) within the Name (= in union with the identity, the character, the authority, the essence) of Jesus Christ (or: of [the] Anointed Jesus; which is Jesus [the Messiah]) – into the midst of a release and sending away, a

divorce and an abandonment, a cancellation and a forgiveness: of your failures, your mistakes, your times of missing the target, your errors, your deviations and your sins – and then you will proceed receiving and continue taking in hand the free gift (the gratuity) of the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: which is the Holy Spirit; or: which has its source in and the character of the Sacred Attitude).

39. "For you see, the promise is (continuously exists being) to, for, with and in you folks, as well as to, for, with and in your children

**– even to, for and in all people:
to, for and in the folks [being] a
long way off – in such an amount
as [the] Lord [= Yahweh] our
God would call to [Himself]!"**

**40. Besides [this], he gave full
testimony, completely laying out
the facts of the case, with
different thoughts and ideas,
and by many more words. Then
he kept on calling one after
another to his side, repeatedly
urging, encouraging and
admonishing them, while saying,
"You folks can be rescued and
kept safe, away from this
generation which has become**

warped and crooked from drying out ([*cf* Jn. 15:6]; or, and as an imperative: Be restored to health and wholeness – be at once saved – as you are separated from this perverse generation)!"

41. Therefore the people who indeed, as it were with their hands, took away and fully received, welcomed and embraced his word (his idea; his message) **were at some point immersed (baptized). And so on** (or: during) **that day about three thousand souls** (= people) **were added** [to the group and community] (or: were placed and

set toward [the goal]).

42. So they were continuing strongly focused toward and persevering in and by, while devoting themselves to, the teaching of the sent-forth folks (the emissaries; the representatives) and to the common existence and in the common being, to sharing, partnering, contributing and in the participation in the breaking of the loaves of bread (= eating meals), as well as to, in, with and by the thoughts, words and deeds that were focused toward having goodness, ease and well-

being (or: prayers).

43. Now reverence, awe, respect and fear began to be birthed in every soul (or: continued coming to be on every person), **and many miracles** (or: portents; omens) **and signs began occurring through the sent-forth folks** (the emissaries; the representatives).

44. So all the folks continuing in trusting and believing were at the same [place], and they continued having and holding all things in common and with joint-participation (in a fellowship of partnership).

45. Furthermore, they began, and from time to time continued, selling (disposing of) the possessions and acquisitions, as well at the properties and things that support their existence, and then were thoroughly dividing and distributing them to everyone – in correspondence to anyone who would continue having a need.

46. Not only daily continuing strongly focused and persevering while devoting themselves in like passion and with one accord within the Temple courts and grounds, but

also regularly breaking bread (= having meals) from house to house (or: home by home; or: in accord with [their] homes), they were sharing and partaking together of food (nourishment) in the midst of great rejoicing and with the evenness and smoothness of a heart without a stone,

47. constantly praising God and habitually having grace with and facing – also holding favor for, with reference to and toward – the whole People. Now the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh] kept on adding and placing toward [the

goal] the folks being from day to day rescued (saved; delivered; made whole; restored), at the same [place and time] [other MSS add: within the called-out community].

ZZZZZZ

In vs. 36, Peter proclaimed about the crucified Jesus, “that God made and creates Him [to be] both Lord (Master; Owner) and Christ ([the] Anointed One; [= Messiah]).” It was because of this fact that Peter now told the crowd in Jerusalem, “Therefore, let all [the] house of Israel, for a certainty and without slipping or tripping, come to progressively know [this] by intimate

experience.” The question can be asked, “What does this mean, and how did the crowd understand it?”

We see that after hearing Peter’s message, “upon hearing [this], they were pierced down to the heart (the core of their being).” He later metaphorically described this kind of experience in 1 Pet. 1:23,

“folks having been born again
(been regenerated; been given
birth back up again), **not from out**
of a corruptible (or: perishable)
seed that was sown, but rather
from an incorruptible
(imperishable; undecayable) **one:**
through God's continually living

and permanently remaining Word (or: through a message or expressed thought of [the] continuously living and constantly abiding God; or: through means of a living and dwelling Thought, Idea and Logically laid out Expression and Communication, which is God).”

So Peter’s words invaded their hearts and gave birth to belief in what he had just said to them. Not only that, some in the group made a verbal response to the group as a whole, asking, “Men... brothers, what can or should we do?” From this response, we see that the announcement of Jesus being made “both

Lord (Master; Owner) and Christ ([the] Anointed One; [= Messiah]” had made them realize that they needed to do something in response to this change of events. Peter had just spoken about a political and religious event (the crucifixion of Jesus) that had an unexpected outcome (God making Jesus both Lord and Christ). By the proclamation that “Jesus is Lord” to people from all over the Empire that had been living under the political and economic reality that “Caesar is Lord,” he was saying that the Roman Empire no longer exercised lordship over them – in effect, they now had a new King. This was a revolutionary turn of fortunes –

but what did it really mean?

John later sent this same message to the called-out communities in Asia Minor, in Rev. 11:

15. Next the seventh agent sounded a trumpet, and great (or: loud) voices of themselves came to be (birthed themselves; occurred of themselves) within the sky (or: atmosphere; heaven), continuously saying, "The reign of the ordered System (of the world of religion, culture, government and economy; or: of the realm of the religious and secular) suddenly came to belong to our Lord [= Yahweh or

Christ] and to the anointed of Him (or: The kingdom of the arranged system at once became our Lord's and His Christ's; The rule as king which pertains to the world, was birthed to be the possession of [Yahweh], as well as of His Anointed), **and so He will continue reigning** (ruling as King) **on into the ages** (or: indefinite time periods) **of the ages** [other MSS add: So it is (Amen)]."

So in light of the announced political and economic changes, their first question was, "What can or should we do?" But this announcement by Peter had

another meaning, as well. The risen Jesus is also the Christ, which for the Jews meant that He was their Messiah, which meant that the promises of their prophets had now come true. When Jesus began His ministry, Jesus read the scroll of Isa. 61:1,

“[The] Lord's [= Yahweh's] Breath-effect (or: [The] Spirit of [the] Lord; or: a spirit from [Yahweh]; or: a spirit and attitude which is [the] Lord) [is] upon Me [Old Syriac MS: you], on account of which He anointed Me [Syriac: you] to bring and proclaim good news (a message of ease and wellness) to destitute

folks..." (Lu. 4:18a).

Then Jesus told the gathering, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your ears (= your hearing)" (Lu. 4:21). He had indicated that He was the promised "Anointed One," or, the "Messiah," and Luke records that when those folks heard that,

"Then all the men in the synagogue, as they were hearing these things, were filled with a rush of emotion (or: anger; fury), and after standing up (arising) they hustled Him out – outside of the town – then they led Him to a brow (= an out-jutting cliff) of the mountain

(or: hill) upon which their town had been built, so as to shove Him down the precipice. But He Himself, after passing through their midst, continued on His way” (Lu. 4:28-30).

So Peter has informed his listeners that this Jesus, whom the rulers in Jerusalem had rejected, was in fact the Messiah, the King of the Jews (something that Pilate's placard which he had attached to Jesus' execution pole both proclaimed and prophesied). But did this fact of Jesus being both Lord and Christ make a change in the Empire? Not immediately. And Peter in vs. 38 answered their question about what they should do: “At

once change your way of thinking (change your frame of mind and point of view; pass beyond the known; [by customary use this implies: and return to Yahweh]). Then at once let each one of you folks be immersed (baptized) within the Name (= in union with the identity, the character, the authority, the essence) of Jesus Christ (or: of [the] Anointed Jesus; which is Jesus [the Messiah])...”

The “change in their way of thinking” would have far-reaching ramifications. Their “immersion” into the Name of Jesus Christ meant that they were transitioning away from the Roman Empire and into the Kingdom of God. It meant that they were joining this new

movement that had a new Way of living. They would now, “proceed receiving and continue taking in hand the free gift (the gratuity) of the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: which is the Holy Spirit; or: which has its source in and the character of the Sacred Attitude).” And in vs. 39 he instructs them that, “the promise is (continuously exists being) to, for, with and in you folks, as well as to, for, with and in your children – even to, for and in all people: to, for and in the folks [being] a long way off – in such an amount as [the] Lord [= Yahweh] our God would call to [Himself]!” Note his inspired words of the extent of this promise. This was not just a localized

event, nor was it limited to their own generation. It was, “to, for and in all people.”

But more important than the new mindset and horizon concerning the Empire was the “change in their way of thinking” in their relationship with the Law and the old covenant which Heb. 5 through 7 address concerning the change in the priesthood and Heb. 8 addresses concerning Christ inaugurating a “better covenant,” with vs. 13 saying about these two covenants,

“In thus to be saying "new [in kind and quality]," He has made the first (or: former) "old," and that [which is] progressively

growing old and obsolete (failing of age; ageing into decay), [is] **near its disappearing (vanishing away).**”

This required a whole new paradigm which included the temple now being a group of people with the Holy Spirit indwelling them. It would later be revealed to Paul that in God’s kingdom economy the concepts of “race” and “ethnicity” were abolished (as well as the male/female distinctions; the slave/free distinctions) – Eph. 2:15; Gal. 3:28. This all required a change of perspective and a different way of thinking about EVERYTHING!

Peter went on to give “full testimony,

completely laying out the facts of the case, with different thoughts and ideas, and by many more words,” and then informed them:

“You folks can be rescued and kept safe, away from this generation which has become warped and crooked from drying out ([cf Jn. 15:6]; or, and as an imperative: Be restored to health and wholeness – be at once saved – as you are separated from this perverse generation)!”

So this was to mean a change in their society and their social conditions. As Paul later put it,

“the original things (the

beginning [situations]; the archaic and primitive [arrangements]) **passed by** (or: went to the side). **Consider! New things have come into existence** (have been birthed; or: It has become new things; or: He has been birthed and now exists being ones of a different kind, character and quality)” (2 Cor. 5:17b).

Verse 41 informs us that around three thousand people were immersed into, and joined, the community, and then we see that,

“So they were continuing strongly focused toward and persevering in and by, while

devoting themselves to, the teaching of the sent-forth folks (the emissaries; the representatives) and to the common existence and in the common being, to sharing, partnering, contributing and in the participation in the breaking of the loaves of bread (= eating meals), as well as to, in, with and by the thoughts, words and deeds that were focused toward having goodness, ease and well-being (or: prayers).”

Verses 43-47 describe the picture of how this newly formed called-out (i.e., called out from their former culture,

religious associations, way of life and kingdom allegiances) covenant community began forming and taking shape. Outward form and religious ritual in these new communities would no longer be the markers of God's kingdom, as prophesied by Jesus in Jn. 4:21-24 (despite the later institutionalization of Christianity in the 4th century, and its return to form and ritual). But the progression into the new both began slowly and continued slowly – to this very day. One of the key changes was that of “devoting themselves to, the teaching of the sent-forth folks (the emissaries; the representatives).” They were no longer following the teachings

of the scribes (Jewish theologians; Torah scholars) or of the Pharisees. The sent-forth folks (which began with Jesus' disciples) taught what Jesus taught and what the Holy Spirit was revealing to them. Their understanding expanded (especially through the unveilings given to Paul), and with the new insights came an expanding view of what it meant for Jesus to be both Lord and Christ. Their story continues on through the book of Acts and the other letters in the NT. As to the new meaning of the title, "Lord," which speaks to the God-human relationship in His kingdom, we find Paul describing and identifying himself in this new relationship in Rom. 1:1,

“Paul, Jesus Christ’s slave (or: a slave servant of and from [the] Anointed One, Jesus; a slave belonging to Jesus [the] Anointed [= Messiah]).” The titles “Lord and Christ” were eschatological in character – they meant that God’s deliverance had invaded human history. Yet Jesus’ most memorable reference to God remains: “Our Father.” But everything was beginning to change (thus the need for changing one’s thinking). We see in Acts 8:26-39 that Philip did not hold to the Jewish religion when he introduced Jesus Christ as the Son of God to the Ethiopian eunuch. Deut. 23:2 forbade eunuchs to practice Judaism,

“No one whose testes are crushed

or whose member is cut off shall be admitted into the congregation of the LORD” (Tanakh).

But, prophesying of the times of the new covenant, Isa. 56:3-5 proclaimed a change from that Law:

“as for the eunuchs.... I will give them, in My House and within My walls, a monument and a name better than sons or daughters... an eonian name which will not be cut off.”

Philip simply explained the passage of Isa. 53 to the eunuch and, **“presents to him Jesus, as the news of goodness, ease and well-being** (or: declared to him the good news about Jesus).” The

eunuch was then baptized and Philip sent him on his way. We should note, here, that vs. 37 is missing in texts of Nestle-Aland, WH, Concordant, Panin, Griesbach, Tasker, and is not in the ancient Syriac. It is not in any of the early MSS. Philip did not catechize him or even tell him to join a good Bible-believing church when he got home. He had the Scriptures, and now knew that they spoke of Jesus (*cf* Lu. 24:27). But things would not continue to be so simple. Paul found believers in Corinth divided and following different teachers (1 Cor. 1:11-15). Contentions continued over divergent views to the point that the institutionally established church leaders

of the next century declared certain groups of Christians to be heretics because their interpretations of Scripture differed from “official doctrine” (orthodoxy: “right opinion”). It was no longer simply a matter of loving one another – and one’s enemies. But we are blessed to have ancient documents and many scholars who help us to understand the contexts of the times. We have been given God’s Spirit, Who indwells us, and He leads us into all Truth. And the Light continues to shine in the darkness of people’s minds and hearts (2 Cor. 4:6).

COMMENTS on EPHESIANS

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[WHAT DID PAUL MEAN by
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JUDGMENT](#)

This "letter" (see Witherington, below) was written circa AD 58, according to the critical analysis of John A.T.

Robertson (*Redating the New Testament*, The Westminster Press, 1976). Some MSS have a subscription: "To Ephesus." Others have the subscription: "Written from Rome, through Tychicus." Most scholars now agree that it was a circular document written to the communities in first century Asia Minor. We can assume that Paul's audiences were primarily Gentiles, for in 2:11-13 he states:

"On which account (or: Wherefore) you must continuously call to mind (or: keep in mind; remember) that once you, the nations (multitudes; ethnic groups;

Gentiles; non-Israelites) **in flesh.... that** (or: because) **you were, and continued on being for that season** (or: in that appointed situation), **apart from Christ** ([the] Anointed One; = [the] Messiah): **people having been alienated from the state of being a citizen** (or: estranged from citizenship in the commonwealth) **of Israel and [being] strangers pertaining to the arrangements of** (or: foreigners from covenants and testamentary dispositions whose origin is) **The Promise.... But now, within, in union with and centered in Christ Jesus,**

you – the folks once being
(continuously existing) **far off** (or:
at a distance) – **came to be** (were
birthed; are generated; are
suddenly become) **near,**
immersed within and in union
with the blood of the Christ (the
Anointed One; = the Messiah)."

Also, in 3:1 we find him qualifying his
audience as, "**you folks, the nations**
(non-Jewish ethnic multitudes; the
Gentiles)." And then, in 4:17 he
admonishes them:

"NO LONGER are you to be
continuously walking [your path]
(i.e., conducting yourself;
adjusting your behavior)

according to the way that the nations (the multitudes; the non-Israelites; the Gentiles; the ethnic or special or pagan groups) **are continuously walking around** (ordering their behavior)..."

He is writing to people who have come into a new situation and into a new relationship with God and with the ethnic group known then as "the Jews."

Joseph A. Grassi writes,

"The image of the Church in Eph is more universal and catholic than in any other Pauline writing." (*The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol. II, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968, p 342)

Victor Paul Furnish observes,

“[T]he content of Eph. is influenced by a single dominant concern, viz., the unity of the church under the headship of Christ.... Numerous and striking points of similarity to the Dead Sea scrolls suggest that the author stands within the general religious tradition... at Qumran” (*The Interpreter's One-volume Commentary on the Bible*, Abingdon Press, 1971, p 834).

William Barclay writes,

"It has been called 'The Queen of the Epistles'... Many would hold that it is indeed the highest reach of NT thought." (*The Letters to*

the Galatians and Ephesians,
Revised Ed., The Daily Study
Bible Series, The Westminster
Press, 1976, p 61)

Comparing this letter to the letter of
Colossians, Barclay states that,

"... more than 55 verses in the two
letters are verbatim the same."

(ibid p 62)

and yet that, "... in *Eph* Paul was saying
things which he had never said before."

(ibid p 64)

Ben Witherington III assesses this letter
as being "a sermon," or "a circular
homily" – "an informal address" or
"conversation" – rather than being a
"letter," and that it is not, "an exposition

of Scripture" (*The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians, A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007, p 215-217).

Another cogent observation by Witherington is, "... throughout this discourse the audience is being asked to learn or remember (e.g., 1:13-14; 2:11-22; 4:17ff; 5:8)." (ibid p 222)

In the first three chapters Paul proclaims God's purpose, the secret of His will, the glory and the Headship of Christ and the fact that God does things "**in accord with** (or: down from; in line with; in correspondence to; following the pattern of) **the deliberated purpose** (intent;

design; plan; determined counsel) **of His will** (or: resultant decision of His resolve; effect of His desire)" (1:11), and then in 1:12-23 while further rehearsing their new situation in Christ he prays that they would perceive, realize and experience God's purpose for them and His power. 1:3 to 3:21 is generally considered the doctrinal section.

Chapters 2 and 3 present more detailed aspects of what God has done in Christ, which includes the joining of the Jews and the Gentiles into one new humanity (2:15), and then describe various aspects of the called-out communities that Christ has created. Chapter 4 starts

the second part of this document which addresses the Christian life, beginning with exhortations to unity, maturity and the contrasts between the old life and the new life. Chapter 5 discusses application for right living and proper family life, while chapter 6 speaks to personal behaviors of the stratified layers of homes and society of the time, ending with a metaphor of how to deal with personal attacks along with more personal admonitions in his conclusion. "The key thought of *Ephesians* is the gathering together of all things in Jesus Christ" (Barclay, *ibid* p 66). Frederick J. Murphy (*Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*, Baker Academic, 2012, p

360-362) states,

“The letter adapts apocalyptic images to reinforce the new identity of these converted gentiles.” He then points to the fact that, “The author wishes for his readers ‘a spirit of wisdom and revelation [*apokalypsis*]' (1:17), indicating that he wishes them to think the way he does.” When commenting on 3:2-12, he concludes, “The apocalyptic framework is evident...”

Chapter 1

1. Paul, a sent-forth person belonging to Jesus Christ (or: an emissary from, and a representative pertaining to, Jesus, [the] Anointed One [= Messiah]) **through and by means of God's will** (resolve; determined purpose; resultant choice), **to all those who continue being set-apart folks** (or: holy ones; saints) [other MSS add: within Ephesus], **as well as to believing folks** (or: and for trusting, loyal people) **within, in union with and centered in Christ Jesus:**

The bold rendering of the opening line gives **Jesus Christ** (other MSS reverse the order of the terms) in the genitive of

possession, which accords with Paul's opening line in the letter to the Romans where he says, "**Paul, Jesus Christ's slave...**" This clearly represents how Paul regards himself in relation to his Master. Rendering these as an ablative (from) designates Jesus as the source for Paul being **a sent-forth person** (*apostolos*), an emissary and a representative.

That Paul serves his Master in this function came about **through and by means of God's will**, not through Paul deciding to perform as such. If we recall Paul's Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ (*cf* the accounts of this in Acts), we can observe the basis for

Paul's claim here. In Phi. 3:12b, he informs us that he **“was taken down by hand (seized; forcefully grasped and taken control of) by and under [the control of] Christ Jesus.”** This also recalls the words of Jesus to his apprentices, **“You yourselves did not choose Me, but to the contrary I, Myself, selected and picked out (or: chose) you folks and placed (or: set) you...”** (Jn 15:16). Marius Victorinus (4th century, AD) advises, **“Those who consider this more closely will find that God and his will are inseparable”** (Epistle to the Ephesians, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, NT VIII*, [hereafter: *ACCoS*] InterVarsity

Press, 1999, p 107).

Grassi observes that reference to God's will occur six times in this letter (1:1, 5, 9, 11; 5:17; 6:6), mentions that the term "holy" [i.e., set-apart] is used 14 times, and states that "Eph. emphasizes the continuity of God's holy people in the OT, now broadened to include the Gentiles" (ibid p 343).

This "sermon" was not written as an evangelistic outreach, but rather to **believing folks** who are already existentially **within Christ Jesus** (a phrase which we will discuss in more detail, below). They can also be described "trusting" folks who are **in union with Christ Jesus**: a spiritual,

mystical, although existential, reality. They are “abiding in the Vine” (Jn. 15:1ff). They are also “loyal people” (*pistois*) that are **centered in Christ Jesus**. Their loyalty (or: faithfulness) was birthed out of God’s “**eschatological deliverance through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ**” (Rom. 3:22a).

2. **Grace and peace** [= shalom] **to you** (or: Favor and harmony [are] with, among, for, and in you folks) **from God, our Father and Lord, Jesus Christ** (or: from our Father-God, even the Owner, Jesus [the Messiah]; or: from God, our Father, and [the] Lord Jesus Christ).
Rudolf Schnackenburg (*The Epistle to*

the Ephesians, A Commentary, T&T Clark, 1991 p 43) points us back to Jesus' instructions to His apprentices in Lu. 10:5, "**Yet into whatever house you may enter, first always say, 'Peace [= Shalom] to this house.'**" Jesus also said,

"I am continuously sending off (releasing away; hurling off) peace to (or: for; by; in; with) you people. My peace I am constantly giving to you (or: in, by, for you folks). I Myself am not giving [it] to you the way (or: according as) the System (the world of religion, politics and culture) continually gives

[it]. Do not let your heart be constantly shaken, disturbed or agitated, neither let it be habitually timid (shrinking, as with palpitations; responding cowardly).” (Jn. 14:27; *cf* Deut. 31:8; Josh. 1:9)

The salutation, “**Grace and peace to you...**” is similarly found in 2 Jn. 3. But, especially considering Witherington III’s assessment of this work being “an informal address,” or “a conversation,” perhaps Paul is making a statement, a reminder, of the new reality that now exists:

“Favor and harmony [are] with, among, for and in you folks!” The conflation of

rendering the prepositions expresses the potential functions of the dative form of the plural “**you**” (or: “you folks”).

Grassi sees the use of the term **peace** as a basic theme of the letter: “unity and harmony among all men through Christ” (ibid). The final phrase states the source of the grace and peace, and the genitive forms of the string of descriptors following the noun God, or applying to Jesus, give us pause for considering Paul’s perception of God, the Father and Jesus. Is this part of a trinitarian formula, or has it just been “read” that way? Let us consider the options on offer here:

a) “**our Father and Lord**” can be

seen as modifying “**God**,” and thus “**Jesus Christ**” would be identified as: **God**, and **our Father**, as well as **our Lord**.

b) “from our Father-God, even the Owner,” also leaves “Jesus [the Messiah]” as being identified as Father/God/Owner-Lord.

c) the third option, “from God, our Father, and [the] Lord Jesus Christ,” falls in line with the traditional formula: here, two *personas* of the “Godhead.”

My own view of this is not yet settled, and for me it is not all that important. I simply want to provide you with these options, as I have done with other NT

epistles. Jesus functioned as a father (e.g., Jn 14:9; it is the Seed of His Word/Logos that has been implanted within us), compared Himself to a “mother hen” (Mat. 23:37), and even Paul saw himself as a father to those to whom he was the first to proclaim the message of goodness that pertains to Jesus, the Messiah (1 Cor. 4:15). Here, Paul’s use of the phrase “**our Father...**” presents an attitude of solidarity and union between himself and his audience. Jesus used the same expression in response to His disciples’ request for Him to teach them to pray. Jerome observes that, “both grace and peace apply no less to God the Father than to

our Lord Jesus Christ” (Epistle to the Ephesians, *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 108).

The opening section which follows (vss. 3-14) can be compared to the opening section (1:3-12) of 1 Peter – evidence of the unity of the good news that was being proclaimed by the sent-forth folks of the 1st century.

3. Characterized by and full of thoughts of well-being, good words and messages of ease (or: Worthy of being spoken well of) [is] the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ – the One speaking Good to (or: blessing; expressing thoughts of well-being to) us within every spiritual good word (or: thought of well-being and blessing

having the qualities of the Breath-effect)
**within the things situated upon the
heavens** (or: in the midst of the
phenomena upon the atmospheres;
[participating] in the full, perfected
heavenlies; in union with the celestials;
among the folks [residing] upon the
atmospheres) **centered in, resident
within, and in union with, Christ** ([the]
Anointed One),

(or, taking *eulogētos* in apposition
with a predicative force: The God
and Father of our Owner, Jesus
[the] Anointed One, [has] the
qualities of a Word of goodness.
He [is] the One speaking
goodness, ease and well-being

[to] us in every thought, word and expression of goodness which embodies the qualities of [the] Breath-effect resident within the superimposed atmospheres [that are] centered within the midst of Christ, and [are] in union with [His, or the] anointing,)

Schnackenburg suggests that this eulogy “stands as the central theme and at the same time the title of the entire meditation” (ibid p 47). He further sees “the aim of this eulogy,” not as “the cosmic glorification of God or of Christ, but... the basis of God’s global plan of salvation” (ibid p 49).

The expanded translations of the first

word in the opening of the eulogy (rendering the Greek adjective, *eulogētos*) are literal renderings – both the bold reading, and the parenthetical. This phrase is describing characteristics of God. He is "Worthy of being spoken well of," and is **Characterized by and full of thoughts of well-being, good words and messages of ease**. This tells us much more than the common rendering, "Blessed be..." The particle *eu-* means goodness, ease and well-being. Combining this with a form of the word *logos* (thought, word, message) yields the bold rendering. It is because of these qualities and characteristics that He is "Worthy of being spoken well of."

The common translations insert the copula "be" after the adjective, treating it as a religious formula. But a different form of the copula is offered here, as an affirmation: **[is]**, rather than as being a formulaic blessing, as though Paul is "blessing God." Paul goes on to emphasize these qualities by the articulated participle, "**the One speaking Good to** (or: blessing; expressing thoughts of well-being to)" – which is a cognate of the opening adjective. We see another cognate, the noun *eulogia*, in the prepositional phrase that immediately follows the participle. God, the One characterized by goodness (etc.), is **speaking Good to us – within**

every spiritual good word (etc., as seen in the parenthetical expansion). This repetition of cognates, for emphasis, is a typical characteristic (redundancy, and here with alliteration) of the Asiatic rhetoric that we will find throughout this essay. In this opening verse Paul has flooded us with *eu*-words to alert his audience to the importance of being aware of God's goodness.

The phrase “**within the things situated upon the heavens** (etc.)” is found only in this writing: in 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10 and 6:12. “Its sense: God’s ordered plan and activity are now brought into human activity” (Grassi, *ibid* p 343). The noun is the plural of the word

“heaven/atmosphere/etc.” with the preposition *epi-* (**upon**) prefixed to it. I have given a rendering of its literal meaning (**upon the heavens**/upon the atmospheres) with the location sense of the preposition *en* (**within**/in the midst of). This would simply be descriptive of the sphere (or, spheres -- note the plural, **heavens**) within which those who have been existentially raised with Christ (2:6, below) are living: the realm of spirit/Spirit/Breath-effect.

The gospel of Matthew characteristically uses the word "heaven" in the plural form. An example is Mat. 3:2, where John the Immerser proclaims,

"You folks be continuously and progressively changing your thinking – change your perceptions, attitudes, frame of mind, mode of thought and understanding, and turn back [toward God], because the reign of the heavens

(the expression and effect of kingdom rule which has its source in the atmospheres; the activity of exercising the sovereignty which exists being the heavens; the reigning [of the King] which pertains to the heavens; the kingdom which belongs to

and comes from the atmosphere; the influence of the sovereignty which is the heavens) **has approached and is now near at hand and is close enough to touch** (= has arrived and is now accessible)!"

We see an apocalyptic picture of the post-resurrection situation in Heb. 12:22-24 which describes "**Jerusalem upon the heaven**" in a multi-faceted, or multi-layered, picture of the "place" or "sphere" where we now exist (the verb used in this verse is in the perfect tense):

"But to the contrary, you folks have approached so that you are

now at Mount Zion – even in a city of a continuously living God; in "Jerusalem upon heaven"

(or: in a Jerusalem pertaining to and having the character and qualities of a superior, or added, heaven and atmosphere; or: in Jerusalem [situated] upon, and comparable to, the atmosphere) – **also among ten-thousands** (or: myriads) **of agents and messengers** (people with a/the message): **[that is] in** (or: to) **an assembly**

of an entire people (or: an assembly of all; a universal convocation) **and in** (or: to) **a summoning forth** (or: a called-out and gathered community) **of firstborn folks having been copied** (from-written, as from a pattern; or: enrolled; registered) **within [the; or: various] atmospheres** (or: heavens), **and in** (or: to; with) **God, a Judge** (an Evaluator and Decider) **of all mankind, even among** (or: to; with) **spirits of just folks** (or: breath-effects from those who are fair and equitable and in right relationship within the Way

pointed out) **having been brought to the destined goal** (perfected; finished; matured; made complete), **and in** (or: to) **Jesus, a Medium** (or: an agency; an intervening substance; a middle state; one in a middle position; a go-between; an Umpire; a Mediator) **of a new and fresh** (young; recently-born) **arrangement** (covenant; settlement; a deposit which moves throughout in every direction; a placing through the midst; a will and testament), **and to and in blood of sprinkling, and to One continuously speaking**

**something superior to (or:
stronger and better than) Abel."**

These "atmospheres" or "heavens" were symbolized by the design of the tabernacle (and later, the temple) which was God's home among Israel, and thus represented "heaven," or God's presence among them. There we had the areas of the outer court, the holy place, and then the innermost chamber, the "holy of holies." These were a picture, a type, of the "added heavens" which comprised God's kingdom, and which would come with the advent of the Messiah.

Next I presented *epi-* as an intensifier of the noun (full, perfected heavenlies) and *en* as the simple "in," and added a

suggested participle, “[participating],” to join this phrase with the previous phrase (**within every spiritual good word**; etc.). The interpretation of this rendering speaks to attainment of the goal (*telos*) that was attained by the work of the Messiah. He brought into being that to which the old covenant types pointed.

Then I rendered the relational sense of *en* (in union with) and rendered the noun “the celestials.” The meaning here speaks of the eschatological joining of “heaven and earth;” the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21, 22), or the Jerusalem which is above (Gal. 4:26), in spiritual interaction with those who have not yet,

“... [been] born back up again to a higher place (or: can be brought to birth again; or: would be given birth from above), [and are thus] having no power (or: he is continuously unable) to see or perceive God’s reign, sovereign influence/activity, or kingdom.”

(Jn. 3:3)

Finally, I expressed *en* as “among,” as it is often translated with a plural object. Here I rendered the plural definite article, “the folks,” and inserted the locational participle, “[residing],” to correspond with the locational/positional aspect of *en*. The plural object is then given as “the

atmospheres,” and the interpretation of the phrase can be a symbolic description of the called-out folks that are seated with Christ (2:6, below).

In the parenthetical rendering of the entire verse, I presented the sense of *epi-* as “superimposed,” again rendering the noun “atmospheres,” and *en* as “resident within.” The language of the three final, successive prepositional phrases is apocalyptic and for this reason I have labored the point by giving all these possible renderings to the middle phrase of the group. Pondering the varied aspects that they describe, then listening for the Spirit’s voice in your mind should prove productive for

understanding just what the author is here describing. I suggest referring back to this paragraph when you encounter the four remaining times where this word is used. I further suggest that keeping Grassi's "sense" in mind should keep us close to the mark. Also helpful would be to keep in mind the varied ways in which Jesus used the word "kingdom/reign/sovereign influence/kingly activities" in His parables. Grassi notes that various forms of "in Christ" or "in him" are repeated over 30 times in Eph. (ibid)

And now we should consider the first of these prepositional phrases, **"us within every spiritual good word** (or: thought

of well-being and blessing having the qualities of the Breath-effect).” The message of the good news (gospel; evangel) concerning, and which is, Jesus Christ (see my appositional rendering of Mk. 1:1), is a *eulogia*: a good word; a thought of well-being; a blessing. The word **spiritual** can refer to the origin of the message or to the quality of the message, or the sphere of meaning and relevance, or the sphere of effect. Jesus said,

“The declarations (gush-effects; spoken words; sayings; results of the Flow) **which I Myself have spoken to you folks are** (or: continue to be) **Spirit** (or: spirit;

Breath-effect; attitude) **and they are** (or: continue being) **Life**” (Jn. 6:63).

The final of these three prepositional phrases, “**centered in, resident within, and in union with, Christ** ([the] Anointed One),” gives conflated meanings of the preposition *en* to present three viable ideas that are potential within what is normally simply rendered “in Christ.” “Centered in” means that Christ is the center, the anchor point, the focal point, the location and the origin of the two prepositional phrases that come before, in this verse. “Resident within” gives the sense of duration as well as location. “In union with” speaks to both

relationship and oneness with Christ, the Anointed One. The apocalyptic character of these descriptive phrases need not lead us to conclude that there is no existential reality to them. However, we should understand that the term “heaven,” which can also simply mean “sky,” had a figurative use in ancient Jewish literature.

Following the first expanded rendering of the verse is the parenthetical optional rendering. We will present this again, here, for further consideration:

"The God and Father of our Owner, Jesus [the] Anointed One, [has] the qualities of a Word of goodness. He [is] the One

speaking goodness, ease and well-being [to] us in every thought, word and expression of goodness which embodies the qualities of [the] Breath-effect resident within the superimposed atmospheres [that are] centered within the midst of Christ, and [are] in union with [His, or the] anointing."

Here we can observe that "the qualities of a Word of goodness... embody the qualities of [the] Breath-effect (Spirit; = God)" which resides in the atmospheres that have been added in this new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). These new atmospheres (in which we live – 2:6, below) are "centered within the midst of

Christ." The term "Christ" can also be rendered "anointing," thus I conflated the prepositional phrase with, "and [are] in union with [His, or the] anointing." This latter translation points to the sphere of these atmospheres – the realms of the Spirit, which anoints us.

4. even as He chose us out (or: selects and picks us out) **within Him, and in union with Him** [F, G: for or in Himself] **before [the]** (or: prior to a) **casting down** (or: a laying of the foundation; a conception) **of [the] ordered system** (world; universe; cosmic order; or: human aggregate), **[for] us to continuously be set-apart ones** (or: to progressively exist being sacred and

dedicated people) **and flawless folks** (people without blemish or stain; blameless ones) **in His sight and presence** (or: in the midst of the sphere of His gaze) **in union with, and centered in, Love.**

Notice the plural pronoun **us**: he did not say “each one of you.” Witherington observes, “The concept of election and destining here is corporate” (ibid p 234). He cites P.T. O’Brien (*Ephesians*, p 98 n 49): “The idea of the incorporation of many into the representative head (using the preposition *en*) appears in the LXX in relationship to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) and Isaac (Gen. 21:12) as well as in Paul

with reference to Adam (1 Cor. 15:22)” (Witherington, *ibid* n 23). We can see a progression in the figures: from one man (Abraham) to one nation (Israel) to all humanity (Paul’s use of Adam as “one humanity” – 2:15, below).

In regard to the phrase “**within Him, and in union with Him, before**” we can observe a primal, organic connection and solidarity that looks back to before "the beginning" of God's plan of the ages – a quick, enigmatic glance to, perhaps, the time of Gen. 1 in Paul's apocalyptic setting, "**before [the]** (or: prior to a) **casting down** (or: a laying of the foundation; a conception) **of [the] ordered system** (world; universe;

cosmic order; or: human aggregate)."

Union with, and inclusion within, Christ – an act accomplished by God – is the whole content of humanity's deliverance/salvation. We find a parallel description of the first clause, above, in Rom. 8:28-29,

"... to the folks being called and invited according to [the] purpose
(or: for, in and with the people progressively experiencing love for God – in, with, by and for the people being invited down from an advanced placing, congruent with a design and corresponding to a before-

placing and a prior setting forth) –

He is constantly working all things together into good and is progressively working all humanity together into that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities, because those whom He foreknew (whom He knows from previous intimate experience), **He also marked out beforehand** (determined, defined and designed in advance) **[as] copies** (joint-forms) **of the image** (material likeness; portrait; mirrored image)

of His Son (or: He previously divided, separated and bounded conformed patterns from the image of His Son) **into the [situation for] Him to be** (or: to continually exist being) **the Firstborn among, within the center of, and in union with many brothers** (= a vast family of believers)!”

Then in Rom. 9:11 Paul inserts this purpose clause:

“to the end that God's purpose and aim, which He designed and set beforehand, may continually remain (abide; dwell) **down from** (corresponding to and in accord with) **election** (a selection; a

choosing-out; a choice)...”

Next, we can find another picture of this same topic in Col. 1:15-16a,

“It is [this Son] Who is the Image (portrait; the Exact Formed Likeness; the Figure and Representation; visible likeness and manifestation) of the not-seen God (or: the unable to be seen God; the invisible God), the Firstborn of all creation

(or: of every creature; or: of every framing and founding; of every act of settling from a state of disorder and wildness; or: pertaining to the whole creation; or: = the

Inheritor of all creation
Who will also assume
authority over and
responsibility for every
creature [note: this is the
duty of the firstborn]),

**because within Him was created
the whole** (or: in union with Him
everything is founded and settled,
is built and planted, is brought
into being, is produced and
established; or: within the midst
of Him all things were brought
from chaos into order)..."

Schnackenburg quotes H. Schlier (*Der Brief an die Epheser, Ein Kommentar*, 1971) in this same context, "If we are in

him, then we were always so,”” and then he himself continues,

“If God made his plan of salvation in (the pre-existent) Christ, he also included us ‘in Christ’ in his plan. Christ and those saved in him cannot be separated from one another” (ibid p 53).

To be “in Christ” is equivalent to being in the Last (*eschatos*) Adam, the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:22-23; 45-49).

In 1 Cor. 2:7 Paul put it in different terms:

“we habitually speak God's wisdom within the midst of a secret (or: we normally speak – in [the form or realm of] a mystery

which only the initiated understand – the wisdom which is God): **the [wisdom] having been hidden away and remaining concealed, which God before marked out and set its boundaries** (or: previously designed) – **before the ages...**”

The last phrase of this quote from 1 Cor. 2:7, “before the ages,” may well correspond to our phrase, here, “**before [the]** (or: prior to a) **casting down.**”

Now let us consider this phrase, “**casting down** (or: a laying of the foundation; a conception) **of [the] ordered system** (world; universe; cosmic order; or: human aggregate).”

The bold rendering is the literal meaning, but the applied connotation is often in regard to “a laying of a foundation.” I gave the extended meaning, “a conception,” from this word’s use in Heb. 11:11,

“Sarah herself – being sterile – received (or: laid hold of) power and ability unto a conception (a depositing; founding; casting down) of seed (= offspring)...”

Looking at the semantic range of the word *kosmos* – from **ordered system** to “world, universe, cosmic order,” to “human aggregate,” foments multi-layered perceptions of Paul’s meaning here. Was he speaking of the creation of

the universe, or the casting-down of humanity (from the Garden of Eden, or, “paradise” in the LXX), or – more recently – the casting down of the ordered system of the cultic arrangements with Israel (including the Law and the old covenant)? Here we must listen to the Breath-effect (Spirit) speaking within us, as It/He leads us into “all truth and reality” (Jn. 16:13). To be dogmatic as to the interpretation leads to a dead end. Another look at this phrase, and which ties in with the “hiddenness” of 1 Cor. 2:7 is found in Mat. 13:35, where Jesus quoted Ps. 78:2,

“I will repeatedly open My mouth in parables (illustrations);

I will constantly disgorge and spew out things having been hidden from [the; a] casting-down.” (LXX, JM)

Cf Mt. 25:34; Lu. 11:50; Jn. 17:24; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; 17:8.

The terms "**set-apart/dedicated**" and "flawless (or: without blemish)" is language that calls up the image of the qualifications for animals brought to the priest for temple sacrifices (e.g., Lev. 1:3, 10; *cf* Heb. 9:14 where the second term is applied to Christ). This allusion speaks to Paul's metaphor of the called-out communities being God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16), which is specifically expressed in 2:21, below. It

also calls to mind John's description in Rev. 1:6a,

“and made (formed; created; produced) us [to be] a kingdom (or: sovereign reign; [other MSS: constructed of us a kingdom which brings sovereign influence]): priests in (or: by; for; with) His God and Father,”

These two terms are used again in the last phrase of 5:27, below, where the discussion concerns the called-out communities being loved by Christ in the same way as a husband should love a wife. The implication there is that the communities have been set-apart as belonging to Christ and participating in

His flawlessness.

The descriptive phrase that modifies the corporate term "**flawless folks**" is worth noting: **in His sight and presence** (or: in the midst of the sphere of His gaze).

Consider the proximity and the relational connotations expressed here. As an apocalyptic description, it speaks to people that stand before His throne – in His immediate **presence**. We see the "realm," or location, expressed in 2:6, below, in the picture of our being "seated with Christ" on His throne.

Putting the next prepositional phrase with what has gone immediately before it adds another layer to the description of first applying it to the location of the

"flawless folks," and then, showing that "His sight and presence" are **"in union with, and centered in, Love."** This figuratively states that His gaze and His presence are both, in fact, Love. It also signifies that Love is the communities' sphere of existence. These joined phrases echo and color-in all the good thoughts that are ascribed to God in vs. 3, above.

5. In love [He was] marking us out beforehand (or: definitively appointing us in advance; before-setting our boundaries and defining us, with a designation) **[and directing us] into a placing in the condition of a son** (or: a deposit of the Son; a setting in place

which is the Son; the constituting as a son; a placing in the Son) – **through and by means of Jesus Christ – [moving us] into the midst of Himself, according to** (or: down from; in correspondence with; following the pattern of) **the good thought, the intention of well-being, and the well-imagined delight of His will** (determined purpose).

The phrase **in love** can be a part of the last part of vs. 4, or as modifying the first participle of vs. 5. I have, therefore, put it with both verses. Schnackenburg (ibid p 54) opts for its connection with vs. 5, and I concur with this most probably being Paul's meaning. But as

you will note, in many other translations, it has been traditionally tied to vs. 4.

As we saw, above, Paul uses the verb cognate of the participle, **marking us out beforehand**, in Rom. 8:29. Verses 29-30, there, are echoed in vss. 4-5, here. We also read this same verb in 1 Cor. 2:7, quoted above, and in this letter we find Paul speaking of the **secret/mystery** in 1:9, below, as well as in 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32 and 6:19. (*cf* Col. 1:26, 27; 4:3).

In 1:11, below, we again read that we were folks “**being previously marked out** (or: being before designated),” but there more detail is given: “**we were** (or: are) **also chosen** (or: randomly

assigned or appointed) **by casting a lot** (or: were made an allotted portion; or: received an inheritance; or: had our lot cast).” And further, it was “**in keeping with** (or: down from; corresponding to; in accord with) **a before-placed** (or: predetermined-by-setting-forth) **aim and design.**” It quickly becomes clearly evident that we are a part of something that God planned from the beginning. His providence and His “determined purpose” strike a loud note in this passage, and here in verse 5 Paul tells us that our “pre-appointed designation” is *huiiothesia*:

The term *huiiothesia* (**a placing in the condition of a son; etc.**) connects us to

Paul's thoughts in Rom.8:14 (being led by the Spirit = being a son of God) and in the next verse, there, we read,

“...you received a spirit of being placed as a son (or: a Breath-effect which set you in the position of a son; or: you receive an attitude of one having been adopted [in accord with Greek or Roman law]), within which (or: in union with Whom) we are habitually crying out, Abba (Dad), O Father!”

and then in Rom. 8:23b,

“...we ourselves also continually sigh and groan within (in the center of) ourselves,

continuously accepting and with our hands taking away from out of a placing in the condition of a son (or: [the] deposit of the Son; a setting in place which is the Son; a constituting as a son; a placing in the Son): the process of the release of our body from slavery

(or: [and] the loosing from destruction pertaining to the [corporate] body, which is us; or: = the unbinding and release of the body [of Adam; of humanity], which belongs to us).”

Another picture of this situation is described in the context of Gal. 4, where

vss. 5b-7 instructs us,

“...so that we could and would receive and take away into possession the placing in the condition of a son (or: the deposit of the Son; the setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son; the placing in the Son).

6. Now, because we exist being (are presently and continuously) sons, God at once sends forth (or: at one point sent off from out of [His] midst) His Son's Spirit (or: the Breath-effect, which is His Son) as an emissary into the midst of our hearts, repeatedly crying out (habitually calling out

or exclaiming in an inarticulate cry; even: screaming, shrieking [verb also means: croak, as a bird]), "**Abba** (Aramaic: = Dad, or, Daddy!), **O Father!**"

7. So that, you are (you exist being) **no longer a slave, but rather, a son, and since a son, also an heir** (a possessor and an enjoyer of the distributed allotment) **through God** [other MSS: God's heir through Christ]."

Putting all this together we can better appreciate Paul's summation in Rom. 8:30,

“Now [in fact, consider this]: those whom He at one point

before-marked-out (or: designates beforehand; [A reads: knew from prior intimate experience]), **these He also at once called** (or: calls; invited), **and whom He called** (or: calls; invites), **these He also in one stroke rightwised by an eschatological deliverance** (or: makes and sets right, frees from guilt and liberates from bondage, while making them fair and placing them in [covenant] relationships in the Way pointed out). **Now further, those whom He rightwised** (or: liberates and turns in the right direction; or: =

included in covenant), **these He also instantly glorified**

(or: makes of reputation which calls forth praise; gives a splendid appearance; gives honorable thoughts and imaginations; clothes with splendor).”

We observe another metaphor of this “placement” in vs. 13, below:

“...**stamped** (or: were sealed; marked for acceptance, or with a signet ring; = personally authorized) **by the set-apart Breath-effect of The Promise** (or: with the holy attitude of

assurance; in the sacred essence from the promise; or: for the Holy Spirit which is the Promise).”

Here, again, this new reality came, and comes, through God’s Spirit. Another description is found in 5:1, below, “... **as beloved** (or: like loveable) **children.**” We find an echo of this in 1 Jn. 3:1a,

“You people at once consider (or: look and perceive) **what kind of** (what sort of; what unusual, foreign or exotic) **love** (or: acceptance) **the Father has given to** (or: in; for) **us** [other MSS: you], **which we now have as a gift, to the end that we can**

(may; should; would) **be called**
(or: named) **God's children**
(born-ones; bairns)! **And we**
are!”

This entire package is also the destiny of Israel, for we read in Rom. 9:4,

“the very ones who are
Israelites, whose [is/was] the
placing in the condition of a son
(or: the deposit of the Son; the
setting in place which is the Son;
the constituting as a son) **and the**
glory (the things which call forth
praise and bring a splendid
reputation) **and the**
arrangements (or: covenants;
[other MSS: the Covenant)…”

Consistent in all these expressions is the language of Family, which finds its ultimate grounding in such expressions as, “Our Father...”

Following the phrase, **through and by means of Jesus Christ**, we have the phrase, **into the midst of Himself**.

Schnackenburg (ibid p 55) notes that there is controversy over the antecedent of the latter phrase: does it refer to Jesus Christ, or to God? He lists four reasons for preferring “in Him/in Himself” as a reference to God:

- a) “The entire eulogy has an unmistakable theocentric character. God is praised because every blessing proceeds from him,

because everything happens according to his will and purpose and is directed to his glorification.”

b) “The theocentric view is prominent in the immediate context, namely in the *kata*-phrase in 5.b: ‘according to the pleasure of his will.’”

c) “*eis auton* stands in a quite close connection with *eis epainon* [and the following] in 6a.”

d) “In vs. 6 Christ’s distinctive function is emphasized: God has bestowed his grace on us ‘in the Beloved’ ...” (ibid; brackets added)

This may be the reason (i.e., for interpretive clarification) for the reading of F and G (“for or in Himself”) in 4a, above. Notwithstanding, the immediate proximity of **“into the midst of Himself”** to **through Jesus Christ** can be interpreted as **into the midst of Himself** being a modifier of **Jesus Christ**. Thus it is the action of God placing us “into Christ” that is the **means** of our “son-placement” unto which He before marked us out. This would echo our being included in the Second Humanity, or the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45-49), or Paul’s frequent term, “in Christ.” Other scholars follow this latter interpretation.

Central to the main theme of this writing is the last phrase of this verse:

“according to (or: down from; in correspondence with; following the pattern of) the good thought, the intention of well-being, and the well-imagined delight of His will (determined purpose).”

The preposition *kata* serves the following functional meanings which all make sense to this context:

a) **according to** tells us that the **thought, intention and delight** (*eudokia*), which determine **His will**, are the defining and controlling factors that created the pattern when **marking us out**

beforehand. We also see that these factors are “good,” intend “well-being,” and are “well-imagined.” Schnackenburg sees here a “connection with election,” and cites these Qumran texts, “1QS 8:6, ‘the elect of his purpose’; 1 QH 432f; 11:9, ‘sons of his purpose’”(ibid p 55).

b) “down from” indicate the source of what was just stated, above.

c) “in correspondence with” shows correlation and relation.

d) “following the pattern of” emphasized the pre-determined, defined plan of His intention for

us.

All of this was done “**In love.**”

Chrysostom observes, “Everywhere the purpose or *good pleasure* means God’s antecedent will” (Homily on Ephesians, *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 112; emphasis original).

6. [This was] with a view unto praise of His grace's glory (or: This [led] into [the] praise of [the] reputation and honorable consideration of His favor; or: [leading] into the midst of glory which is, and is from, His joy-producing act of favor) **in and with which He graced us** (or: favors and gifts us with joyous grace) **within the One having been, and continuing being, loved**
(or: in the midst of the Beloved

One; or: in union with the One
having been given and now
expressing the essence and
qualities of love; [some MSS:
within His beloved Son]),

This verse is actually a continuation of vs. 5, but for modern English readers I inserted “[**This was**]” as a way of unpacking Paul’s Asiatic rhetoric so as to more easily understand what he has put into this continued string of prepositional phrases. The phrase “**unto praise of His grace’s glory**” echoes Yahweh’s purpose in overthrowing the Egyptian army during the Exodus that emancipated Israel, as was expressed in Ex. 9:16,

“but this is why I have kept you [Pharaoh] alive, to let you see my power and to publish my fame all over the world.” (Moffatt; brackets added)

God’s eschatological deliverance of humanity was the **glory** of His **grace**; it “[led] into [the] praise of [the] reputation and honorable consideration of His favor.” It also had in view the leading of humanity “into the midst of glory which is, and is from, His joy-producing act of favor.” We read of this glory in Col. 1:27,

“... **the glory of this Secret** (or: the wealth which has its source in this sacred mystery's manifestation

which calls forth praise) **within the multitudes** (among the nations; in the Gentiles; IN UNION WITH the swarms of ethnic groups), **which is** (or: exists being) **Christ within you folks, the expectation of and from the glory**

(or: which is [the] Anointed in union with you people: the [realized] hope of the manifestation which called forth praise; or: which is [the] Anointing within the midst of you folks – the expectation which is the glory).”

Next is the dependant clause, “**in and with which He graced us** (or: favors and gifts us with joyous grace).” The verb tense is aorist, so I gave both a simple past tense rendering, and then (in the parentheses) a simple present reading. The first gives us a timeless expression of the historical Christ-event – the cross, the resurrection, the giving of the Holy Spirit. The second expresses the present, existential giving of His Son to us. He graciously confers Himself to us via His Spirit. All of this happens **IN** the Beloved One.

The participle of the last phrase is in the perfect tense, showing a completed action that has lasting results. It is a

reference to Jesus Christ which echoes what His Father said to Him, at His baptism, in Mk. 1:11,

“You Yourself are (or: continue being; habitually exist being) My Son – the Beloved One!”

The preposition (*en*) expresses position (**within**), location (in the midst of) and union, and we again see this same preposition beginning the next verse (7) – with these same meanings and the same object of the preposition (here: **the One** loved; there: **Whom**). Paul began stressing these thoughts concerning our relationship with Jesus Christ, using *en* in the last phrase of vs. 3, then in the first clause of vs. 4, and again in the first

clause of vs. 5 (**In love**). If we listen, we may hear an echo of Paul in Acts 17:28, where we again see this preposition

“For you see, within the midst of and in union with [*en*] Him [i.e., God] we continuously live (or, as a subjunctive: could be constantly living), and are constantly moved about and put into motion, and continue existing (experiencing Being).”

This verse in Acts is quite obviously an existential statement, not just a metaphor. The question must then be asked: How is Paul using the *en* phrases here in Eph.? Perhaps the answer is: Both metaphorically (in the literary style of

apocalyptic expression) AND existentially, as a description of the new reality of His new creation. Jesus used the metaphor of a Vine/branches in John 15, but it was to present to His students a spiritual view of both the relationships within the corporate Christ and the character of His reign (sovereign activities; kingdom). Pondering, or contemplating, the layered, “mystical,” meanings of these phrases will produce inner edification and have a fruitful effect upon our outward living.

7. within and in union with Whom we continuously have (constantly hold; progressively possess) the release into freedom from slavery or imprisonment

(the liberation from our predicament) **through His blood – the sending away** (causing to flow off; removal; forgiveness; dismissal; divorce) **of the effects of, and results from, the fallings-aside** (the stumblings by the side; wrong steps; offences; transgressions), **in accordance with** (or: down from; corresponding to; in keeping with; to the level of; commensurate with) **the wealth of, and which is, His grace and the riches of the joy-producing act of His favor** (or: of the favor/grace which is Him),

Here, the beginning preposition (*en*) can indicate the sense of location/sphere (**within**) as well as a relational sense (**in**

union with), both of which can speak metaphorically with a sense of participation and even causation. The **“release into freedom from slavery or imprisonment** (the liberation from our predicament)” was accomplished **IN** the eschatological act of deliverance (Christ’s death and resurrection): the Christ-event was the **IN**-strument of our **release**, and He mediated this liberation to us. Grassi states that this word, “implies setting free a person or group that is under someone else’s power or in slavery” (ibid p 343). Paul uses this word in Rom. 3:24,

“... through means of the process of a release-from-an-

enslaved-condition and a liberating-away-from-imprisonment, which is resident within Christ Jesus (or: by the setting-free which is centered in [the] Anointed Jesus; or: through the redemption that is union with Jesus [the] Messiah).”

Paul also included this term in 1 Cor. 1:30,

“Now you folks are, and continuously exist being, forth from out of the midst of Him – within and in union with Christ Jesus, Who came to be (or: is birthed) wisdom in and among us (or: to us; for us), from God:

**both a rightwising,
eschatological deliverance into
righted, covenantal existence in
fair relationships of equity in the
Way pointed out (or: likewise a
just Act from God) and a being
set-apart to be different, even a
redemptive liberation.”**

Origen observes, “First then we need to be redeemed, to be no longer subject to our captor and oppressor...” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 114).

But this was also accomplished by our being joined to the Vine, or grafted into the Olive Tree (the Tree of Life).

Viewing the Act of Christ and the resultant Condition for humans gives us

at least a three-dimensional perspective of the “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17) and a “new humanity” (2:15, below).

Note the present tense of the verb **have/hold/possess**: Paul is describing a present and continuing situation. The “new age” had come with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The phrase **through His blood** is a reference to His death on the cross, but is also an allusion to the sacrificial metaphors of the OT cultus (especially Passover and the Day of Atonement). This is portrayed symbolically in Rev. 5:6, “**a little Lamb standing, as one having been slaughtered.**” That picture looks back to the proclamation by John the baptizer

concerning Jesus,

“Look! (Pay attention, see and perceive)! **God’s Lamb** (or: the Lamb from God; the Lamb having the character and qualities of God; or, in apposition: the Lamb which is God), **the One continuously lifting up and progressively carrying away the Sin of the world, and removing the sin which belongs to and is a part of the System**

(or: habitually picking up and taking away the failure and error brought on by the organized system; progressively removing the

falling short and the missing of the goal from the world of culture, religion, economy and government [= from humanity and secular society])!” (Jn 1:29)

The noun phrase that follows (**the sending away... of effects...**) is in apposition to **His blood**, explaining the **effects and results** of the cross. The noun (*aphesis*), which is commonly rendered “forgiveness,” is better seen in its more literal meaning which corresponds with the concept of release from a situation by **the sending away** of something that has resulted in bondage and loss of freedom. It is “the causing to

flow off,” “the removal” of **the effects of and results from** (the *-ma* ending of the following noun) **the fallings-aside**, or the stumblings by the side; the wrong steps, the offences. This fits with the idea of “atonement,” which was a covering over which resulted in a cleaning. Christ divorced us from the effects of our transgressions. In regard to our part, in response to our new liberation and our passing this on to others, Richard Rohr put it this way, “Forgiveness is simply the religious word for letting go” (Richard Rohr's Daily [email] Meditation: Sabbath – Letting Go; 7/26/2014, www.cac.org). Christ's act of accepting death over our

situation, in order to liberate us and to give us His Life, came to us in a way that was **in accordance with**, corresponding to, TO the LEVEL of, commensurate with, and descended upon us from, His **grace and favor**. But Paul does not say it so simply; he puts the work of the Messiah in the category of **wealth and riches**. It corresponds to the **wealth of, and which is, His grace**, and to the **joy-producing act of favor – which is Him** (genitive of apposition). He has just described Christ's character as that of magnificent, over-the-top and abundant grace. He gives freely, gratuitously.

8. which He caused to superabound

around [and] unto us (or: which He makes to be more than enough unto us; which He excessively supplied and then lavishes into the midst of us) **within the midst of, in union with and centered in all wisdom** (or: in every wise thing) **and thoughtful prudence** (gut-intelligence; mindful purpose; considered understanding).

So now we see what He does with His **wealth**, which is His **grace**: **He caused [it] to super-abound around us** and makes His favor “to be more than enough” for us and for our situation. He further “excessively supplied” it to us and then “lavishes” it into us. The core concept of the preposition *eis* can be

pictured as an arrow coming **unto**,
piercing and entering “into the midst.”
This describes what God did, and
continues to do, with His grace. This
calls to mind what Paul wrote in Rom.
5:15b,

“MUCH MORE (= infinitely
greater) **[is] the Grace of God**
(God’s Grace; favor which is
God), **and the gift** (or: gratuitous
benefit) **within Grace – a joy-**
producing act of Favor – by that
of the One Man, Jesus Christ,
surrounded (or: encircles) **into**
encompassing superabundance
(extraordinary surplus and excess)
into THE MANY (= the mass of

humanity).”

And then in Rom. 5:17,

“...much more, rather, will the peoples (= the masses of humanity) – in continuously receiving and seizing upon (taking in hand) the surrounding superabundance (encircling, extraordinary surplus and excess) of the Grace and of, from and which is the gratuitous gift of the liberated Rightwiseness (of the solidarity in fair and equitable treatment; from the placement in right [covenant]-relationship in the Way; of the justification and freedom from guilt while being

turned in the right direction and made right)...”

Also there, in vs. 19b,

“But where the Sin (the failure; the divergence and missing of the target) **increases** (or: abounded to be more than enough; becomes more intense) **THE GRACE** (“the act producing happiness, which is granted as a favor” – Jim Coram) **at once super-exceeds** (or: hyper-exceeded) **over and above, surrounding to excessive abundance and overflow.”**

In the second half of vs. 8, above, we once again encounter the preposition *en* (**within... in union... centered in**)

showing that all this superabundance is located and grounded **in all wisdom and thoughtful prudence** – these gifts being our sphere of existence and our environment in this new creation (the "added atmospheres" – vs. 3, above) that exists "in Him." These terms describe the qualities and characteristics of His Breath-effect that was imparted "into the midst of us" and into which/Whom we were immersed. Both terms also describe "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

9. **[This occurred] while making known to us** (acquainting us by intimate, experiential knowledge; suddenly making us to realize) **the secret**

(mystery; hidden knowledge) of **His will**
(determined purpose; resolve) – **in
accord with** (or: down from and
following the pattern of; corresponding
to; in line with) **His good thought which
He before placed within Himself**

(or: – corresponding to the
measure of His pleasing
imagination and intent of well-
being which He designed
beforehand and determined by
setting it forth in union with
Himself),

The verb phrase, **making known**, is an
aorist participle of the verb *gnōrizō*, a
cognate of the noun *gnōsis* (knowledge).
We will see this verb again in 3:3, 5, 10,

and 6:19. In 3:3 Paul says that from “**an unveiling** (or: down from a revelation; in keeping with a disclosure), **the secret** (or: mystery) **was made known**” to him, “with a view to [them]” (3:2), and in 3:4 he identifies this as “**the secret** (or: mystery) **of the Christ** (or: which is the Anointed One [= the Messiah]).” Then in 6:19 we read the clause, “**to make known the secret** (or: mystery) **of the good news** (or: which is the message of goodness, ease and well-being).” Here, in vs. 9, it is designated as “**the secret of His will and His determined purpose.**” In 3:5 Paul tells us that,

“it is now (at the present time) **uncovered** (unveiled; revealed) **in**

spirit (or: within a Breath-effect; or: in union with [the] Spirit) **by** (or: to; among) **His set-apart emissaries** (or: consecrated folks that are sent forth from Him as spokesmen) **and prophets** (folks having light ahead of time).”

It is an “apocalyptic” gospel, a “disclosed” secret. Ralph P. Martin suggests that with the first clause of this verse Paul may have been countering “the false teachers in Asia Minor, whom Paul addressed in the letter to the Colossians [who] were claiming a secret teaching, open only to initiates, which gave them a clue to the understanding of the universe” (*The New*

Bible Commentary, Revised, WM. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1970 p 1108; brackets added). He cites J. Amitage Robinson (*St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1904) as saying that the content of this **secret** “is ‘the inclusion of the Gentiles as well as the Jews in a common human hope in Christ’ and even more ‘the unification of humanity in Christ’” (ibid). This knowledge comes from God invading the human mind and spirit through the eschatological deliverance that is in Jesus Christ. Then, in 3:9, we learn that the purpose of this was,

“to illuminate all people (give light to everyone) **[as to] what [are] the house-rules** (or: [is] the

administration and management of the household) **of the secret** (or: mystery) **pertaining to that having been hidden** (concealed) **away, apart from the ages** (or: disassociated from the [past] periods of time), **within the midst of God.”**

Grassi compares Paul’s use of the word **secret** (*mysterion*) in Col. with the way he uses it here:

“In Col *mysterion* refers to the hidden presence and working of Christ (1:25-27), but in Eph it means the hidden plan of God, to create a universal community of men in Christ” (ibid p 344).

What Grassi refers to as God's "plan" I have more literally rendered "**His will, determined purpose and resolve.**" These words give greater expression to His sovereignty. His **will** is not just a wish or a desire, or even a "plan." The sense of "resolve" instructs us that the purpose which He has "determined" will in fact take place. Col. 1:26 tells us that it is,

"the Secret (or: sacred mystery) having been hidden away and remaining concealed away from the ages (or: from [past] eons), as well as away from the [past] generations, yet now (at the present time) is set in clear light in His set-apart folks (or: was

manifested to His holy ones; is caused to be seen by His saints; is shown for what it is, for His sacred people),”

which answers to it being made “**known to us,**” in our verse, here. In Col. 1:27 he identifies the **secret** which there he associates with,

“the riches of the glory of this Secret (or: the wealth which has its source in this sacred mystery's manifestation which calls forth praise) within the multitudes, which is (or: exists being) Christ within you folks, the expectation of and from the glory.”

Making this **secret** (or: hidden

knowledge) known to us was part of **His good thought** (*eudokia*) **which He placed within Himself, beforehand.**

Making [this] known to us came down to us from “following the pattern” of what He had both “designed” and “determined.” Origen offers an interesting thought, here (ibid p 115),

“We must examine the possibility that predestination and purpose differ so that purpose is presupposed in predestination. Thus... the predestination is the thought of God and the purpose unfolds in accordance with things predestined, so that then they become realities and actualize the

predestination.”

Marius Victorinus observes, “Not only has God a will, but the intention of his will is expressed in Christ” (ibid p 115). Knowledge of this “secret” (or: mystery) empowers us, gives us direction and imparts purpose into our lives. I like the idea of the whole purpose of existence being that which came from "His pleasing imagination (*eudokia*).” It involves an “intent of well-being,” so we can trust in the goodness of this God! What has happened in Christ is “in line with” what He “[set] forth in union with Himself.” It is all about God and His secret plan. The next verse begins to unpack this plan:

10. [leading] into an administration, implementation and realization from a detailed plan for household management of the effects of that which fills up the appointed seasons and fertile moments

(or: unto a dispensing of the entire contents of the opportune situations; [leading] into a household of the result from the full measure of the fitting situations and a management of the household of the complement of the seasons; into an administration of the full effect from the eras), **[designed] to itself bring back again all things up under one**

Head (or: to gather everything around the main point and sum it all up in unity; to unite and return all things to the Source) **within and in union with the Christ: those things upon** [other MSS: within] **the heavens** (or: the atmospheres) **and the things upon the land** (earth) – **centered in, within the midst of, and in union with, Him!**

The noun (*oikonomian*) in the first prepositional phrase speaks of “**His good thought which He before placed within Himself**” (vs. 9, above). It literally means “implementation of a house-law (or: custom of the house), thus: the management of a household, or a plan for the administration thereof.”

Dr. Ann Nyland found a later use of this word from a 2nd century papyrus where this word was used, “to describe surveyor’s plans for a village” (*The Source New Testament*, Smith and Stirling Publishers, 2007 p 141). Its extended sense involves the **implementation and realization of detailed plans** that are involved in its **administration**. This involved “dispensing” and “management,” and therefore implies that not only did God have a plan for **the effects of that which fills up the appointed seasons and fertile moments**, but that He was also involved in the realization of those plans (which were “**good thoughts**” –

He had nothing bad in mind).

The parenthetical alternatives on offer for the first half of this verse should also be considered. What God has done in the Christ-event involves a “dispensing of the entire contents of the opportune situations” which have come into being in the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). This all developed “into a house-law” and the “management of [God’s] household” that “resulted from the full measure of [these] fitting situations” which have ushered in the “full effect from the eras” that have now come to be. These two phrases that open vs. 10 call to mind Paul’s description of the Christ-event, in Gal. 4:4-5,

“Yet when the effect of the filling of the time came (or: that which was filled up by time reached full term), forth from out of a mission (or: from out of the midst of [Himself]), God sent-off His Son, being Himself come to be born from out of a woman, being Himself come to be born under [the rules, authority and influence of] Law, [cf Ex. 19:17, LXX: “under {Sinai}”] to the end that He could (or: would) buy out (ransom; redeem; reclaim [from slavery]) those under [the] Law – so that we could and would receive and take away

into possession the placing in the condition of a son (or: the deposit of the Son; the setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son; the placing in the Son).”

Schnackenburg rightly sees “... ‘a plan for the fullness of time’ ... presented in the infinitive clause ‘to unite all things in Christ,’ and ‘all things’ is then explained in the appositional ‘things in heaven and things on earth’” (ibid p 48).

Witherington cites P. Perkins (“The Letter to the Ephesians,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible XI*, 2000), “... in the world of first century CE Asia Minor, Christians found themselves the center of God’s cosmic design because they

belonged to the risen Lord...” (Ibid p 237). The “fullness of the appointed seasons” corresponds to the types in the OT agricultural-cultic calendar. The last of the three main feasts of Israel was the Feast of Tabernacle (also called Ingatherings and Booths; *cf* Deut. 16:15; Lev. 23:4ff), which, incidentally, included the Day of Atonement. The yearly calendar was a picture of the age of the Law.

The terms used in this verse, along with the concepts presented, are apocalyptic in nature and should be understood in conjunction with the “types and shadows” presented in the OT (*cf* Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1). Israel’s

religious/agricultural calendar presented pictures of the **appointed seasons and fertile moments** (*kairoi*) – and each, in its own way, pointed to the age of the Messiah. Taken together, they “summed up” God’s “secret” of God’s “purpose of the ages” (3:11, below). This is why the coming of the Messiah (Jesus) was presented in both cultic and apocalyptic pictures, as we see in Heb. 9:25-29,

“Nor yet [is it] that many times He would be repeatedly offering Himself, even as the chief priest is repeatedly entering into the set-apart (or: holy) places yearly in blood belonging to another, otherwise (or: in that case) it was

continually binding Him to experience [it] (or: to suffer; to have sense-experiences and to feel) many times from the founding of the organized System of [their] religion and culture (or: the casting down of the world or universe). Yet now (at this time), once, upon a conjunction (a joined destiny; a bringing of [two] ends together ["denoting the joining of two ages-times" – E.W. Bullinger]) of the ages, He has been and remains manifested (has been brought to light and continues visible) into a displacement of failure (of error;

of sin; of failure to hit the target) **through the sacrifice of Himself** (or: through His sacrifice; or: by means of the sacrificial altar-offering which was Himself).

And now, according to as much as it continues lying-away (or: laid away; reserved-off; stored) **in** (or: with; for; to) **mankind** (or: people) **to die-away once, but after this a process of evaluating** (a separating and making a distinction to be a judging and determining; a deciding), **so also, the Christ – being once borne** (or: carried) **close into the many** (or: being

offered once unto and for the many) **to carry failures** (errors; sins mistakes; deviations; misses of the target) **back up again – will continue being made visible** (or: will be progressively seen) **forth from out of the midst of the second [place (cf 9:3, 7 & 10:9; {comment: = the holy of holies})] – apart from failure** (apart from sin; apart from a sin offering; apart from error in attempting to hit the target) – **in those** (or: by those; to those; for those) **habitually receiving** (or: progressively taking) **from out of the midst of Him, [progressing]**

into a deliverance (or: [leading] into a rescue; with a view to health and wholeness; into the midst of salvation).”

The final clause of this verse begins with an infinitive of purpose. I have inserted an interpretive suggestion, **[designed]**, before the infinitive phrase, **“to itself bring back again all things up under one Head.”** As the parenthetical expansions show, this verb has a greater semantic range than the literal picture given in the bold rendering:

“to gather everything around the main point and sum it all up in unity, or, to unite and return all things to the Source.”

In this context, all of these applications of the infinitive present an apocalyptic, eschatological picture of the arrival of the age of the Messiah and the conclusive work of Jesus which inaugurated the new age, the new creation and the new arrangement (or: covenant).

The main point is that humanity will bear the image and likeness of God. The work of the cross and the resurrection “sums-up” the secret, discussed above. The coming of the Breath-effect creates “one new humanity”: unity (2:15, below). Through Jesus Christ “all things” return into God, the original Source (Rom. 11:36). This all happened/happens

“within and in union with the Christ.”

The next phrases, **“those things upon [other MSS: within] the heavens (or: the atmospheres) and the things upon the land (earth),”** are an apocalyptic (or, “ancient science”) phrasing for the whole universe (the “world cosmology” of the day), the entire creation. But there were other layers of symbolic meaning:

a) “the heavens” were a figure for the realm of spirit, or for the realm of God and His kingdom-reign-sovereign influence-creative activities

b) “earth” was a figure for humanity (*cf* 1 Cor. 15:47-49)

c) the tabernacle/temple was a

figurative representation of the heavens, with the cherubim, etc. (God's throne was the ark, within the holy of holies); the land was a figure of the people; thus, a change in the heavens spoke of a change in leadership and rule for the people; a change in the earth spoke to a transformation of people.

We see all this in Paul's designation for the followers of the Messiah being "God's temple (or, home)." We can observe the concept of "resurrection" being a shift from dwelling in/on the earth to dwelling in the atmospheres/heavens (a move from the

“fleshly/soulis” to the “spiritual”). This transformation happens because it is all **“centered in, within the midst of, and in union with, Him!”**

“One thing is clear from 1.10: the unification of the universe in Christ, the restoration of the divine rule of the universe, has already taken place. If this were not so, talk of the ‘fulfillment of the fullness of the times’ would be meaningless” (Schnackenburg, *ibid* p 61).

Grassi comments,

“In biblical thought, man is closely related to the universe; Adam is commissioned to ‘rule

over the earth' (Gen. 1:28). Christ, the new Adam and the head of a new complete people of God, has been entrusted with the mission of bringing the universe into a state of unity and harmony" (ibid p 344).

Theodoret referred to what Paul describes in vs. 10b, here, by a word that has been translated *recapitulation*: "By *recapitulation* he means the complete transformation of things" (Epistle to the Eph., ACCoS, ibid p 116; emphasis original).

11. Within and in union with Whom we were (or: are) also chosen (or: randomly assigned or appointed) by

casting a lot (or: were made an allotted portion; or: received an inheritance; or: had our lot cast), **being previously marked out** (or: being before designated) **in keeping with** (or: down from; corresponding to; in accord with) **a before-placed** (or: predetermined-by-setting-forth; destined) **aim, design and purpose of the One continuously operating** (effecting; energizing) **all things** (or: the whole) **in accord with** (or: down from; in line with; in correspondence to; following the pattern of) **the deliberated purpose** (intent; design; plan; determined counsel) **of His will** (or: resultant decision of His resolve; effect of His desire),

This is an example of the rhetorical device of “restatement” (here of the theme in vss. 4-5a) which is designed to emphasize the point that he has been making. This verse begins with the emphatic placement of the preposition *en*, which continues to be a central theme and concept of the new reality “in Christ.” We should not miss the continuation of thought between the last phrase of vs. 10 (**centered in, within the midst of, and in union with, Him**) with the restatement of this idea in the first phrase of vs. 11 (**Within and in union with Whom**). The emphasis virtually shouts, but also adds the fact of our place of inclusion within “**those**

things upon the heavens (or: the atmospheres) **and the things upon the land** (earth)” – phrases which apocalyptically describe, and add another layer of perception to, the phrase “**all things**” that we see in both vss. 10 and 11.

Note the “divine passive” form of the verb “**chosen by lot**”: this was an act of God, not a result of human choice. The parenthetical expansions give other potential meanings from the semantic range of the verb, enlarging our perspectives of the effect of His purpose. This is the only occurrence of this verb in the NT, but corresponds to the use of the cognate noun in Col. 1:12-

“[We are folks who are] constantly giving thanks to the Father: the One calling you [other MSS: us] – as well as making [you; us] competent (sufficient; qualified; fit; suitable) – into the divided share of the lot of the inheritance (or: into the part and portion of the allotted possession) of the set-apart folks (or: pertaining to the holy ones; belonging to the saints; from the sacred people; which is the different-from-the-ordinary folks) within the Light; He who drags us out of danger (or: rescued us)

forth from out of the midst of the authority of the Darkness (from Darkness's jurisdiction and right; from existing out of gloomy shadows and obscure dimness; = the privilege of ignorance), **and changes [our] position** (or: transported [us], thus, giving [us] a change of standing, and transferred [us]) **into the midst of the kingdom and reign of the Son of His love.**”

This same cognate noun is used in vs. 14, below, and Schnackenburg points out that this concept is taken “from the division of the land among the tribes of Israel...” (ibid p 62). See also Acts

26:18 as well as 5:8, below, and a similar statement in 1 Thes. 5:5. These same thoughts are joined and expanded in 1 Pet. 2:9-10 which echo pictures from Israel's history,

“Yet you folks [are] ‘a picked-out (selected; chosen) offspring (family; kin; lineage; race; species; breed) [Isa. 43:20; Deut. 7:6], a royal (kingly; palace) priesthood [Ex. 19:6; Isa. 61:6], a set-apart (holy; different) multitude (company; nation; body of people living together; swarm; association; ethnic group; caste; [Ex. 19:6; note: implies a sacred life]), a people constructed into

an encirclement (made into a surrounding structure; set as a perimeter; made into a performance about [Him]; formed around as an acquisition; gathered into a surrounding [flock])’ [Isa. 43:21; Ex. 19:5] – **so that you may tell forth the message of** (or: out-message; publish; declare abroad) **the excellencies and qualities of nobleness** (virtues of braveness, courage, good character, quality, self-restraint, magnificence, benevolence, reliability) **of and from the One calling you out of darkness** (gloomy dimness; the realm of

shadows and obscurity) **into the midst of His wonderful** (marvelous; amazing) **light** [*p72* reads: into the wonderful Light], [you] **who [were] once** (or: formerly) **‘not a people,’ but now [are] ‘God’s people;’ [formerly] being the ones having ‘not been given mercy,’ yet now [are] ‘folks being mercied (being given mercy)’ [Hos. 2:23].”**

The final clause proclaims God’s sovereignty over His creation – and the all-inclusive extent of His power and authority. Nothing is outside of His continuous operations and purposeful effecting that which is in accord with

His sovereign will. We were, and are – the aorist tense, **chosen** and appointed to be a part of His grand **design and purpose**. The Christ (a corporate reality, since the resurrection of Jesus) was the “predetermined-by-setting-forth and destined **aim**” of God’s “good thoughts” – and we are graced to be a part of it. The effects of the Christ-event were, “**in accord with** (or: down from; in line with; in correspondence to) **the deliberated purpose** (intent; design; plan; determined counsel)” – or was, “following the pattern of the resultant decision of His resolve and the effect of His desire.” Here Paul has expanded his thoughts about God’s “**detailed plan**”

that he mentioned in the previous verse. How more comprehensively could he have said it?

12. [leading] into the [situation for] us to continuously be (or: exist) [immersed] into the midst of praise and approval from (or: which is) His glory (or: from His manifestation which calls forth admiration and which yields a good opinion; which pertains to His imagination; of a reputation which is Him) – [we] being the folks having before (or: fully) placed expectation within the Christ and who have left our expectation there (or: who have continued expectantly hoping in advance [of others]).

This verse begins with the preposition, **into**, followed by the definite article, **the**, before the infinitive, **to continuously be** (or: exist). Since this directly follows “**the deliberated purpose of His will**” in vs. 11, I inserted the interpretive participle [**leading**]. To keep the infinitive form of the verb, I inserted [**situation for**] before the personal pronoun **us**, in order to help the flow of the sense in English. Next we come to another prepositional phrase that informs us to where His will is leading us: **into the midst of praise and approval**. Since the preposition (**into...**) directly follows the infinitive (**to continuously be**) I have inserted a

suggestion (**[immersed]**) to better describe the picture that Paul is painting by using this particular preposition which indicates movement from one place into the midst of another, as in Col.1:13, cited above.

Next we encounter another prepositional phrase which I first render as an ablative (**from**), indicating that the **praise and approval**, into which we have been **[immersed]**, comes **from His glory**. Rendered as apposition, this can also read, “praise and approval which is His glory.” Another ablative reading, and another rendering of *doxa* (glory, etc.) yields, “praise from His manifestation which calls forth admiration and which

yields a good opinion.” *Doxa* also means “imagination,” so a genitive reading can be, “which pertains to His imagination.” The word “glory” also means one’s reputation, so by rendering the personal pronoun “Him” as apposition, we can also render this, “praise and approval of a reputation which is Him.” All of these options present a beautiful picture of Christ, and of our position in Him. Below, Paul uses this same phrase in vs. 14, speaks of **Father of the Glory** in vs. 17, and **the riches of the Glory** in vs. 18 and then in 3:21 makes a summation regarding the glory, in this essay,

“**by Him** (to Him; for Him; in

Him; with Him) **[is] the glory** (the manifestation which calls forth praise) **within the called-out community** (the summoned-forth congregation) **as well as within Christ Jesus: unto** (or: [proceeding] into) **all the generations** (births; progenies) **of the Age of the ages** (= the most significant, or crowning, Age of all the ages)! **Make it so** (or: Amen)!”

This present-and-future oriented proclamation reminds us of Heb. 13:8, **“Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and on into the ages.”**

The next clause has the action expressed by a perfect participle, and this is the reason for the reading, “**having before placed expectation... and who have left our expectation there,**” which describes a completed past action with the results continuing into the present. Opinions vary regarding how to render the prefix (*pro-*) of the participle. I have given three options: **before** and “in advance” (inserting “[of others]” to help the reader see the meaning). **Before** aligns with the sense inherent in the perfect tense and stresses the idea of a past action. Paul, the Jewish Christians and others (e.g. Cornelius and his household) had been given the life of

Christ prior to the outreach into Asia Minor. The traditional interpretation of this phrase was that the “we” of vs. 11-12 referred “to those believers in Christ who were from a Jewish background.... those who had previously hoped... in Christ” (Abrosiaster, Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, ibid p 118), but especially in view of Acts 2:8-11 (the largest list of Gentile nations in the NT), this view does not seem to follow.

Another possibility is taking the prefix *pro-* as an intensifier, “fully,” which would point to a finished or completed action – which aligns with the perfect tense – and suggests that they had placed expectation in none other than the

Anointed One. The final parenthetical rendering presents the continued state of both expectation and expectant hope that is brought to us when we are placed “in Christ.” Here the “us” can also be read as including the Christians in Asia Minor, as well; all believers have placed their expectations upon Jesus Christ, and not on themselves. This clause calls to mind Rom. 8:24a,

“For in the expectation and with hope we are suddenly made whole and healthy

(or: You see, by the expectation we are delivered and saved; or: For we were at one point rescued to expectation; or: To be sure, we

were kept safe for this expectation)!”

Cf 1 Cor. 15:19. 2 Cor. 1:10 gives us a picture of an ongoing expectation of receiving His care here in this life,

“He Who snatched (dragged so as to rescue) us from out of the midst of the very prime (or: peak) of Death (or: out of a death of such proportions) will also repeatedly rescue and drag us to Himself – into Whom we have placed our hope and expectation so as to yet rely that He also will Himself continue still dragging us further toward Himself”

1 Tim. 4:10b presents a picture that attests to the “**before**” rendering, above:

“because we have placed our expectation (or: set our hope) and thus rely upon a living God (or: upon [the] living God), Who is (exists being) [the] Savior (Deliverer; Rescuer; Restorer to health and wholeness) of all human beings (all mankind) – especially of believers (of folks full of faith and trust; of faithful ones)!”

Cf 1 Tim. 5:5 and 6:17 for practical situations.

13. Within and in union with Whom you folks also, upon hearing the Word

of the Truth (or: the thought and idea of Reality; the message from the Truth; the Logos which is Reality) – **the good news** (the message of goodness, ease and well-being) **of your** [other MSS: of our] **deliverance** (rescue; return to health and wholeness; salvation) – **within and in union with Whom also, upon trusting and believing, you people are stamped** (or: were sealed; marked for acceptance, or with a signet ring; = personally authorized) **by the set-apart Breath-effect of The Promise** (or: with the holy attitude of assurance; in the sacred essence from the promise; or: for the Holy Spirit which is the Promise)

In the previous verses Paul has been using the pronouns **we/us**, and now in this verse he changes to **you/your**, and except for the **our** in the next verse, he continues speaking about "them."

Although commentators debate Paul's motivation for this, I suggest that it may simply be a rhetorical strategy of first taking an inclusive stance that shows his solidarity with his audiences, and thereafter assuming a form of discourse that displays the fact that his message is primarily about them, and their important place and significance within the **us**. He makes it personal to them.

Take note of the sequence that Paul describes. First: **hearing the Word of**

the Truth – or, as the parenthetical expansion points out, "the thought and idea of Reality" (as opposed to the "unreal existence" of the Edenic lie or the resultant "false existence" of the old creation). Or it could mean, "the message from the Truth," which could refer to what Jesus taught (He IS the Truth – John 14:6), or to the unveiling given to Paul from the risen Christ concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles in the new covenant. Or, through the proclamation of the good news, they could have heard "the Logos (Christ) which IS Reality." All of this is included in **the good news**, or literally, "the message of goodness, ease and well-

being." Col. 1:5 connects the idea of "expectation" (in 12b, above) with "the Word of the Truth," here, thusly:

"the expectation (or: expectant hope) – **the one continuously lying stored away as a reserve – resident within the atmospheres** (or: heavens), **which you folks already heard** (or: heard before) **within the word** (message; discourse; or: Logos) **concerning the Truth** (or: the word of truth; the idea belonging to and having its source in Reality; the message which is truth and reality) **which originates in and pertains to the message of ease, goodness and**

well-being (or: which belongs to the good news).”

Next Paul specifies that this **good news** was, or created, their **deliverance** – their rescue from the human predicament, which included being estranged (which he discusses, below), and metaphorically dead (2:1 ff, below). Then he restates their corporate inclusion **within and in union with Whom** (referring to Christ, in vs. 12, above) – and so now twice he is affirming that they are "in Christ." Because of this, they became able (through the power of the Spirit within them) to be **trusting and believing** (*cf* 2:8, below); but we should note the

parenthetical quality in this prepositional phrase. It is the next phase of what organically grows from **hearing the Word of the Truth**. Because of BEING within Him, when the trusting and believing was birthed within them, they were simultaneously "sealed," and **are stamped by the set-apart Breath-effect**. This picture is an echo of Ezk.9:4ff, and is seen again in Rev. 7:2-8.

Here I want to emphasize the *-ma* ending of *pneuma* (Breath-effect; Spirit; attitude; essence). This noun ending signifies "the effect" or "the result" of the meaning of the particular stem to which it is suffixed in order to form this

kind of noun. Some grammarians render this particular noun as "Blow-effect" (*Greek-English Keyword Concordance*, in the *Concordant Literal NT*, Concordant Publishing Concern, 1983, p 282) or "blow-effect; breeze" (*A Comprehensive Lexicon and Concordance*, Concordant Pub. Concern). The stamping and sealing was the effect of God's Breath blowing upon and into these folks. This rendering calls to mind Gen. 1:2b – the action of the Creator upon first the face of the waters – and then Gen. 2:7b where He "blew into" the human (that He had formed of moist soil) "the breath of life." Here, this transfer of the spoken Word into the

human hearers **by** the Breath-effect (with a view to "**stamping**" them with the image of God) is another act of creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) – a resurrection into the last (*eschatos*) Adam, the Second Humanity.

Paul gives us another picture of this action in the first chapter of 2 Corinthians:

21. Now God [is] the One repeatedly placing us on good, firm footing (constantly stabilizing and establishing us; or: confirming, guaranteeing and validating us as possessed by a purchase) **and completely** (or: instantly, in one point in time)

anointing us, together with you folks, into Christ.

22. He [is] also the One completely (or: instantly, in one point in time) **sealing us** (**stamping us** with an identity-mark; imprinting us for ownership; or: validating/guaranteeing our genuineness), **even** (or: and) **completely** (instantly, in one point in time) **giving the advance transaction of the agreement** (or: the pledge and down payment guaranteeing full payment for purchase; or: a dowry) **of the Spirit** (or: which is the spirit; or: having its source and origin in the

Breath-effect; or: which belongs and pertains to the spirit; from the Attitude) **within the midst of our hearts.**

The action was (and is) **by the set-apart Breath-effect of the Promise**, or with the holy attitude of assurance, or in the sacred essence from the promise, or for the Holy Spirit which is the Promise. We see reference to God's Spirit, below, in 2:18, 22; 3:5, 16; 4:3-4, 39; 5:18; and 6:17-18. The first prepositional phrase in this sequence is in the dative case, whose functions give us the potentials of choosing the English "by, with, in or for." These can be used in other combinations with the renderings on

offer for the second prepositional phrase which is in the genitive case. This "mix and match" potential must be guided by the context and what "makes sense." May His Breath-effect guide us as we contemplate the full extent of Paul's meaning and all the facets of this beautiful gem.

I also give the extended meanings of the nouns: attitude of assurance; sacred essence from the promise; Holy Spirit which is the Promise. This last option is the most profound and most inclusive in describing the purpose of God in creating what He has.

Both "location" (within) and "relationship" (in union with) are key

concepts for understanding what Paul is describing in the twice-stated **within and in union with**. And of course in the perceiving of the majestic object of this little preposition (*en*): "Whom," is the perceiving of the Good News.

The qualifying noun "**the Promise**" would signal to the folks in Asia Minor that Paul is flagging Abraham and their connection to the Promise that was made to him, which was central to the history of the Good News (*cf* Gal. 4).

14. – **Which is continuously a pledge and guarantee of our inheritance** (or: Who remains being an earnest deposit, a security and the first installment of our portion which was acquired by lot) –

[leading] unto a release into freedom (liberation from slavery or imprisonment) **from that which was made to surround [us/you]** (or: of the encircling acquisition; or: which is that which has been constructed as a perimeter around [us]), **[being immersed] into the praise and approval from** (or: which is) **His glory** (or: from His manifestation which calls forth admiration and which yields a good opinion; which pertains to His imagination; of a reputation which is Him)!

The term **pledge** (etc.) can be correlated to the planting of the Seed of Christ into the soil of humanity (*cf* the organic

metaphor in 1 Jn. 3:9, “**because His Seed {sperm} is continuously remaining {dwelling; abiding} within him {or: within, and in union with, Him}**”; also the agricultural metaphor in, Jn. 12:24, and then the figure of growth and increase in Mk. 4:28, “**Spontaneously the ground progressively bears fruit and produces a crop: first a sprout, then a stalk head and finally a full grain within the stalk head**”). This is a statement of promise and expectant anticipation. The term **guarantee** renders this Semitic borrow-word, *arrabōn*, in “the language of commerce” (Schnackenburg, *ibid* p 66) and yields an even stronger promise

of receiving the full amount **of our inheritance**. Cf 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5 – the only other places in the NT where this term **pledge/guarantee** (etc.) is used. The parenthetical expansion of this clause renders the particle as *ho* (without an accent) or *hos* (with other MSS), personalizing it to read, “Who [referring either to the Promise, or the Holy Spirit, in the previous verse] remains being an earnest deposit, a security and the first installment of our portion which was acquired by lot.” This “deposit” into us is Personal – it is God, Himself.

Next we come to another prepositional phrase. I inserted the participle

[leading], again, to express the directional movement inherent in the preposition *eis*. The work of Christ brought us “into Him” so that we now reside “within and in union with Him.” The giving of God’s Spirit (His Breath-effect) brought us “**unto a release into freedom** (or, into liberation from slavery or imprisonment).” This calls to mind Gal. 5:1a,

“For the [aforementioned] freedom, Christ immediately set us free (or: [The] Anointed One at once frees us in, to, for and with freedom)!”

Now we encounter another phrase which I have rendered first as an ablative,

“from that which was made to surround [us/you],” then as a genitive, “of the encircling acquisition,” and lastly in apposition, “which is that which has been constructed as a perimeter around [us].” The substantive to which I have given three renderings is from the cognate verb, *poieō* (to make, do, produce, construct, create) with the prefix *peri-* (around, as a circle). It can have either a positive or a negative connotation. The first rendering speaks of our being released into freedom **from:** a confining environment, an encumbrance of possessions or cares, a restricting perimeter of rules that hamper our freedom, etc.

The next -- positive -- rendering speaks of a **release into freedom OF the encircling acquisition** (e.g., the super-abounding riches of His grace and mercy that surround us). The last rendering on offer, the appositional one, can be seen as the freedom that comes with having defensive measures constructed around us (e.g., walls of a house or a city, or the placement of troops as protection). We see another use of this substantive, giving us another picture of what Christ has done for us, in 1 Pet. 2:9a,

“Yet you folks [are] "a picked-out (selected; chosen) offspring (family; kin; lineage; race; species; breed) [Isa. 43:20; Deut.

7:6], a **royal** (kingly; palace)
priesthood [Ex. 19:6; Isa. 61:6], a
set-apart (holy; different)
multitude (company; nation; body
of people living together; swarm;
association; ethnic group; caste;
[Ex. 19:6; note: implies a sacred
life]), a **people constructed into
an encirclement** (made into a
surrounding structure; set as a
perimeter; made into a
performance about [Him]; formed
around as an acquisition; gathered
into a surrounding [flock])" [Isa.
43:21; Ex. 19:5]

Paul uses this picture in 2 Thes.2:13b-
14,

“in a setting-apart of spirit and faith which has the character of truth (or: a making sacred from Breath-effect and trust from reality; or: in union with Spirit's differencing and Truth's faith), **on into which, through our message of goodness, ease and well-being, He also called you folks** [other MSS: us] **into an encompassing** (or: forming an encirclement; establishing a perimeter; creating a surrounding, and thus a procuring) **of the glory** (or: which is the glory; from the manifestation which calls forth praise) **of our Lord, Jesus Christ**

(or: [the] Anointed).”

For a discussion of the final two prepositional phrases (**into the praise...** which is Him) see the identical phrases in vs. 12, above.

15. On account of this, I also, on listening to (or: after hearing) – along with and in accord with you folks (or: in the same sphere as you; down from you; on the same level with you people) – the faith resident within the midst of the Lord Jesus (or: the trust centered in the Owner, Jesus; the loyalty based on union with the Master, Jesus), as well as the love and unrestricted acceptance [being dispersed] unto all the folks set apart (holy ones; saints),

The opening phrase, **On account of this**, alerts the listener to understand that what Paul is about to say is based upon what he has just said. He includes himself (**I also**) with his listeners (**along with and in accord with you folks**; in the same sphere as you; on the same level with you) in the **listening to and after hearing** (an aorist participle) “**the faith resident within the midst of the Lord Jesus, as well as the love and unrestricted acceptance...**” This reading of the text opens with a statement of Paul’s solidarity with his listeners and focuses their attention on their Master, Jesus – and on the faith, trust and loyalty that resides within Him

– and not upon themselves. It keeps Christ as the reason for Paul giving thanks and speaking goodness toward them, in the next verse, with a view to what he would have God do for them (and himself – included in the “**us**” in vs. 19) in vss. 17-19. Note the corporate implications in the plural pronouns. What he says is meant for the groups, as bodies of Christ.

Some early MSS do not have the phrase, “**as well as the love and unrestricted acceptance** (*agapē*),” but there is good MS witness for it, and its inclusion corresponds with Col. 1:4.

Schnackenburg suggest that it “might be an oversight” (i.e., a scribal error) in the

MSS where it is missing (ibid p 73 n 8). Notice the ellipsis (no expressed verb) where I supplied [**being dispersed**] to complete the thought of Christ's love [coming] **unto all the folks set apart** (holy ones; saints). This recalls Rom. 5:5,

“because God's love (the urge toward reunion and the unambiguous, uniting acceptance from God) has been poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts, permeating the core of our being, through the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit; Sacred Attitude) being given to

us (in us; for us).”

This reading also expresses a more extensive understanding of Paul’s use of the word “**all**,” rather than applying it just to the communities of Asia Minor. It would be unlikely that all of those groups would have generated such a glowing reputation, as that which Paul (with this reading) applies here to Christ. Consider the letters to the called-out groups of this same area as given in Rev. 2-3. Reading this verse christologically seems the best course.

16. [I] **do not pause** (or: cease; stop myself) **in continuously giving thanks over you folks** (or: speaking good favor on your behalf; or: expressing the well-

being of grace because of your [situation or condition]), **constantly making mention** (constructing a recollection; producing for myself a mental image) **upon the [occasions] of my speaking and thinking toward having wellness and goodness** (or: imparted desires; prayers),

Because of the effect of the work of Christ (vs. 15, above), Paul did **not pause continuously giving thanks over [them]**. He was thankful because of the Christ-caused situation and condition. He continued to speak “good favor on [their] behalf, expressing the well-being of grace” because of Christ in them. The root of the participle that Paul uses is

charis (grace; favor), and this term is prefixed with the particle *eu-* (goodness; well-being); thus my parenthetical renderings. So Paul may have been “speaking good favor and well-being” toward them. In fact, the object of the final preposition in this verse is *pros-eu-chōn* (thinking or speaking toward [their] having **wellness and goodness**). He was imparting these desires TO them: praying for them.

Note that this was a continuous aspect of his life. He was constantly involved with them, in spirit if not in physical presence.

17. to the end that the God of (or: pertaining to; or, reading the genitive as

in apposition: Who is) **our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the Glory** (or: the founder and archetype of, and which is, this manifestation which calls forth praise), **might give** (suddenly impart) **to you folks a spirit** (or: breath-effect; attitude) **of wisdom and revelation** (unveiling; uncovering; disclosure) **within the midst of a full and accurate experiential and intimate knowledge of Himself**

(or: in a full realization of Him; or: within and in union with His full, personal knowledge; or: centered and resident within an added insight from Him, and which is Him),

From this we can observe that **wisdom, revelation and knowledge** all come to us as a **gift/impartation** from **God**.

There is therefore no condemnation for those who lack any of these. There is no “fault” imposed if **the eyes of [our] heart** (vs. 18, below) is not yet enlightened. Paul is writing this to believers that are a part of the called-out, covenant communities who have already been placed “into Christ,” and have Christ “in [them].” As Witherington pointed out, above, Paul is writing this to aid their growth and development. All of the NT letters to the congregations in the various cities boil down to this (even if they address specific issues or

problems); they are not evangelical in nature. All of our Bible was written to, for or about folks that were already “God’s people.” Throughout its history it was primarily an instrument of “course-correction” for those who were called to follow the path as it was revealed in their time and situation.

The rest of this chapter points to the purpose of Paul’s imparting prayers for them. These three components which Paul desires for them to have are in the realm of **spirit**, [**God’s**] **breath-effect** and an enlightened **attitude** (all of which are meanings of the Greek *pneuma*). The final compound phrase has as its object **knowledge** (*gnōsis*

with the intensifying preposition *epi-* prefixed to it, qualifying it as **full and accurate**, or “added,” **experiential and intimate knowledge** and insight). This “knowledge” is specified and made particular by the modifying phrase, **of Himself**. Both the wisdom and the uncovering exist **within the midst** of this knowledge. So an accurate knowledge of God is imperative. At the same time, the **wisdom and revelation** are replete with this “insight” that comes “from Him, and which is Him.” All of this is found “in Christ.” We need not look elsewhere, for Paul has, above, repeatedly emphasized, that it is all “in Him.”

The phrase, **the Father of the Glory**, is

another way to say “the Father of Jesus Christ,” for this new Adam, the Christ, is “**God’s image and glory**” (1 Cor. 11:7). Christ within and among us is the expectation of this **glory** which the **Father** has produced. As the parenthetical expansion of this phrase reads, God is “the founder and archetype of, and which is, this manifestation [i.e., Christ] which calls forth praise.” Chrysostom comments that, “*The Father of glory* means ‘the one who has given you these most extraordinary gifts’ Everywhere in Scripture this name is applied to God: glory” (Homily on Eph., *ACCoS*, ibid p 120). “Where Jesus Christ is, there is God, and where there

is glory, there is the Father” (Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, ACCoS, *ibid* p 120).

Revelation, unveiling, uncovering and disclosure all function to make the fullness of the **secret** (here, knowledge concerning God) **known** – and especially “**to know – and gain insight by intimate experience – the love of, from, and which is, Christ** (3:19, below). The parenthetical renderings of the last compound phrase are worth noting:

- a) in a full realization of Him
- b) within and in union with HIS full, personal knowledge
- c) centered and resident within an

ADDED insight from Him, and
which IS Him.

So this “full or added” insight and knowledge is something beyond the beginning “milk” of the Word and of our experience of Him: it is the “solid food” (1 Cor. 3:2; *cf* 1 Cor. 2:6-16). We are called to partake of His “flesh,” which is “solid food,” in Jn. 6:27-58. This happens in intimate, experiential union with Him (Jn. 15:1ff).

18. the eyes of the heart of you folks (= the insights and perceptions of the core of your [corporate] being) **having been and now continuing enlightened** (or: now being illuminated into a state of enlightenment) **into the [situation for]**

you folks to have seen and thus perceive and know what is the expectation (or: expectant hope) of His calling (or: from HIS calling; belonging to His summons; from the invitation which is Him) and what [is] the wealth and riches from the glory (or: of the imagination and opinion; pertaining to the reputation) of and from the enjoyment of His lot-acquired inheritance within, in union with, and among the set-apart, sacred people (the holy ones).

Note the corporate singular: literally, **“the heart of you folks.”** The enlightenment comes corporately, and each member needs all the rest of the

members (1 Cor. 12:12-20). In 1 Cor. 14:29-31 Paul gives us a picture of how this can happen,

“Now let two or three prophets be speaking, one after another, and let the other folks continue thoroughly sifting and sorting so as to fully evaluate and reach a decision. Yet if it may (or: should) be unveiled (revealed; disclosed) to another being seated, let the first hush, and keep silent, for you all continue able (constantly have power) to be repeatedly prophesying, one by one, to the end that everyone (all) can be learning, and

everyone (all) can be called alongside to receive relief, aid, comfort and encouragement (may receive the benefits of the Paraclete)."

Ephraim the Syrian (4th cent.) observed, "The signs manifest to the external eyes of the Jews did them little good. But faith opened the eyes of the hearts of the Gentiles" (Homily on Our Lord, *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 121). Schnackenburg points out that this first clause reflects "a Jewish way of thinking" (*ibid* p 74).

Next is the perfect passive (note: the "divine passive" – the action of God upon us) participle, **having been and now continuing enlightened**. The

“illumination” came with the advent of the Messiah,

“Within It (i.e., the Light; or: Him), **life was continuing and progressively existing** (or: In It was life [as a source]; [Aleph, D and others witnesses read present tense: In union with it there continues being life; Life progressively exists within the midst of It]). **And the life was continuing being, and began progressively existing as, the Light of mankind** (or: Furthermore, the Light progressively came to be the life known as "humanity," and was for

human beings; or: Then the life was existing being the light from the humans). **And the Light is constantly shining in the dim and shadowed places, and keeps on progressively giving light within the gloomy darkness where there is no light** (or: within the midst of the obscurity of The Darkness where there is no light of The Day; or: = in the ignorant condition or system).... **It was** (or: He was, and continued being) **the True and Genuine Light which** (or: Who) **is continuously** (repeatedly; progressively) **enlightening** (giving light to)

every person (or: human)
continuously (repeatedly;
progressively; constantly; one
after another) **coming into the
world** (or: the ordered system of
culture, religion, economics and
government; or: the universe)

(or: It was the real Light,
progressively coming into
the world {organized
system}, which is
progressively enlightening
{or: shedding light on}
every human).”

(Jn. 1:4-5, 9)

The illumination came to the folks in
Asia Minor when the Logos was

proclaimed to them, but it is a Light that continues shining and illuminating. We read in Prov.4:18,

“Now the paths (roads; ways) of the just folks [those having been rightwised into the Way pointed out] keep on shining and radiating like Light; they continue journeying on and progressively give Light (or: continue enlightening) until the Day can set [things] straight (or: may aright [itself]; can set [everything] up”
(LXX, JM)

Paul sees the past event (perfect tense) as having a continuing effect, via His Spirit (vs. 17, above).

We now come to a dependent clause employing a perfect infinitive that describes their (and our) present condition: **“into the [situation for] you folks to have seen and thus perceive and know what is the expectation (or: expectant hope) of His calling (or: from HIS calling; belonging to His summons; from the invitation which is Him).”** Paul wants them (and us) to be perceiving the **expectation** (*cf* the discussion on this word in vs. 12, above) that came with **His calling** them/us to Himself. This is put in contrast to their previous situation that he describes in 2:12, below, **“continually having no expectation,”** and he sets it within their new

environment of oneness and unity in 4:4, below, “[being] **one body and one spirit** (attitude and effect of the Breath), **according as you folks were** (or: are) **also called within the midst of one expectation.**”

In the parenthetical rendering of the last phrase, first rendered “**of His calling,**” we move from the idea of His having called us, to a rendering of the genitive to an ablative (from) with the personal pronoun as a possessive: “from HIS calling.” HIS calling to be the deliverer of the world and to carry away the sin of the world gave US and expectation of life, and of participation in Him! It gave us the expectation of being able to

function as His temple, to bring Him to other folks, and to perform as paracletes, as Judah (Jude) describes,

22. And so, on the one hand, you folks be repeatedly extending compassionate kindness on some folks in order to relieve their misery and affliction [other MSS read: put to the proof; expose; convict; reprove] while continuously discerning, sifting and thoroughly separating so as to accurately decide [about their situation]

(or: be continually showing mercy on some who are constantly undecided and

continue wavering and doubting because of making divided judgment in or for themselves);

23. yet on the other hand, be continuously delivering (or: repeatedly rescuing and saving, restoring to health and wholeness) others, snatching them from out of the midst of the Fire; be repeatedly extending compassionate mercy in reverent fear, while hating and radically detaching from even the garment having been stained (or: spotted) from the flesh (= the alienated human nature; = the self

that was formed and controlled by the System).

This elaborates a part of our life of following Him which comes with “belonging to His summons.” It is “expected” of us to be His apprentices, and as Jesus said,

“the person habitually trusting and progressively believing into Me, the works (actions; deeds) which I Myself am constantly doing (habitually performing; progressively making, constructing, creating, forming) that one also will proceed doing (performing; making; creating), and he will progressively be

doing greater than these..." (Jn. 14:12)

Jesus also said to His followers,

"No one continues holding (or: having) greater love than this: that someone should place (set; lay; lay down) his soul (or: soul-life; inner being; self; person) over [the situation or circumstances of] (or: on behalf of) his friends." (Jn. 15:13)

These continue being **"expectation of and from His calling."** But I think that my favorite rendering is the combination of the rendering of the ablative with the personal pronoun in apposition: "from the invitation which is Him." He comes

to us in the word and message of the invitation (or, the imperative, as in Mat. 9:9, “**Be continuously following Me!**”). That invitation is Him presenting Himself to us.

The next phrase leads us into another area of Paul’s thoughts: “**and what [is] the wealth and riches from the glory** (or: of the imagination and opinion; pertaining to the reputation).” We discussed the term **wealth/riches** in vs. 7, above, where he spoke of “**the wealth of, and which is, His grace.**”

Here Paul speaks of this wealth coming **from the glory**, then he further qualifies this as,

“**of and from the enjoyment of**

His lot-acquired inheritance within, in union with, and among the set-apart, sacred people (the holy ones).”

Because of our being “in Him,” there are riches “of the imagination and opinion” **of/from HIS inheritance** that is “**among the set-apart, sacred people.**” His lot was cast among us, and in union with us. This calls to mind Ps. 2:8, “I will give the nations (ethnic multitudes) as Your allotment.” This union with Him and with all the set-apart folks brings a wealth of imagination as He shares His opinions about things with us – and we with other people. Thus there comes for Him and for us “the riches” that are

inherent in and that emanate from things “pertaining to the reputation of and from **the enjoyment** of His allotment **within** us. We belong to Him (He is our owner), but He has given Himself to us.

Schnackenburg instructs us that the final phrase of this verse “refer[s] to the divine-heavenly sphere” and that, “The Qumran Community believed that it was united with the ‘holy ones’ in heaven [*cf* n 16: 1 QS 11.7f; 1 QSa 2.8f; 1 QH 3.22f; 1 QM 12.1, 4]” (ibid p 75). I suggest that this “spiritual” sphere is our present environment (Acts 17:28; Heb. 12:22ff). If we understand and place the Qumran viewpoint alongside what Paul says in 2:5-6, below, about our now

being, in apocalyptic terms, “caused to sit among the folks [residing] upon the atmospheres,” we might gain an insight into their spiritual perceptions.

19. And further, [I pray that you may know] what [is] the continually surpassing greatness (or: the constantly transcendent, repeatedly overshooting and thrown-beyond huge extent) of His ability and power [being given] unto, and into, us – the people continuously believing, progressively trusting and constantly loyal – in accord with (or: down from; corresponding to) the operation (or: energizing; internal working) of force (or: might) of His strength,

This verse is actually a continuation of vs. 18, but for the ease of reading I have simplified Paul's Asiatic rhetoric and rendered it as a separate sentence, while inserting a short paraphrase of his intercession for them which began above. Here, he wants them to know **“the continually surpassing greatness** (or: the constantly transcendent, repeatedly overshooting and thrown-beyond huge extent)” of what God has given **“unto us and INTO us (*eis*).”** He explains that it is the gift **“of His ability and power”** – the two primary meanings of *dunamis*. This is a staggering concept. It is so staggering that Paul describes God's act unto us as the “continuously

surpassing greatness” (a present participle) or as the “constantly transcendent” and “repeatedly overshooting” **huge extent**. Talk about hyperbole! It was the ability to liberate us from slavery to sin (Rom. 6:20). It was the power to resurrect us from the existence of “**being dead ones by (or: to; with; in) the results and effects of your stumblings aside (offences; wrong steps) and failures to hit the mark (or: mistakes; errors; times of falling short; sins; deviations)**” – 2:1, below, and the power/ability to “**jointly rouse and raise [us] up, and caused [us] to sit (= enthrone [us]) together within the things situated upon [thus, above] the**

heavens” (2:6, below). It was the power to make all things new (Rev. 21:5) and form a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). It was the ability to infuse us with the eonian life (the life of the age of the Messiah). It was the power to place us into the risen, “cosmic,” Christ – and the ability to indwell us by His Spirit, transforming “jars of clay” (2 Cor. 4:7; He is the Treasure within us) into temples of God. It is the power of a new arrangement (or: covenant; Heb. 8:6). All this, by His power and ability, He has given **“unto us,”** and has placed **“into the midst of us.”**

Because He indwells us, His faithfulness indwells us. His presence has changed

us into people who are “**continuously believing, progressively trusting and constantly loyal.**” And this condition is:

- a) **in accord with**
- b) **down from**
- c) **corresponding to**

“**the operation** (or: energizing; internal working) **of force** (or: might) **of HIS strength.**” In other words, it is all Him. Like the creation of the first Adam, He has blown the breath of His life into us, and we have become LIVING beings.

20. which is operative (or: which He exerted and inwardly worked) **within the Christ** (the Anointed One; = the Messiah), **awakening and raising Him forth from out of the midst of dead**

folks and then seating Him within (or: = at) **His right [hand]** (or: in union with the place of honor, strength and receiving – which is Him), **within the things** (or: among the folks, places or realms) **situated upon the heavens** (or: in the super-heavenlies; within the full, perfected heavenlies; in union with the celestials; among the folks [residing] upon the atmospheres),

The verb in the first clause is in the aorist tense. Seen as a simple past (the parenthetical rendering), we see this verse as historical: the resurrection of Jesus, the Anointed One, and His enthronement. The apocalyptic picture of

the second part of this verse is an allusion to Ps. 110:1. Seen as a simple present tense (**is operative**), we see the work of the “power of the might of His strength” **awakening and raising Him forth from out of the midst of dead folks** to whom Paul refers in 2:1, below. In this second layer of interpretation, we see in the apocalyptic second half of this verse a parallel to what he states in 2:5-6, below. We were the dead folks out of whom (subsequent to His falling into our ground and dying – Jn. 12:24) God’s power raised Him forth, so that we can now bear God’s image and show forth God’s glory (which is Christ within us). Jerome rightly observes,

“He demonstrates the power of God through a human image.... the very word *sits* denotes the power of kingship...” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 123),

and Marius Victorinus concludes,

“Authority is expressed in action. Power is expressed in the capacity to act... But since Christ is himself the origin of all and is in all that is possible, he is *above all power*. Since he is the source of all acts and authority is expressed in actions, he is therefore said to be *above all authority*” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 123; emphasis

original).

21. **up over** (or: back above) **every primacy** (or: ruler; principality; government; controlling effect; or: beginning; origin) **and authority** (or: right and privilege from out of being) **and power** (or: ability) **and lordship** (or: ownership), **as well as every name being continually named – not only within this age, but also within the impending one** (the one being presently about to come) –

Now apply both interpretations of vs. 20 to this verse: both are the new reality of the new age. Take a moment to consider the semantic range of **primacy** – they all apply – but keep in mind that this is an

apocalyptic image of this new age, but which also transcends all the ages yet to come. Our word, here, is the genitive form of *archē* – primary meaning: beginning; origin. The secondary meanings refer to rulers, principalities (kingdoms run by princes), or simply, governments. A more extended meaning: controlling effect.

Indeed Jesus was raised up to be above all these, for with His enthronement He is King of kings and Lord of lords (*cf* Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

“In the sight and presence of God – the One continuously bringing forth all things as living creatures (the One habitually or

repeatedly generating all things
alive, keeping The Whole alive)
.... **keep watch on, so as to
guard and preserve, the
spotless, not-to-be-laid-hold-of-
for-blame implanted goal until
the shining upon from (or: the
display in clear light of) our
Lord, Jesus Christ which, in its
own fitting situations**
(appropriate seasons; appointed
occasions; fertile moments), **will
proceed to exhibit and point out
The Happy and Only Able One**
(only Powerful One; alone Potent
One): **The King of those reigning
as kings, and Lord (Master;**

Owner) of those ruling as lords”
(1Tim. 6:13-15).

In this letter to Timothy, Paul saw the “fertile moment” as being in the future, when the **exhibition** and **pointing out** would occur (perhaps, historically now, the events of AD 70). But the actuality of Christ’s enthronement was in the historical past when Paul penned these words. It was only “the shining forth – the display in clear light” that was yet to take place in Paul’s and Timothy’s future. Yet here in Eph. Paul is speaking of history, regarding Jesus, but also about the existential realities of His being raised up within us, over:

a) our being “number 1”

- b) our rights and privileges
- c) our power and abilities
- d) our ownerships and performing
“as lords” over other folks
- e) our “name” and reputation

This all began with Christ's resurrection, and it continues on into the ages (Heb. 13:8). The resurrected Jesus said in Mat. 28:18,

“All authority (or: Every right and privilege from out of Being) **is** (or: was at once) **given to Me within heaven and upon the earth** (or: in sky and atmosphere, as well as on land)!”

In Phil. 2:9-11, Paul informs us,

“For this reason, God also lifts

Him up above (or: highly exalted Him; elevates Him over) **and by grace gives to Him** (or: joyously favors on Him) **the Name – the one over and above every name! – to the end that within The Name: Jesus!** (or: in union with the name of Yahshua; in the midst of the Name belonging to [Yahweh-the-Savior]), **every knee** (= person) – **of the folks upon the heaven** (of those belonging to the super-heaven, or [situated] upon the atmosphere) **and of the people existing upon the earth and of the folks dwelling down under the ground**

(or: on the level of or pertaining to subterranean ones; [comment: note the ancient science of the day – a three-tiered universe]) – **may bend** (or: would bow) **in worship, prayer or allegiance, and every tongue** (= person) **may speak out the same thing** (should and would openly agree, confess, avow and acclaim) **that Jesus Christ [is] Lord** (Master; Owner) – **[leading] into [the] glory of Father God** (or: unto Father God's good reputation; [progressing] into a manifestation which calls forth praise unto God [the] Father)!”

Schnackenburg points out that there are only four terms listed here, above which the risen Christ has been enthroned: primacy, authority, power and lordship. Jerome has also observed this, “Now we must ask where the apostle found these four names...” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 124). Many other terms could have been employed (note the absence of such specific terms as satan, demon, agent/messenger, kingdom – all of which are traditionally considered to be represented by the four terms used here). Paul mentions two of these four in the discourse of Rom. 8:35-39. Schnackenburg informs us that,

“The number four may in general

express completeness, but is also frequently used for the expanse of the earth or of heaven ('four corners of the earth,' four points of the compass) and is consequently a kind of 'cosmic' symbolic number for the extent as well as for the limitedness of the created world" (ibid p 78).

We see this number in apocalyptic literature: 4 living beings each having 4 wings and 4 faces, in Ezk. 1:5-8 (seen again in Rev. 4; the number 4 is seen numerous times in Ezk.); 4 chariots with horses of 4 different colors in Zech. 6:1 ff (which corresponds to the 4 horses in Rev. 6); the 4 agents at the 4 corners

of the land, holding the 4 winds, in Rev. 7:1; 4 horns of the altar and 4 agents, in 9:13-14; then the 4 quarters of the land, in 20:8, and the foursquare design of the New Jerusalem, in 21:16. In the book of Daniel we encounter a period of history described by 4 kinds of material of which a “great statue” (2:31) is composed. These different metals were interpreted as representing 4 historical kingdoms, the first of which was the one in Daniel's day. Then in Dan. 7 we read of 4 great beasts of prey (figurative wild animals; vss. 3-7) and in vs. 17 it is explained that these “great beasts” are “four kings which shall arise out of the earth.” The evidence points to the

number four being associated with things of the land, or earth (depending upon the context), and its atmosphere. We might well conclude that the “spiritual” significance of these figures may be applying to human governments and the flesh-oriented humans that rule and compose them. The apocalyptic use of these four terms derive from human, earthly systems or arrangements that were used to control or enslave people, or – as in Rev. – employed in association with judging these systems, or as simply signifying the “worldwide extensiveness” of the context.

The inclusiveness in the phrase “**every name**” expands upon the symbolism of

the number four.

“The ‘name’ signifies for the Bible and all the ancient world (*cf* the Magic Papyri) the power to dispose; in it are gathered being and power, and from it proceed effect and influence”

(Schnackenburg, *ibid*).

Some observations from Ray Prinzing seem appropriate to this verse, from his book of daily devotionals, *Daily Overcoming* – for August 9, “God Rules and Overrules,” he writes:

“If this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be

found even to fight against God.’ (Acts 5:38-39)

“If in the heart of man there is some evil device and plan which God does not purpose to ultimately use and work into good, then He restrains it from happening, and man becomes frustrated because his plans have failed again. Why spend a lifetime fighting against God, when in the end it will be man, and not God, that is defeated? But, if we align ourselves willingly and joyfully with His will, then we are one with the power that never faileth.

‘The Lord breaks the

*plans of the pagans,
And frustrates mere
human designs; -
But the plans of the Lord
last for ever,
The designs of His heart
for all times'* (Psalm
33:10-11, Ferrar Fenton).

*'For the ways of a man are
before the eyes of the Lord, and
He pondereth all His goings.'*
(Prov. 5:21). And that in the
mouth of two witnesses a thing
might be confirmed, we add
Hebrews 4:13, *'all things are
naked and opened unto the eyes
of Him with whom we have to*

do.'

“There are no ‘cover-ups’ that He cannot see through. No masquerades that He cannot discern the real state underneath. It is all naked before Him.

Darkness and light are both alike unto Him. *‘A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure’*

(Prov. 16:9). How many times have we planned it all out in our mind, only to discover when it is time to carry out those plans, the whole course of direction has been changed? God rules and overrules, and thus *‘the steps of a*

man are ordered by the Lord.’
(Ps. 37:23). *‘The lot is cast into
the lap, but the decision is
wholly of the Lord – even the
events that seem accidental are
really ordered by Him’* (Prov.
16:33).” [end quote]

As we see from these OT and NT quotes, God’s sovereignty and His rule over the affairs of humans was an accepted concept within the ancient Jewish culture. In his Homily on Eph., Chrysostom concluded, “Where the head is, there is the body also” (*ACCoS*, *ibid* p 126).

**22. and then placed and aligned all
people in humbleness under His feet**

[Ps. 8:6b; LXX]

(or: and arranges everyone in a supportive position by His feet; or: then by the feet – which are Him – He subjects all things), **and yet gives** (or: gave) **Him, [as] a Head** (or:

Source; origin and beginning of a series; or: extreme and top part) **over all humanity and all things, for the called-out community** (or: and as a Head over all humanity, gave Him to the summoned and gathered assembly; or: and then by the called-forth congregation He gives Him [to be the] Source over [the situation] of, and for, all humanity),
Again Paul uses the aorist tense in the

first clause: a historical fact; an existential reality in the lives of people, each in their own class (1 Cor. 15:23a). This is also the case for the next verb, **gives/gave**. The anthropomorphisms of “feet” and “head” are typical of apocalyptic metaphors.

The word “all” in both the first and last clauses can refer to both humans and things (as the expanded parenthetical rendering demonstrates). The first verb is a compound of the verb “to place aligned or arranged” with the preposition *hupo-* (under; below) prefixed to it. The combination yields two senses:

a) a humbled placement or

alignment/arrangement; subjection

b) an arrangement in order to give support.

God's plan of unification involves both. Pondering the semantic range of the substantive "**Head**," we can observe layers of interpretation of Paul's words here. When enthroned He became the governmental Head; when resurrected He became the Head of the called-out (5:18, below) and of the body (4:15-16, below; Col. 1:18). As with the head of a river, He is the Source, the origin and the beginning of all things (Jn. 1:3). He is also "the Beginning of a series," or as Rom. 8:29 instructs us, "He is the Firstborn among many brothers." In the

parenthetical expansion, where the term “all” is also a masculine form, renderings can have these options:

- a) gave Him [as] a Head over all things, for the called-out community
- b) and as a Head over all humanity, gave Him to the summoned and gathered assembly
- c) and then, by the called-forth congregation He gives Him [to be the] Source over [the situation] of, and for, all humanity.

Also consider in these options the potential renderings of *ekklēsia* in the dative: “for, to or by the summoned, called-forth congregation.” He is a Head

for us; He is “the” Head to us; and God gives Him through and “by” us as we present Him to the world as the “Source over [the situation] of, and for, all humanity.”

Paul elsewhere instructs us further in regard to Christ (giving us further foundation for what Paul will say in vs. 23, below):

“because within Him all the effect of the fullness of the Deity (the result of the filling from the Godship and feminine aspect of the Divine Nature) is repeatedly corporeally (or: bodily, as a whole; embodied; as a body) settling down and

progressively taking up permanent residence (or: is continuously dwelling in person)” (Col. 2:9).

In Col. 2:19 we are informed concerning,

“getting strength from (or: apprehending and becoming strong by) **the Head** (or: the Source), **from out of Whom all the body** (or: the entire body) – **being constantly fully furnished and supplied to excess with funds and nourishment, and progressively joined cohesively** (welded together; knitted and compacted together; united and

made to go together as in mounting
for copulation) **through the
instrumentality of the joints**
(connections; junctures;
fastenings) **and links** (things
bound together, as by ligaments) –
**goes on growing and increasing
God's growth**

(or: the growth of God; the
growth having its source in
God; the growth pertaining
to God; the growth and
increase which is God; or:
the growth from God).”

Verses 20-22 have just described a
whole new unified, ordered arrangement
-- a whole new world; a new creation.

This exists right now, in the realm of His Spirit (the atmospheres).

23. which [community] is His body, the result of the filling from, and which is, the One Who is constantly filling all things within all humanity (or: humans)

(or: which continues existing being His body: the resultant fullness, entire content and full measure of Him [Who is] progressively making full and completing all things in union with all things, as well as constantly filling the whole, in – and in union with – all people).

The called-out community, the summoned and gathered assembly, is

(existentially exists being) **His body**, and it became His body because of “the result of the filling” with Deity (Col. 2:9, above) – the filling from Christ’s Godship, including the feminine aspects (the term Deity/Godship is in the feminine form) “of the Divine Nature.” This apocalyptic statement calls us to deep contemplation of this Truth. As an organic metaphor (Grassi concurs, stating that Paul “considers them as an organic unity” – ibid p 344), which is clearly correlated to the pictures given in the previous verse: “**His feet**” and Him as the “**Head**,” we can ponder the fact of our being members of a living Organism (pictured to John as 4 “living

beings” of multiple facets within the midst of and round about the throne/ark in the tabernacle/Israel-encampment – 4 being the 4-directional groupings of the 12 tribes – scene of Rev. 4:6). The entire organism is the corporate Christ (Anointed One), with Jesus as the Head. Hold in mind the apocalyptic statement concerning US being seated within the midst of the throne (2:5-6, below). The “heavens” or as commonly rendered, “heavenly places,” refer to the dwelling place of God (first a Tent, set in the midst of the 4 groups of Israel’s encampment design [*cf* Nu. 1:53-2:32]; next a Temple within Jerusalem) within the midst of His people, located here on

earth, affecting our “atmosphere.” But what does the second clause signify? We are “**the result of the filling from, and which is, the One Who is constantly filling all things within all humanity.**” He has filled us with Himself, and so now we are His BODY. He lives in us – we are now His home – and so we are called His Temple (2:21, below, where it speaks of us “**GROWING** [an organic term] **into a set-apart temple**”; cf 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16) – a term that signifies the “home” of a deity.

The latter part of this clause informs us that He remains active in the project of filling folks: He is “**constantly filling all**

things within all humanity.” This is as inclusive a clause as any Greek statement can be. The KJV, NASB and NRSV (for examples) normally render the last phrase, “all in all” – which is correct, but it obscures the fact of the word “all” being in the plural, in both cases, as well as the fact that the second “all” is also a masculine (as well as neuter) form and thus can be rendered “**all humanity** (or, humans).” But He is also filling “all things” (or: “the whole”) with Himself. As He continues creating containers (people; animals; the expanding universe) He simultaneously fills them with Himself, and so wherever we may investigate or explore (the

heavens, the earth, the grave – Ps. 139:7-13), we find Him.

Let us consider the parenthetical alternate and expanded rendering:

“which continues existing being His body: the resultant fullness, entire content and full measure of Him [Who is] progressively making full and completing all things in union with all things, as well as constantly filling the whole, in – and in union with – all people.”

Here we get a more complete picture from the additional semantic aspects of the terms which he used. The participle is in the present tense, so we can see

either continuous or progressive action being indicated, and the semantic range of meaning includes the idea of “completing” as well as “filling in order to make something full.” Another rendering of *ta panta* is “the whole” – i.e., all of the created universe. We again see the preposition *en* in the last phrase, which indicates either location, or union – both of which were common themes of this chapter. Schnackenburg gives a good discussion of this verse (ibid p 80-84), also presenting the Gnostic, the Hellenistic Jewish and the Stoic perceptions of *plērōma* (here rendered: **the result of the filling**; resultant fullness; entire content; full measure).

He concludes regarding this term, "... in its thinking, the conception arises that Christ as ruler penetrates every part of the universe... and at the same time finds in the Church his 'fullness', the beneficent sphere of his rule" (ibid p 83), and on this same page he cites H. Schlier as liking to "understand *en pasin* as masculine and interpret it as meaning the individual members of the Church..." (ibid n 52). Although I regard Schlier's interpretation as being too limited, I applaud his understanding this phrase as referring to people.

Witherington suggests here that, "it is just possible that Paul means that the church fills out or completes Christ as

his body” (ibid p 246). I concur, but I suggest that this, also, is too limited, and does not represent the universe-wide extent (*ta panta*) of the final phrase, nor its universal application: **within all humanity** (or: in union with all humans). On this final clause, Origen quoted Wisdom of Solomon 1:7a, “For the Spirit (Breath-effect) of the Lord has filled the inhabited earth – the world of humanity – and it continued full” (LXX, JM; quoted from Commentary on Rom., ACCoS, ibid p 124). On this same passage, Chrysostom comments,

“The fullness of the head is the body and that of the body is the head.... *The fullness* of the head,

he says, is fulfilled through the body. The body consists of all its members...” (Homily on Eph., ACCoS, ibid p 126; emphasis original).

In regard to the body, Theodoret quotes from Lev. 26:11-12 here, “He *lives in it and goes about in it*, as the voice of prophecy says” (Epistle to the Eph., ACCoS, ibid p 126). H. Schlier comments on vs. 23b, here, “In His body, which represents the pleroma, the heavenly sphere of His presence, Christ draws all things into the pleroma” (TDNT, III, WM B. Eerdmans, 1978, p 681).

Chapter 2

Paul now moves to describing the former condition and existence of his audience in terms of their relationship to god, to God's people, and to the economy of His purposes and of His plan of the ages (3:11, below).

1. And you folks [who were] continuously existing being dead ones by (or: to; with; in) the results and effects of your stumblings aside (offenses; wrong steps) and failures to hit the mark (or: mistakes; errors; times of falling short; sins; deviations)

Grassi (ibid p 345) makes a very insightful observation concerning the "striking resemblances" between this

chapter and the story which Jesus told in Lu. 15:11-32, the parable of the prodigal. In this verse, above, we see that Paul's audience had been dead (as was the younger son, Lu. 15:24, 32). And as with these folks being made alive (vs. 5, below), so also was the prodigal.

In vs. 4, below, we see **God, continuously being wealthy and rich in mercy**, and so it was with the father (Lu. 15:20) in Jesus' parable. In vs. 15, below, we observe that as the Gentiles were **once far off**, so had been the younger son in a "far off country" (Lu. 15:15). Paul's calling them **fellow-citizens** (2:19, below) corresponds to

being restored to the family with the markers of being a son (Lu. 15:22). Where vss. 14-16, below, bring together the Jew and the Gentile, we see the father in Luke calling the older brother to reconciliation with his younger brother (vss. 28-32). The figurative state of being dead, both here and in the story of the younger son in Lu. 15:11 ff, paints a picture of an absence of personal, intimate relationship and present fellowship. It is the "dying" condition of "living" outside of the "Garden" and is like what Jesus described as not "abiding in the Vine" (Jn. 15:1 ff). Paul discussed the cause of this situation in Rom. 5:12,

“as through one man (or: So it is that, even as through the act or agency of one person,) **The Sin** (or: the failure, miss of the target and deviation from the goal) **entered into the aggregate of humanity** (ordered system of religion, culture, society and government; or: world; cosmos), **and through The Sin** (failure; the mistake; the miss of the target; the deviation) **The Death [also], in this way The Death thus also passed through in all directions** (or: came through the midst causing division and duality; went throughout) **into all mankind** (or:

into the midst of humanity; or: to all people), **upon which [situation, condition, and with the consequential result that] all people sin** (or: everyone failed, missed the target, fell short of the goal; or: all make mistakes and deviate from the path).”

This was the result of God’s decision in Gen. 2:17, “on the day you eat from it, to die you shall be dying” (CVOT). In Rom. 6:2, he says, “**We, the very ones who once died by the Sin** (or: died with the Sin; die in deviation; died with reference to missing the target; died to failure; die in error)...” So we can observe in our present text that Paul is

addressing situations that pertain to all of humanity – pictured here in the terms “Israel,” i.e., the Jews, and “Gentiles,” i.e., the rest of the world.

Rudolf Bultmann points out that the word “dead” here (*nekros*) “is also used figuratively. The prodigal son was dead and then alive again (Lu. 15:24, 32).... In Col. 2:13 the whole pre-Christian existence is dead.... in Mt. 8:22...those who resist the call of Jesus are put on the same level as the dead.” He also points us to Ps. 106:28 where the “images of false gods” are called “the dead” (*TDNT*, IV, 892-3).

Paul in Rom. 8:6 gave this insight:

“For the result of the thinking

(mind-set; effect of the way of thinking; disposition; result of understanding and inclination; the minding; the opinion; the thought; the outlook) **of the flesh** (= the human condition or the System of culture and cultus; or: = outward Torah ceremony) [**is; brings**] **death, yet the result of the thinking** (mind-set; disposition; thought and way of thinking; outlook) **of the spirit** (or: the Spirit; the Breath-effect; the Attitude) [**is; brings**] **Life and Peace.**”

This shows us that "death" has to do with "thinking; mindset; way of thinking;

disposition; minding; opinion; outlook" – that upon which we focus our attention. It speaks of "living in flesh (as the mode and realm of our thought-life)" as opposed to "living in the Spirit (as the mode and realm of our thoughts)." It therefore follows that when folks are figuratively dead in their thought-life that they are unable to make rational spiritual decisions. They lack the capacity to think spiritually, or to have the mindset of the spirit. It is an ontological, existential condition as well as a relational one. In order to heal this human condition and to negate the situation of lack, God, by His Spirit, must breathe resurrection life into them

so as to infuse "spiritual life" (the Life and Mind of Christ) into them, which will in turn enable them to have **the result of the thinking of the spirit** – the mindset, way of thinking, etc., of the Spirit. And **THIS [is, or brings] Life and Peace!** We do not ask or expect a dead person to do or choose anything. A dead person can only operate in (and thus, “choose”) death (the flesh). And only a person who has been eschatologically delivered (saved; rescued; made alive) from this prison of mental/spiritual death will be free to will or to choose Life:

"Therefore, if the Son should (or: would) at some point

LIBERATE or begin to make
(or: set) you **FREE**, you folks
will progressively exist being
free ones in your very essence
and being" (Jn. 8:36),

and as we also read in Jn. 8:32,

**"you will progressively come to
KNOW the Truth** (or: Reality;
that which is unsealed, open and
without concealment) **by intimate
experience, and the Truth
(Reality) will progressively
liberate and make** (or: set) **you
free!"**

The ethnic multitudes could not, of
themselves, "choose" to be grafted into
the orchard olive tree (Rom. 11:17); they

could not "choose" to be (along with the Jews) **"One New [p46 & others: common] Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with [Christ]"** (2:15, below), nor could they simply decide to seat themselves **"together within the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens within and in union with Christ Jesus"** (2:6, below) – these both required the work of Christ through the power of God's Spirit. Saying this again, until they were birthed into the Life of Christ, they could only mind the things of the flesh – which includes the things pertaining to Torah observance. All of creation (as well as all of the Law and the Prophets)

declares the glory of God – but unless folks are given "ears to hear," they will be unable to hear these declarations; not until they are given "eyes to see" (by the Christ giving sight to the blind) will they ever be able to see His glory (which is Christ, God's Image-bearer).

In Rev. 2-3 John was given messages from the risen Christ for some called-out communities in Asia Minor, beginning with the group in Ephesus. Beginning with 2:7 we repeatedly hear, "**Let the person having an ear hear what the Spirit is repeatedly saying to, in and by** (or: the Breath-effect is continuously laying out for) **the called-out communities...**" They were expected to

have "ears to hear." In Rev.3:1, to the community in Sardis He said, "... **you have a name (= reputation) that you are living, and yet you are dead!**" He made a corporate assessment about their condition, yet in 3:4 He acknowledged, "**But still, you have a few names in Sardis which do (or: did) not stain (soil; pollute) their garments, and they will continue walking with Me in white [garments] because they are worthy ones (folks of corresponding value).**" Did this mean that the majority was not "abiding in the Vine"? Paul warned the Gentiles of Rome, "**For you see, since (or: if) God spares not (or: did not spare) the natural branches (the**

branches down from, or, in accord with, nature), **neither will He continue sparing you!**" (Rom. 11:21). The covenant communities in Asia Minor were receiving a similar message through John. A very direct and severe warning was given to some in Thyatira when the Son of God (Rev. 2:18) spoke concerning Jezebel's group, "**And I will proceed killing her children within death, and all the called-out assemblies shall know that I am the One continuously searching the kidneys and hearts, and I will continue giving to each one of you down from** (in accord to; in the sphere of; to the level of) **your [plural] actions** (deeds;

works)" (Rev. 2:21). Here, again, He was speaking of a figurative killing, and death, just as He was concerning those in Sardis. These things inform us that **"the One continuously walking about within the midst of the seven golden lampstands"** (Rev. 2:1) is both present and active within His new creation groups and individuals. He does not wait until some future time to bring corrective judgments to His people (1 Pet. 4:17) and this gives a present-time (in this life) interpretation to 1 Pet. 4:5-6,

"Such folks will continue rendering an account (or: giving back a reason) to the One readily

and continually judging

(evaluating and making a decision about) [*p*72: prepared to judge;

other MSS: constantly holding {Himself} in readiness to judge]

living folks and dead ones, for

into this [purpose], also, the

message of goodness and well-

being is (or: the good news was suddenly) brought and

announced to dead folks, to the

end that on the one hand they

may at some point be judged

(or: can be separated and decided about) – **corresponding to**

humans – in flesh

(or: according to humans in

flesh; or: = in the sphere of people with estranged selves; or: = on the level of mankind in an alienated condition that was enslaved by the System), **yet on the other hand, that they can continue living** (or: would be habitually living) **corresponding to** (down from; in line and accord with; in the sphere of) **God, in spirit** (or: by Breath-effect)."

His people included folks that were living (joined to the Vine) and those who were dead (not presently joined to the Vine; folks who were living with the

results of the thinking of the flesh). He is "readily and continually judging everyone – evaluating them and making decisions concerning them." Paul wrote to the province of Galatia,

"Do not be continually led astray (or: Stop being caused to wander and being deceived); **God is not one to be sneered at** (to have a nose turned up at; to be scorned, mocked or treated like a fool), **for "whatever a person is in the habit of sowing, this also he will reap,"** because the person **continually sowing into the flesh of himself** (= his estranged inner being), **will progressively reap**

corruption (spoil; ruin; decay)
forth from out of the flesh (= the estranged inner being);

(or: the one habitually sowing into the flesh [system], of himself will continue to reap decay from out of the flesh [system])

yet the one constantly sowing into the spirit (or: the Breath) **will be progressively reaping eonian life** (life having the characteristics of the Age [of Messiah]; or: life from the Age that lasts on through the ages) **forth from out of the spirit** (or: the Spirit; the Breath; that attitude)" (Gal. 6:7-8).

We can look back at the history of the Christian Church to observe the reality of Paul's words to Galatia (which he was writing to groups of called-out folks); we can observe the same as we review our own lives. Having been delivered from a "death mindset – a fleshly way of thinking," we can still stray from the path, and wind up "figuratively/spiritually" dead, as did the covenant community of Sardis. But as with Sardis and the other communities, there is always opportunity to change our way of thinking (Rev. 3:3) and "pass beyond the known" (Leloup). It is instructive to ponder the potential functions of the dative case in the last

compound phrase of this verse: **by** (or: **to; with; in**) **the results and effects of your stumblings aside** (offenses; wrong steps) **and failures to hit the mark** (or: mistakes; errors; times of falling short; sins; deviations). Before the coming of the Breath-effect, folks are dead by the effects, they are dead to (clueless about; unresponsive to) the effects, they are dead with (the environment of) the effects, and they are dead in (the environment and conditions of) the effects of their offenses, wrong steps, mistakes, deviations, failures, etc. This describes a state of spiritual oblivion. A state of unawareness. Jesus termed it the condition of being "lost (also

translatable as 'destroyed')" – as in Luke's parables of lost (or, destroyed) things/people. In the next verse, Paul continues his description of their former situation.

2. – within the midst of and in union with which things you once walked about (= lived your lives) **in accord** (or: in keeping; corresponding) **with** (or: as directed by) **the age of this ordered System** (or: down through this time period of the world of secular culture, religion, economy and government; or: in the sphere and to the level of this age of the aggregate of humanity), **in line with the primary directive of the right**

and privilege of the air (or:
corresponding to the Ruler out of Being
with regard to air) **from the Breath-**
effect of the One at the present time
continuously operating within the sons
of The Disobedience

(or: down under the controlling
aspect of the authority of "the
blowing" of the Spirit of the One
now progressively working
internally in union with people
having the character and qualities
of noncompliance;
or: in correlation to the chief and
leader from the privilege which
comes from the Blowing, which is
the attitude which expresses a lack

of persuasion, or of not being convinced, which repeatedly energizes at this present time; or: in keeping with the original one with regard to the right concerning the atmosphere – the attitude now habitually effecting inward action within the midst of people displaying non-conviction or a non-compliant disposition),

It is obvious that Paul is not speaking of a literal, physical death in these passages, for he is speaking about how they “**once walked about** (= lived [their] lives)” in this “dead” condition. Paul uses these terms “death” and “died” in this same sense in Rom. 5 and 6.

There was a direct correspondence between how they had lived and **“the age of this ordered System.”** Their old life had been **“in accord with and directed by”** the **age** in which they had lived (which was the “age” in the economy and plan of God which existed before the coming of the Age of the Messiah through the resurrection of Jesus Christ). It had been “in keeping with” and it “corresponded to” the “world of secular culture, religion, economy, government,” and it was lived “in the sphere and to the level of “this [current] age of the aggregate of humanity” which had not yet been existentially birthed into the midst of the

Christ (via the called-out communities, the “Jerusalem which is above” (Gal. 4:26).

The term “**age**” (the literal meaning of *aiōn*) as it is used in conjunction with “**this ordered System**” (the literal meaning of *kosmos*) is rendered here, in the NRSV and the KJV, as “course.”

This interpretation can be understood since the original concept of *aiōn* was the lifetime of a person, and thus it could refer to “the course of his life.” And an “*aiōnios* (the adjective form) position” was one that a person “held for life.”

Nyland translates the phrase, here, “the world right now.” These interpretive renderings add certain insights and

perspectives to this verse, but they obscure the term's association with the other places where Paul used it in this sermon: 1:21; 2:7 (directly below, where NRSV and KJV render its plural "ages," and Nyland renders it "the near future"); 3:9, 11, 21 and 6:12. Most of all, if *aiōn* is not rendered "age," we can miss Paul's association of their past life, which he is describing here in vss. 1-3, with the age of God's economy which had just ended – the age where they, as Gentiles, had been separated and alienated from the Community of Israel, as vss. 11-12, below, explain. The old age has passed by, in Christ, and the new age (with a new creation and a new

covenant that included all of humanity – Jews plus Gentiles) has come (2 Cor. 5:17). This new “age” equates to what Jesus called “the kingdom of God,” or, “the reign of the heavens.” One has to be born (or, resurrected) into this age in order to be alive to it, but it spiritually embodies the new arrangement of how God is now dealing with, and operating through, people.

That “dead” life and way of living had been **“in line with the primary directive of the right and privilege of the air.”** We can only understand what this compound prepositional phrase means, if we examine it in the light of the genre of apocalyptic literature and

symbolism. The Greek phrase will be here examined: *kata ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeros*.

To what do these Greek phrases refer? My first rendering of it, given in bold in the previous paragraph, presents a perspective that differs from traditional renderings. In line with this reading, the clause that follows these phrases begins with the preposition translated as an ablative (source): **from the Breath-effect of the One at the present time continuously operating within the sons of The Disobedience**. The term, “The Disobedience,” can be read as an echo from Eden, in the Genesis account of humanity’s disobedience.

Therefore, I capitalized **Breath-effect** and the **One**. This is a case of “translator’s interpretation.” I am indicating by the first rendering that it is God who gave the **prime directive** (*archonta*) to Adam, and it is the effect and result of His Breath in speaking the words, “on the day you eat from it, to die you shall be dying” (Gen. 2:17b; CVOT). It was that **directive** which gave mankind “**the right and privilege** (*ex-ousia*) **of the air** (the atmosphere of the lowest heaven – the air and the clouds – of the ancient Jewish world view). That directive was to be living, but at the same time dying, or as Paul says here in 2:1, above, “**continuously**

existing being dead ones.”

By expressing the definite article (**The**) before "**Disobedience**," I am suggesting that Paul is here referencing the disobedience of Adam, and thus in the phrase "**the sons of**" he has all humanity in view (as is also suggested in the first clause of the next verse, "**immersed among which folks we ALL also were once twisted up**"). Paul refers to, "**the disobedience of the one person (Adam)**" in Rom. 5:19. We find the same picture in 1 Cor. 15:22, "**For just as within Adam all humans keep on (or: everyone continues) dying...**" However, I have also offered alternate renderings of the entire last half of vs. 2 in the

parenthetical insertion that follows.

The "*hina*" phrase (**to the end that**) that begins vs. 7, below, signals the conclusion of Paul's thoughts in this section, giving God's purpose for what he has been describing and discussing from vs. 1, on.

What he has expressed in the last half of vs. 2 he restates in the last half of vs. 3:

Furthermore, we were continuously existing in essence (in natural condition; by instinct)
being children of natural impulse (natural disposition; inherent fervor and swelling passion; teeming desire; or: anger; wrath)
even as (or: as also) **the rest** (the

remaining ones) [were].

This was the human condition before the Christ event, and it existentially continues to be this way until each person has been placed in covenant relationships (rightwised; eschatologically delivered into union with Christ), with God and with people, and **"made alive** (or: in union with the Anointed One, everyone will be created with Life) – **yet each person within the effect of his or her own class or division,**" within Christ (1 Cor. 15:22b-3a; see the article, below, p 257).

God alone is the One who has **"the right and privilege of air,"** and Who effects our very life and existence here, **"He**

Himself being the One constantly giving to all people (or: all things) life and breath and all things (or: everything; the whole [universe])!" (Acts 17:25b), and, **"For you see, within the midst of and in union with Him we continuously live (or, as a subjunctive: could be constantly living), and are constantly moved about and put into motion, and continue existing (experiencing Being)"** – Acts 17:28.

Now here Paul was describing the common human situation. In our passage, above, he is giving the description of the negative condition of existence before the advent of the Christ. It was the existence of the death-sentence that was

birthed from the original Disobedience (Rom. 5:12).

I would further suggest that God continues operating within these folks, but under the new arrangement (covenant with humanity) of the new creation. He is plowing the fallow ground, burning off the briars and weeds (Heb. 6:8), reworking the clay in preparation of forming a new pot on the wheel (Jer. 18:2-4).

But let us consider the other options of 2:2b, above:

"down under the controlling aspect of the authority of 'the blowing' – of the Spirit of the One now progressively working

internally in union with people having the character and qualities of incomppliance."

The rendering, "the blowing," is the Greek *aer* (air; atmosphere) which comes from *aemi* (to blow; to breathe unconsciously; or, passively: to be wafted or carried by the wind, or beaten by the wind). The Breath-effect/Spirit is the controlling aspect of the authority of the "blowing" of His breath both into humans to give them life, and to move upon them for His purposes – be they for good or for ill. The word "internally" gives the force of the Greek *en* which is prefixed to the verb *ergeō*, to work. Of Yahweh it is said, "He is the One

Who is making the thick clouds [in the AIR] His chariot, and is going on the wings of the wind, and who is making His messengers winds..." (Ps. 104:3, 4a). And in Isa. 19:1 we are told, "Look! Yahweh [is] riding on a swift cloud..." In Ps. 148:8 it speaks of "Fire and hail, snow and fume, tempestuous wind, performing His word." It would seem that God is the Ruler and Director of the blowing wind and the air. All the burnt offerings done under the old covenant were "to fume [i.e., rise into the air] on the altar – an ascent offering it is to Yahweh; it is a fragrant odor, a fire offering to Yahweh" (Ex. 29:18). In the tabernacle and the temple, the incense

offerings ascended into the air (in Rev. 5:8 and 8:4 we are informed that the incenses that passed off fumes and smoke into the air represented the prayers of the saints). So, once again, we see that God is the controlling aspect behind the authority expressed through the “blowing” of His Spirit.

The next option is:

"in correlation to the chief and leader of the privilege which comes from blowing: the attitude which expresses a lack of persuasion, or of not being convinced, which repeatedly energizes at the present time."

For *pneumatōs* I here give "attitude," as

an attitude/spirit that controls the lives of people, and "energizes" them. Note the range of *kata*, here rendered "in correlation to." "Chief and leader" is another meaning of *archonta* (also rendered "controlling aspect," above). Here *ex-ousia* (literally: out of being) is given again as "privilege," and *aeros* is rendered as an ablative (source) instead of a subjective genitive. Recall that even "a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets" came from the court of Yahweh (1 Ki. 22:22-23). Also, we read in the first two chapters of Job that the adversary was under the control of God. We can observe there that this adversarial spirit worked through

people (1:15), lightning (“the fire of God”; 1:16), again, people (1:17) and a great wind (or: the Great Spirit; 1:19) – all of which Job attributed to “the hand of God” (2:10). But Job’s “friends” “lacked persuasion” and were “not convinced” that God was simply testing Job. They had an “attitude” that God said had caused them to speak things that were “not right” concerning Him (Job 42:7). Alas, we have all done this. But this, too, is from God – in, as Ray Prinzing used to teach, God’s “interplay of good and evil” – similar to what Jesus said in quoting Isa. 6:9-10 in Mat. 13:13-15 where we again encounter “the divine passive” (indicating that the

action has been done by God), **“the heart of this people was MADE thick and fat...”** Note the final phrase in the above optional rendering, "at the present time" – this is not their final condition, any more than Paul's former condition was his ultimate end. Behind everything is God – Who is All in all. Once He breathed Himself into Adam, He never left (except on an individual basis, when a person dies and returns into His hands – Lu. 23:46).

The last alternative of 2b is:

"in keeping with the one in first position with regard to the right concerning the atmosphere – the attitude now habitually effecting

inward action within the midst of people displaying non-conviction or a noncompliant disposition."

Rendering *archonta* as "first position" speaks to the condition of the fallen Adam "with regard to [humanity's] right, concerning the atmosphere" in this earth-life. The rest of the clause speaks for itself. This attitude is an expression of "**the thinking** (mind-set; effect of the way of thinking; disposition; result of understanding and inclination; the minding; the opinion; the thought; the outlook) **of the flesh** (= the human condition or the System of culture and cultus; or: = outward Torah ceremony)" – Rom. 8:6, above. This rendering takes

the perspective from the human predicament of the 1st Adam.

Taking all these various readings of the Greek, with their possible meanings, seems to speak primarily to the condition of estranged humanity and mankind's predicament. Paul's language is apocalyptic, but I think that he is speaking to the story of Adam, and not about a mythic spirit-being. This latter interpretation would have to be injected into the text. Schnackenburg interprets this verse in the traditional manner, but he gives reference to the Nag Hammadi Codex V/5, *The Apocalypse of Adam*, where we read,

“Then God, the Ruler [or: archon]

of the aeons and the powers divided us [or: cut us off] in wrath [or: his anger]. Then we became two aeons. And the glory [which was] in our hearts left us...”

(translated by George W. MacRae, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, James M. Robinson, Gen. Ed., Harper and Roe, 1977, p 257; brackets are Schanckenburg's rendering).

MacRae concludes that this writing “depends heavily on Jewish apocalyptic traditions; in fact the document may represent a transition stage in the development from Jewish to Gnostic apocalyptic. If this be the case, its date

may be... 1st or 2nd century C.E.” (ibid p 256). I cite this as outside evidence for the thinking of the times, that God ruled over all, and that the aeons (= the ages) referred to Adam and his offspring – at least in this Gnostic document.

Nonetheless, the picture that Paul paints, in 2:2 of our text, is that of God in relation to post-Disobedience Adam.

J. Preston Eby presents another interpretation of this section of the verse that is worthwhile considering. He first points us to the judgment pronounced upon the serpent, in Gen. 3:14b, where we read, “On your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.” It is instructive to note the

phrase “DAYS of your LIFE.” We are not dealing with some spirit being that has lived ever since the “days” of Eden; and “days” speaks of an earthly existence, with the qualifying “of your life” implying temporal existence that will have an end. Eby then insightfully point to Ps. 44:25, “For **our soul** is bowed down **to the dust: our belly** cleaveth unto the **earth**” (KJV; emphasis his). So the imagery of this psalm is one of a lowered, humbled position and sphere of existence. Eby now ties the judgment upon the serpent to our verse here in Eph. 2,

“The very fact that God states that the serpent was now to crawl

upon his belly, which obviously he had not done before, reveals that there was a *descending* from one realm to another, from a greater to a lesser, from a higher to a lower. Moving on his belly limits the sphere of the serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground. Previously he had access to loftier realms, his sphere of activity extended to higher domains – exalted realms of pure spirit expression – but he is now lowered into the dust-realm, into the world of the natural man, confined to the earthly, and restricted to action

upon and expression through THE MAN OF THE DUST.... [as] ‘THE SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE’ (Eph. 2:2, [KJV]).... When the ancient serpent was lowered into the dust realm, to crawl upon his belly and eat dust, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe.... [other than] the realm of the first Adam, the natural man, the carnal mind – the man of dust! *‘The first man is of*

the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven' (1 Cor. 15:47)" (From the Candlestick to the Throne, Book Eight, The Dragon and the Beasts, Firestarterpublications.com, 2015 p 6; emphasis original; brackets added).

This presents “the spirit” of 2b of our text, here, as being the spirit of the adversary, where from my rendering presents the text as referring to God, who continuously works everywhere, and in all – whether in judgment, leading to correction and reformation, or in blessing and life. Either way that we interpret the term Spirit/spirit in this

verse, God is behind it all, and in it all. And we must keep in mind the psalmist's declaration: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the residue of wrath shalt Thou gird upon Thee" (RV).

The next verse continues Paul's description of the same situation:

3. immersed among which folks we all also were once twisted up (or: entangled; overturned; upset) **within the cravings** (full longings; over-desires) **of our flesh** (= the estranged human nature, or the alienated self; or: = system of our works and sacrificial religion), **continually doing the will** (or: producing the intentions) **of the flesh** (= our existence while in bondage, or the

duties of religion), and of the divided thoughts and things passing through the mind. Furthermore, we were continuously existing in essence (in natural condition; by instinct) being children of natural impulse (natural disposition; inherent fervor and swelling passion; teeming desire; or: anger; wrath) even as (or: as also) the rest (the remaining ones) [were].

Notice the switch from the plural pronoun “**you folks**” in vss. 1 and 2 to the inclusive “**we**” in this verse. The reason for this should be seen as being a rhetorical device. He is wanting his listeners to think back to their former existence, so he addresses them directly,

above, but now he expresses solidarity with them, showing that even the Jews **“were once twisted up within the cravings of our flesh.”** They had all existed in a common plight. There had really been no difference between Jew and Gentile: they were **all** “entangled within over-desires of [their] estranged human nature with its ‘alienated self’ ... [which made them] **children of natural impulse** [according to their] natural disposition (etc.)” just like all humanity was. These **children** correspond to the **sons of the Disobedience**, in vs. 2, above: the human race. Verse 3 is more Asiatic rhetoric: restatement and expansion.

Paul is speaking of "**the cravings of our flesh**" and "**the will of the flesh**" and "**the divided thoughts**" of the mind. He is not referencing a cosmic spirit-being. The context is this life here, in its estranged existence. This verse explains what vs. 2, above, was describing in its apocalyptic terminology. The term, **twisted up** (etc.), really gives an accurate picture of the addicted life prior to His invasion of "eschatological deliverance" into our existence here. Paul describes the ongoing conflict between the old way of life and the new in Gal. 5:16-17, and then affirms in the next verse,

"Yet since (or: if) you folks are

continuously being led in spirit (by [the] Spirit; to [the] Spirit; with a Breath-effect), **you do not exist** (you are not) **under Law** [= Torah; = the flesh system of works]” (Gal. 5:18).

This succinctly describes the difference between the old age, and the new; the old covenant and the new. The new “way of life” is described in Gal. 5:24,

“Now those whose source and origin is Christ Jesus (or: those who belong to the Anointed Jesus) **crucified the flesh** (or: put the flesh [system] on an execution stake; or: = associate their old estranged human nature as being

put to death along with Christ Jesus), **together with the results and effects of the experiences** (emotions; feelings; sufferings; passions) **and the over-desires** (rushing passionately upon things; full-rushing emotions).”

This passage in Galatians corresponds to Mat. 16:24ff, and further explains it, in Gal. 5:25, “**we continue living in and by spirit** (or: for [the] Spirit; to Breath-effect; or: with attitude).” Paul also gave instruction for dealing with “the old” in Rom. 13:14,

“but rather, you folks must clothe yourselves with (or: enter within and put on) **the Lord,**

Jesus Christ, and stop (or: do not continue) **making forethought** (constructing provision; planning ahead; performing provident care) **into excessive desires of the flesh** (= into rushing upon emotions which pertain to the inner self or the estranged humanity; = into the setting of feelings and longings upon something of the human nature that is oriented to the System).”

Moving on, from an application of this clause to our moral or social conditions, to considering the realm of religion, the “over-desires of the system of our works and sacrificial religion” (typified by

Jesus' description of the Pharisaical "straining at a gnat") can "twist us up and overturn us" to where we are **continually doing** (or, operating out of) **the will of the flesh,**" in vs. 3, here.

John spoke of this in Jn. 1:13 concerning folks, "**who are born** (or: were given birth)... **forth from the will of flesh** (or: from the intent of a flesh [ceremony])." As I suggest in the next parenthetical expansion, **the flesh,** can be a figure for either "our existence while in bondage (i.e., slavery to our false persona)" or for "the duties of religion (i.e., slavery to the Law – *cf* Gal.4)."

The "**divided thoughts and things**

passing through the mind” (*dia-noia*) speaks of the split, disunited condition before the unification that comes through being in Christ – the change which brought us to the present condition of the new creation, to where now, **“we, ourselves, are continuously holding** (or: progressively having) **Christ's mind** (a mind which is Anointed, and which is Christ!)” (1 Cor. 2:16b). Because of this, we are empowered to be **“be progressively transformed** (transfigured; changed in form and semblance) **by the renewing** (or: in the renewal; for the making-back-up-new again) **of [our] mind”** (Rom. 12:2). The next clause describes who and what

we were: children of (i.e., a product of and having our source from) an **existence** which was **in essence** (i.e., in [our] natural condition [and] by instinct) a "**natural impulse.**" Natural impulse was our guide and driving force, instead of God's Spirit being the One who leads us (Rom. 8:14). We operated "by the instinct of our natural disposition." Our internal ancestry had been the "inherent fervor, swelling passion and teeming desire" that we had inherited from our parents, our culture, and our environments. Being disconnected from the love of God, our character (another figurative meaning and idiom of the term "child," or "son") was often that of

“anger or wrath.” We were just like **the rest** of humanity. I have in this verse rendered the broad semantic range of the term *orgē*, which means much more than just “anger” or “wrath.”

With all the ugliness and the negativity of the past age and our past life being called to mind, Pal now turns their thoughts to God and the positive results of His love.

4. But God, continuously being wealthy and rich in mercy, because of His vast (much; great in magnitude and quantity; outstretched; long-lasting; repeated) **Love**

(*agape*: the unrestricted and unambiguous drive and movement

toward reunion and acceptance which overcomes existential separation; participation in the other one; the acceptance of the other one as a person; the power of reunion with the other person as one standing on the same ultimate ground; the urge toward unambiguous, accepting reunion, in spite of the estranged, profanized and demonized state of the object – Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, pp 134-138) **in** (or: with) **which He focused love on** (or:

loves and accepts) **us** [p46 reads: had mercy on us],

Here Paul sets the stage of the new, revealing the setting of God's redemptive Act in Christ: the focusing of His **love** on **US!** But Paul first lays the foundation of God's being "**rich in mercy.**" We can hear in this an echo of Rom. 10:12,

"You see, there is no distinction or separation made by putting asunder in order to define or distinguish between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord (Owner; Master) of everyone (or: for the same One [being] Lord of all) is continuously being enriching unto (or: is constantly abundantly furnishing [Himself]

into; or, reading *ploutōn* as a gen. pl. noun: You see this very Owner of all treasures [is proceeding into the midst of) **all the folks habitually, in and for themselves, calling upon (or: summoning) Him for help and assistance.**”

In 1:7, above, and 2:7, below, it is “**the wealth of, and which is, His grace and the riches of the joy-producing act of His favor** (or: of the favor/grace which is Him);” in 1:18, above, and 3:16, below, it is “**the wealth and riches from/of the/His glory.**” In 3:8, below, it is “**riches of the Christ.**” Grace and glory are both “**the Christ.**” In Phil.

4:20, we read, **“Now in our God Father [is] the glory.”** In Rom. 2:4, we hear of, **“the riches (or: wealth) of His kind and gentle usefulness (benevolence with a sweet disposition; kindness), [His] delaying forbearance (the tolerant holding-back) and [His] patient longsuffering,”** and in Rom. 11:33 it is, **“the depth of [the] riches (wealth; resources) and wisdom and intimate, experiential knowledge and insight of God (or: from God)!”** In Col. 2:2, Paul refers to it as,

“the riches (or: wealth) pertaining to the state of having been brought to fullness (or: of the full assurance and conviction)

from the comprehension (or: which is the joint-flow of discernment; of the junction of that which is sent together for a person to be able to catch on and understand) [leading] into full, accurate, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight of God's Secret: Christ.”

All of this is, “**because of His vast Love.**” In the text of this verse I have given Paul Tillich’s definitions of *agapē*, so I don’t need to expand on it here, but those expanded meanings should be carefully pondered. As in 1:4 and 1:15, above, Paul also speaks of **love** in the following verses:

a) being folks having been rooted (or: having taken root) and now established and placed on a foundation within the midst of and in union with Love (or: having been grounded and rendered firm, centered in love and unambiguous acceptance) – (3:17)

b) to know – and gain insight by intimate experience – the love of, from, and which is, Christ (3:19)

c) continuously holding one another up (or: bearing with each other with tolerance) within the sphere of, and in union with,

love (unqualified acceptance and the urge toward union) – (4:2)

d) continuously being real and true (living in accord with reality and the facts; holding to, speaking, pursuing and walking in Truth; truthing it) **within, and in union with, love** (4:15)

e) continually making (or: is for itself progressively producing and forming) **the growth and increase of the Body, [focused on and leading] into house-construction** (or: unto building [up] and edification) **of itself within the midst of, and in union with, love** (4:16)

f) **keep on walking** (walking around; = progressively living and maintaining your life) **within, and in union with, Love, according as the Christ also loves** (or: to the same level and commensurately as the Anointed One loved, accepted and achieved reunion with) **you** (5:2)

g) **Peace and harmony** [= shalom] **to** (or: [are] with, among and by) **the brothers** (= family or fellow believers; [p46 reads: the set-apart folks]), **and love** (unrestricted acceptance) – (6:23).

He used the finite verb or a participle of

“love” in the following verses: 1:6; 2:4; 5:2, 25, 28, 33; 6:24.

We should conclude that *agapē* is an important ingredient of our relationships with God and with people. Paul’s insights on Love in 1 Cor. 13, Jesus’ statements about love in Jn. 15:13, e. g., and the epistle of 1 John, to mentions a few places, should be brought into our consideration as we read Paul in this sermon. This all comes from His vast Love, in which, “**He focused love on** (or: loves and accepts) **us.**” *cf* 1 Jn. 4:19 The “**us**” here should be interpreted corporately concerning both Jew and Gentile – in fact, including all humanity, as we read in Jn 3:16a,

“For thus God loves the aggregate of humanity (the universe; the ordered arrangement; the organized system [of life and society]; the world), so that He gives His uniquely-born [with other MSS: the only-begotten] Son,

(or, reading wste as an adverb: You see, in this manner God loves the sum total of created beings as being the Son: He gives the Only-begotten One; or: reading wV te: For you see, [it is] in this way [that] God loves the aggregate of humanity – even as it were His Son: He gives the uniquely-born

One)...”

This verse also calls to mind Paul's words in Rom. 5:5,

"God's love (the urge toward reunion and the unambiguous, uniting acceptance from God) has been poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts, permeating the core of our being, through the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit; Sacred Attitude) being given to us (in us; for us)."

The context of the action of this pouring out of His love within our hearts is specifically designated in the next verse (Rom. 5:6), in the historical Christ

Event:

"For during our yet existing [as] weak folks and continuing in being without strength (or: [B reads: Since in fact] when we were infirm, and thus helpless), Christ, still corresponding to and in accord with [the] appointed season (or: down from a *kairos*; in the sphere of and down into the level of a fitting situation; in line with a fertile moment), died for the sake of the ungodly and irreverent (or: died over [the situation of] and on behalf of those without awe of God)."

That event began the new age with its

new unilateral arrangement (covenant). Thank God that He caused the old age and the old covenant/arrangement to pass away (2 Cor. 5:17). Next, Paul restates the universal solidarity of the previously “dead ones,” and then contrasts it to the Good News:

5. even us, being continuously dead ones by (or: in; to; with) the results and effects of stumblings aside (wrong steps; offences)

[p46 reads: ... in (to; by) the bodies; other MSS: by the failure(s) to hit the mark (sin/sins); B reads: within the stumblings aside and the cravings (lusts)], **He made alive together**

by (or: joins us in common life **with**, for and in; [p46, B: within; in union with])
the Christ – by (with; in) the Grace and joyous favor you continually exist, being folks having been delivered (rescued and saved, so that you are now safe; made whole)! –

In vss. 4-5 we see that the remedy is not "killing the mythic primeval monster," as in paganism, but God taking action by **“focusing [His] love on us,”** simply **“accepting us,”** (vs. 4, above) and giving us life and salvation, as we read in Rom. 5:6-8. Then in vs. 6, below, Paul returns to the Gospel message: the death and resurrection of Christ, but here pointing out that we are jointly included in the

Christ event.

In the first clause here in vs. 5, Paul references 2:1 and then in the second clause he reminds them of God's remedy for their dead condition: resurrection – the eschatological deliverance when **“He made [US] alive TOGETHER.”**

Note the corporate and temporal (reading the aorist as a simple past tense) significance of these words! This was done **by the Christ**. Said another way, “He joins [aorist tense] us in common life **with** the Messiah.” What is obviously absent here is any mention of keeping the Law, or, in fact, of our doing anything or having any part in our being made alive **“with the Christ.”** It was

God's action of raising Jesus from the dead that concurrently **made [us] alive together with Him**. The gospel message is simply informing people of this fact, to wake them up and make them aware of what God has already done to them by raising Jesus from the dead. All humanity was raised and made alive with and by the Christ. Let that sink in and contemplate what Paul has said here.

Martin (ibid p 1110) points out two passages in Paul that shed light on "being made alive." The first is a contrast, Gal. 3:21b,

“For if a law (or: [the] Law) were given which continued

having power or being able at any point to make alive (to construct or create living folks; to engender living ones; to impart life), **really, the eschatological deliverance of fairness and equity resulting in righted relationships** (the liberating and rightwising qualities of justice, freedom from guilt, and life as it ought to be within the Way pointed out; or: = new covenant inclusion) **was likely being from out of the midst of [the] Law.”**

The other is 2 Cor.3:6,

“Who also adequately qualifies us (or: made us fit, competent and

sufficient) [to be] **attending servants and dispensers of an arrangement that is new in quality** (or: pertaining to a new kind of covenant that has a different character and is fresh and effective)... **of a Breath-effect** (or: pertaining to the result of [the] Spirit; having its source in and being the effect of spirit and attitude)... [for] **the Spirit** (or: the spirit; the breath-effect; the Attitude) **continuously gives life** (or: repeatedly makes alive; progressively forms life; habitually creates life)!”

Then, in a third clause that begins with a

dative phrase, he states the present and lasting condition of our new existence: **by the Grace and joyous favor you continually exist, being folks having been delivered** (rescued and saved, so that you are now safe; made whole)! The Greek construction is with the present tense of the verb “to be; to exist” followed by a plural participle in the perfect tense. This participle indicates that the action was an historical event (in the past), creating a condition and a situation that has continued on (as a completed act) into present time. The expanded lexical terms, “delivered, rescued, saved so that [we] are now safe, and made whole” cover the

semantic range of *sōzō* that all easily fits the context.

Consider, also, the other functions of the *chariti*: with the Grace; in the Favor. It happened by the Grace of God, and was done with the Grace of God, and was accomplished in the sphere and environment that was the Grace of God. Here we have the cross and the resurrection (which brought us salvation and life) described as God's grace. But it did not stop with just *sōzō*:

6. and He jointly roused and raised (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us]) **together within the things situated upon** [thus, above]

the heavens

(or: in union with the full,
perfected heavenlies; or, although
neuter: among those comprising
the complete and perfected
heavenlies; among the ones
[residing] upon the atmospheres;
in union with the celestials)
**within and in union with Christ
Jesus,**

This speaks of our having been both
resurrected and ENTHRONED – with
Him, in the heavens. We are there, folks!
Grassi points out that in vss. 5 and 6,
“Three verbs are used: brought to life
together, raised together and enthroned

together. Each is prefixed by *syn*, ‘with.’ Thus the writer brings out forcibly the intimate association... with Christ” (ibid p 345). Jesus used two of these verbs (without the prefixes) together in Jn. 5:21,

“You see, just as the Father is habitually (repeatedly; constantly; presently) raising up the dead folks, and is repeatedly (continually; presently) making [them] alive, thus also, the Son is habitually (constantly; presently) making alive which ones He is presently intending (willing; purposing).”

This is a profound, existential

proclamation. This is God's habit, His practice!!

We find Paul using both of these verbs in Rom. 8:11,

“Now since the Breath-effect (or: Spirit; Attitude) of the One arousing and raising Jesus forth from out of the midst of dead folks is continuously housing Itself (making His abode; residing; making His home; by idiom: living together as husband and wife) within, and in union with, you folks, the One raising Christ Jesus forth from out of dead ones will also continue progressively giving Life to (or:

will even habitually make alive) **the mortal bodies of you folks** (or: your mortal bodies) **through the constant indwelling of His Spirit** (or: the continual in-housing of His Breath-effect; the continuous internal residing of the Attitude, which is Him,) [other MSS: because of His habitually-indwelling Spirit] **within and among you folks.”**

We also read an echo of this verse in Col. 2:13,

“And you folks – continuously being dead ones within [other MSS: by] the results and effects of falls to the side, and in (or:

by) **the uncircumcision of your flesh** (= physical bodies or national heritage; or: = estranged human nature and alienated self) – **He makes** (or: made) **alive together: you** [other MSS: us] **jointly together with Him, gracing us and granting favor to us [for; in] all the effects of the falls and stumbling to the side** (= false steps).”

These statements become hard for our modern mindsets and world views to comprehend, and so there is a tendency to put this off into some future time and some literal space. But if we read this passage as being written in the genre of

ancient apocalyptic (and thus figurative) literature, and compare it to other figurative descriptions – like the kingdom of God being within us, or our being God’s temple – we can see that this was the writer’s way of describing a spiritual reality that Grassi terms “realized eschatology” (ibid), the actualization of the new age that has been describe throughout the NT in figurative or symbolic terms and pictures. Just think of Jesus’ parables, as examples.

Cf Rom. 6:5-11. “The resurrection is again in the past and has become more spatial than temporal. Believers are now with Christ in heaven” (Murphy, ibid p

360), and as Martin observes, “the whole process is God’s doing” (ibid) as he points us to 2 Cor. 5 as another example,

18. Yet further, all these things [are] (or: the Whole [is]) forth from out of the midst of God – the One transforming us to be completely other [than we were] (or: bringing us into another place or state of being; changing us to correspond with other [perceptions and conceptions]; altering us to be conformed to another [person]; changing us from enmity to friendship; reconciling us) in Himself (or: with Himself;

by Himself; to Himself; for Himself), **through Christ, and giving to us the attending service of, and the dispensing from, the transformation [for folks] to be other [than before]** (or: the change into another [position]; the changing to correspond with other [situations; perceptions]; the alteration to be another [person]; the change from enmity to friendship; the reconciliation),

19. as that God was existing within Christ (God was and continued being in union with [the] Anointed One)

progressively and completely transforming [the] aggregate of humanity (or: world) to be other [than it is] (or: progressively bringing [the] ordered System into another level or state; repeatedly changing [the] universe to correspond with other [conditions; perceptions]; progressively altering [the] ordered arrangement of culture, religions, economy and government to be in line with another one; habitually and progressively changing [the] secular realm [of humanity] from enmity to friendship; reconciling [the] world [of mankind]) in

Himself, to Himself, for Himself and by Himself, not accounting to them (not putting to their account; not logically considering for them; not reasoning in them) **the results and effects of their falls to the side** (their trespasses and offenses), **even placing within us the Word** (the Idea; the Reason; the message) **of the corresponding transformation to otherness** (or: the full alteration; the change from enmity to friendship; the conciliation).

Here Origen said,

“What Paul is saying then is: If you believe that Christ is risen

from the dead, believe also that you too have risen with him. If you believe that he sits at the Father's right hand in heaven, believe that your place too is amid not earthly but heavenly things" (Commentary on Rom. 5:8, *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 132).

The picture painted here in vs. 6 is described more fully in Heb. 12:22-24 (see quote, under 1:3, above). Now, here, Paul draws his audience to see God's intent for all this, continuing in vs. 7, which begins with another purpose clause:

7. to the end that within the continuously oncoming ages (the indefinite time periods continually and

progressively coming upon and overtaking [us]) **He may exhibit** (display; point out; give proof of) **the continuously transcending** (being cast beyond; overshooting) **riches and wealth of His grace and favor, in useful goodness** (beneficial kindness) **[flooding] upon us, within Christ Jesus** (or: in union with [the] Anointed Jesus). Murphy (ibid p 361) rightly reads the author's use of the word **ages** as holding "apocalyptic meaning." Paul here gives a rare view into what lies before us. We, His body, will "display and point out" – to someone or to other folks! – **the continuously transcending riches and wealth of His grace and favor.** This

calls to mind Paul's apocalyptic statement in Rom. 8:

19. For the looking away and watching with the head stretched forward alertly (or: the peak expectation, premonition or intuitive opinion; or: = the concentrated and undivided focus) of the creation is constantly receiving and taking away from out of the unveiling of God's sons

(or: = the uncovering and revealing of folks who have the character and qualities of God; or: the disclosure pertaining to the sons of

God; or: the unveiling and revelation which belongs to God's sons; or, as an ablative: **the disclosure from God's sons**).

What we may have assumed to pertain only to this life would seem to speak to “the indefinite time periods [that are] continually and progressively coming upon and overtaking [us].” Although the temporal sense seems to be the central idea of the **ages**, since the concept of an “age” derives from the perception of the lifetime of a human being, this phrase, **oncoming ages**, has been by some considered to speak of people or human lifetimes (e.g., here Schnackenburg once

again points to such a use in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, and also, *The Perceptions of our Greater Power*, but he concludes its sense here to be temporal). The reference to “**the secret pertaining to that having been hidden away from the ages**” (3:9, below) could also be potentially interpreted in this manner. The ages are a part of creation (time and space) and in the Scriptures these always involve humanity – as we see in this verse. Schnackenburg mentions that the “*hina*-clause” (which begins, as I have rendered it, **to the end that**) “brings the train of thought begun in vs. 4... to its conclusion and climax” (ibid p 96).

There Paul mentions the wealth of God's mercy, and here the wealth of His grace and favor. Both of these acts (or, aspects of The Act, the Christ-event) are manifestations of His **useful goodness and kindness**, which Schnackenburg describes as "liberally dispersed philanthropic goodness" (ibid).

The picture of His "beneficial kindness" [flooding] upon us, within Christ Jesus again calls to mind Rom. 5:5b, as quoted above (and forgive my "Asiatic redundancy" in quoting it again),

“God's love (the urge toward reunion and the unambiguous, uniting acceptance from God) has been poured out in a gush and

shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts, permeating the core of our being, through the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit; Sacred Attitude) being given to us (in us; for us)."

Once again, we should note in the last phrase of vs. 7, here, the location of **us** ("within Christ Jesus") and our relationship to Christ ("in union with the Anointed Jesus") that is signified by the (pervasive) *en*-phrase that concludes this verse, above.

Next, Paul expands upon his points (note the opening conjunction, "**For you see,**" that indicates that he is building upon what he has just been saying):

8. **For you see, by (or: to; in; for; with) the grace and joyous favor you are (you continuously exist being) folks having been delivered (rescued; kept safe; saved; made whole; restored to your original state and condition) so as to now be enjoying salvation through [some MSS add: the] faithfulness (or: loyalty; trust; faith; confidence), and even this not forth from out of you folks, [it is] the gift of and from God (or: the gift which is God; or: the gift pertains to God),**

Observe that Paul has returned to direct address here: “**you are folks...**” He has taken his listeners back from the future ages, and now focuses their attention on

their present circumstance that have resulted from God's **grace and joyous favor**. This calls to mind Rom. 3:24b, **“freely (as a gift; gratuitously) by His grace (or: in His joyous favor; with His grace; to His favor) through means of the process of a release-from-an-enslaved-condition and a liberating-away-from-imprisonment, which is resident within Christ Jesus (or: by the setting-free which is centered in [the] Anointed Jesus; or: through the redemption that is union with Jesus [the] Messiah).”**

Here, once more, we have a

prepositional phrase in the dative case, but with no preposition expressed in the text. So, in this common situation, we look to the case of the articulated noun (*tē* chariti – “the” grace), which is a reference to the Christ-event, for the functions of this case to supply the preposition(s) that is (are) thus indicated. The instrumental function (**by**) is an obvious choice, but the other functions of the dative (seen in the parenthetical expansion: to; in; for; with) also fit the topic and the context. We can see a similar situation in Rom. 8:24,

“For in the expectation and with hope we are suddenly made whole and healthy

(or: You see, by the expectation we are delivered and saved; or: For we were at one point rescued to expectation; or: To be sure, we were kept safe for this expectation)!”

A reading, here, of vs.8, which gives each of these prepositions will more vividly color in the picture that Paul has painted: Grace is our destiny (to grace); Grace is our sphere of existence (in grace); Grace is our purpose (for grace); Grace and favor accompany us (with grace).

Next we encounter a perfect, passive (here indicating Divine action upon us)

participle, **having been delivered**, which specifies an action completed in the past, but which continues as a completed action, having effect, influence or existential reality on into the future (our present state of being), which I have indicated by expanding this clause: **so as to now be enjoying salvation**. This is our current and continuing state of being: we were rescued and are now kept safe; we were made whole and have been restore to our original state and condition (we are once more in the Garden – a figure of the Temple, which we are).

This all happened “**through the faithfulness**.” I have chosen this as the

first rendering of *pisteōs* because of its immediate association with the action of God that came by and in Grace. But it all happened through the **faithfulness** of Jesus in doing the will of God (Mat. 26:39) in His work on the cross. The rendering “loyalty” implies the same thing, as do “trust, faith and confidence.” He had the same faith to make Him loyal that Abraham was given, who **“By faith, in trust and with confidence... was logically reasoning and considering (reckoning; figuring; counting on) that God has power and is able to repeatedly arouse even out from among dead folks”** (Heb. 11:18-19). Through the Word of the message that

was imparted into us, the indwelling Spirit (recall that His words are Spirit and Life – Jn. 6:63) brings faith, trust, conviction and loyalty into us, because **“The Word [is] full of faith”** (1 Tim. 4:9). So we now existentially have His deliverance actualized in us **through** the medium and existence of the faith and trust that are inherent in the proclamation of the Good News. The Seed contains the Life, and it is a life of faith, trust, conviction, faithfulness and loyalty. Christ’s faithfulness is in the life of Christ that is injected into us – and we are resurrected from death into life. None of this is **forth from out of you folks** [or, us]. Note the emphatic use of

kai in the phrase that immediately follows **faithfulness**, faith, (etc.): **and even this**. Not even the faith is from out of us: **[it is] the gift of and from God** (or: the gift which is God; or: the gift pertaining to God). Each rendering of this genitive (of), ablative (from) and appositional (which is) phrase loudly proclaims that our salvation is totally and completely the work of God – and in fact it “pertains to God” (it is His plan, His program, His life, His journey – or Path). We simply participate in Him and in what He is doing. We read in 3:16b-17, below,

“for the interior person (or: by means of the Spirit, which is Him,

[proceeding] into the midst of the humanity within,) **to inhabit** (dwell down in; take up permanent abode in) **the Christ** (or: to house the Anointed One; or: to make a house in the sphere of the Anointing), **through the faith and by means of the trust within your hearts, being folks having been rooted** (or: having taken root) **and now established and placed on a foundation within the midst of and in union with Love.**”

Here Chrysostom says, “So even the act of faith is not self-initiated. It is, he says, *the gift of God*” (Homily on Eph. 2:8,

ACCoS, *ibid* p 134).

In a personal email, Winslow Parker has shared an insightful understanding on the concept of grace:

“‘Grace is the unmerited favor of God,’ intoned the theology professor.

‘What does that mean?’ I thought to myself, the drone of flies trapped behind transparent but impenetrable glass competing with that of the dry lecture. ‘Let’s see, a favor. Like when someone shares their candy bar with me? Like when someone offers to come help me with my homework? A server says, “it’s on

the house”?”

“Grace puzzled me, but it wasn’t a high-priority puzzle for most of my life until, one day, it popped into my world. **‘You believe in Christ,’** said a small voice, silent but heard. **‘I do? Didn’t know I ever didn’t believe in Christ.’** No further enlightenment came. But things began to change: new actions, discarding of old ones without thought, without effort. Then I stumbled onto Ephesians, the first serious study of scripture since days of theology. It has remained my pivot point, my fulcrum for the last 20 years.

“Revisiting the first couple of chapters, recently, I found grace mentioned five times in the first two chapters, perhaps the most concentrated use of the word in all scripture:

1:5 to the praise of **His glorious grace...**

1:6 in harmony with **the riches of His grace**

2:5: it is **by grace you have been saved**

2:7 in order that He might show **the incomprehensible riches of His grace**

2:8 for it is **by grace you**

have been saved.

“In each case, the word ‘grace’ is referring back to something done, by God, to, for or in us, without our request or participation:

1:4 chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless

1:5 predestined us to the adoption of sons

2:4 while we were still dead in sins, He made us alive

2:6 raised us up And Seated us in the heavenly realms in Christ

2:8 saved us.

“In each and every case, without our awareness, sometimes before we were even born, while we were still dead, He does something: considers us holy and blameless; adopts us as sons; makes us alive; raises us up and seats us in heaven; saves us.

“So now my definition of Grace is: **The unknown, unmerited, unattainable, unfathomable, incomprehensible, unwanted, action of God in restoring us to relationship with Himself.** But even that dense sentence is purely dry theological words until and unless the Spirit speaks it to our

heart.”

9. not out of works (or: not forth from the midst of actions or deeds done; = not self-produced; = not from the Law or the old covenant), **to the end that no one could boast,**

Rom. 9:16 echoes this same idea:

“Consequently, then, [it is] not of or from the one constantly exercising [his] will (or: [it does] not pertain or belong to habitually intending or designing), **nor of the one constantly rushing forward** (or: nor does it pertain or belong to the one continuously running or habitually racing), **but rather of, from, pertaining to and**

belonging to God, the One constantly being merciful (or: but from God's habitually and continuously relieving from distress and misery; or: but to the contrary, [it is] from the One repeatedly dispensing mercy, which is God)."

The two paraphrases in the parenthetical expansion suggest the two areas of **"work"** to which Paul may be referring here. Witherington suggests that in this phrase Paul "refers to human efforts, not works of the Law" (ibid p 256). The contrast implicit in this first phrase is set against what was just said in the previous phrase, that it is, **"the gift of**

and from God.” That Paul does not specify “what works,” here, seems to suggest this his thought extends to include “all works,” whether they be works of the Law, or any self-righteous performance, or even humanitarian works, where a person could attach his or her ego to it. We are all the recipients of God’s grace and mercy, as stated in Rom. 11:32, **“to the end that He could (or: would; should) mercy all mankind (may make everyone, the all, recipients of mercy)!”** Consider Rom. 3:21-27 which ends with Paul saying,

“So then where [is] the loud-spoken boasting? It is shut out (or: was excluded). Through

what kind of law, custom or teaching? Of works (or: The one concerned with, composed of and pertaining to acts; The one whose source and involvement is deeds and actions)? **No!** (or: By no means!) **But rather through Faith's law and principle**

(or: To the contrary, by means of a principle of trust and loyalty, manifested in faithfulness and coming from confident reliance; = a law and custom which was displayed in the confident loyalty of Christ in His act of solidarity with the human

condition)!” (vs. 27) *cf* also
Rom. 4:2; 1 Cor. 4:7;

But we should not presume from this that Paul was characterizing Judaism as a “works religion.” In 1 Cor. 1:31 Paul quotes Jer. 9:23,

**“The one constantly boasting:
let him habitually boast and
constantly take pride in [the]
Lord [= Yahweh].”** *cf* 2 Cor.
10:17

Trust in, and boasting upon, God was a tradition taught throughout the OT. And in 1 Cor. 1:29, Paul says emphatically, **“so that no flesh [nature, government or religious system] – [including, or at] all – could boast in God's sight or**

presence (or: before God).” And we read in Gal. 6:14, “**Now may it not happen to me** (or: in me) **to take up the practice of boasting, except within the cross** (the execution stake/pole) **of our Lord, Jesus Christ.**” This fairly well covers everything, and Paul puts it well in Phil. 3:3,

“For you see, we ourselves are (exist being) **The Circumcision: the people** (or: those) **continuously rendering sacred service in a spirit of God** (or: by God's Breath-effect; to God's Spirit; with God's breath; [some MSS: service to God in spirit; *p46* omits "God," so simply:

serving in spirit]) **and constantly making our boast** (being loud-tongued, vaunting and exulting) **within, and in union with, Christ Jesus; even folks** (or: those) **being people having been persuaded and thus continuing to put no confidence within flesh**

(= having no reliance upon what is physical: e.g., religious works or natural heritage; or: the estranged human nature; [comment: this could be a reference to animal sacrifices]).”

Schnackenburg suggest that here, in vs. 9, Paul is speaking of “arrogance”

toward other folks (ibid p 98). This would especially speak to an honor/shame society, and for us, today, it would admonish against an “us-and-them” attitude (where “us” is always above and better than “them”).

10. for the fact is, we are (continually exist being) **the effect of what He did** (or: His creation; the thing He has constructed; the result of His work; His achievement; His opus; the effect of His Deed): **people being founded from a state of disorder and wildness** (being framed, built, settled and created; being changed from chaos to order), **within and in union with Christ Jesus;** **[founded and built] upon good works**

(virtuous actions; excellent deeds)
which God made ready (prepared; or:
prepares) **beforehand, to the end that
we may, could, should and would walk
about** (= live our lives) **centered within
and in union with them.**

So following the universal statement of
vs. 9, he returns to the inclusive “we,”
and he reinforces the instruction about
our condition and situation being the
work of God in vss. 4-8, above, with an
affirmation of what and who **we** now are
(our new existence and “being” in the
new creation). We continuously exist
being the effect of what He did in
creating the Second Humanity (and the
eschatos Adam) that “[**is made**] **out of**

heaven” (1 Cor. 15:45-48). **“We are... people being founded from a state of disorder and wildness** (being framed, built, settled and created; being changed from chaos to order).” We were first **“sown** [when ejected from the Garden] **a body having the qualities and characteristics of a soul** (a soulish body; or: = a body animated by soul; or: = a natural entity),” but now have been **“awakened and raised up a spiritual body** (a body having the qualities and characteristics of the Breath-effect; or: = a spiritual entity)” (1 Cor. 15:44).

We are God’s opus – His great achievement – the result of **HIS** work, His (new) creation, the [building] that

He has constructed, the **effect** (the *-ma* ending of *poiēma*) of His Deed (the Christ-event). This imagery reaches back to Gen. 1-2, and to Israel's Exodus story (especially His making of Israel into a people, a nation, and then later to His bringing them out of the wilderness into their inheritance and then settling them). This characterization especially applied to the ethnic multitudes of Paul's day, but in using the first person plural, **we**, he is including all humanity. Again, in contrast to any of this being from human works (9a, above), it is God's singular (unified) "work." All of this happened, and now exists, **within and in union with Christ Jesus** (the recurring

theme of this sermon). Theodore of Mopsuestia observes,

“He is speaking not of the first but of the second creation, wherein we are re-created by the resurrection” (Epistle to the Ephesians, *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 135).

I supplied the ellipsis, [**founded and built**], based upon the aorist passive participle whose semantic range includes “being founded [as a community]” and “being framed and built [as a house or temple].” The foundation (as we see in 1 Cor. 3:11) is Christ, but we are informed by Jesus Himself,

“My Father is continuously

working and keeps on being in action until the present moment (or: up to right now); I, Myself, also am continually working (or: and so I Myself continue active, regularly performing in [His] trade)” (Jn. 5:17).

Furthermore, He told His apprentices, **“the works (actions; deeds) which I Myself am constantly doing (habitually performing; progressively making, constructing, creating, forming) that one also will proceed doing (performing; making; creating), and he will progressively be doing greater than these...” (Jn.**

14:12).

These point to the works **upon** which the called-out communities are founded.

Schnackenburg reminds us that **upon** followed by the dative case (the form of the noun phrase, “good works”)

“denotes the purpose or goal” (ibid p 99) – and thus virtuous actions (etc.) are the goal for which we have been created and founded as the New Jerusalem. The folks of the Christ-communities are not just philosophical societies, but are living organisms within which each member has a function – both on the physical plane (e.g., Mat. 25:35-36) and the spiritual plane (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:5-26). God’s sons (Rom. 8:14) are those who

are led into the **good works, virtuous actions and excellent deeds** that the Spirit **made ready beforehand, to the end that we may, could, should and would walk about** (= live our lives) **centered within and in union with them.** Here we see another purpose clause, introduced by the phrase, "**to the end that.**" The purpose is that we would live our lives in the midst of, and **in union with,** the works that **God beforehand prepares** for us to do. Here, once again, we have the verb in the aorist tense. This, along with the passive participle, "**being founded (etc.),**" can either look back to the work done by God, or, we can read the aorist

timelessly and understand that He does this for each one of us either before we are born into this life, or as we live this life. There is an interactive, organic relationship between us and our Creator. We are His family (vs. 19, below) and household, as well as His opus. His Spirit leads us into what He has prepared or what He prepares for us. For the blessing of, and help to, others, our lives are to be centered in **good works**. Marius Victorinus has put forth a thought-provoking question on this verse,

“Does Paul mean ‘good works’ in the future sense or those which we now perform?” (ibid p 135)

The “future sense” speaks to us as having a productive expectation. Here Chrysostom notes that “walking is a metaphor that suggests continuance, extending to the end of our lives” (Homily on Ephesians 4.2.9, *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 135).

Our pattern, as sons, is given by Jesus’ life in what He said in Jn. 5:19,

“I am now saying to you folks [that] the Son continues unable to do anything from Himself (or: the Son, from Himself, habitually has no power to be doing anything [independently]) except He can (or: unless He should) continue seeing something the Father is

in process of doing (or: if not something He may presently observe the Father making, producing, constructing, or creating), **for what things That One may likely be progressively doing** (making; constructing; creating; producing), **these things, also, the Son is likewise habitually doing** (or: is in like manner constantly making, etc.).”

Looking once more on the final clause of this verse, "**to the end that we may, could, should and would walk about** (= live our lives) **centered within and in union with them,**" we see Paul emphasizing the practical side of the

Good News, in the last phrase: living a life that is **centered in good works** (virtuous actions; excellent deeds). We are reminded of this in the parable where Jesus addressed His sheep (His followers),

"You see, I was hungry (or: I hunger) and you folks gave (or: give) to Me [something] to eat; I was thirsty (or: I thirst), and you folks gave [something for] (or: cause) Me to drink; I was existing being a foreigner (or: stranger), and you people gathered Me together [with you] (= showed Me hospitality and oneness with your group); [I

was/am] naked, and you people clothed (or: clothe) Me; I fell sick (or: become weak), and you folks carefully looked upon (or: = visit and look out for; took oversight of) Me; [I was/am] in prison (or: jail), and you came to Me (or: come and set your face on Me)" (Mat. 25:35-36).

And then His explanation:

"Upon such an amount (or: = To the extent) that you did (or: do) and perform(ed) [it] to (or: for) one of these belonging to the least of My brothers (used collectively: = the members of My family; or: = those of My group or

brotherhood), **you did and perform [it] to and for Me!**" (Mat. 25:40).

The next verse finds Paul stacking more thoughts upon what he has just said, bringing up the cultural marker of circumcision that had separated the two categorizations of humanity as being either Jew or Gentile (based upon Israel's Law and their old covenant), as he moves toward a rhetorical climax of the Peace (joining) that had come in Christ.

11. On which account (or: Wherefore; So then), **you folks must continuously call to mind** (or: keep in mind; remember) **that once you, the nations**

(multitudes; ethnic groups; Gentiles; non-Israelites) **in flesh** (= in your physical beings and cultural heritages) – **the ones habitually termed** (spoken of as; called; said to be) "**uncircumcision**" **by the one** (or: that) **habitually being termed "circumcision,"** **in flesh** (= body, culture and religion), [i.e.], **made by hand** –

The opening phrase, "**On which account** (Wherefore; So then)," points back to what Paul had just presented in vss. 1-10, and what follows is based upon the consequences of their new situation and state of being which is "**the effect of what He did**" (vs. 10, above). The discussion is now about the place in

God's economy which they had once occupied: **the nations, ethnic groups and multitudes of non-Israelites, in flesh** – i.e., their physical beings and cultural heritages. They were termed **“uncircumcision”** by those of Israel's heritage and culture who had belonged to the arrangement (or: covenant) that required **circumcision** under the Law of Moses. He wants them to **“continuously call [this] to mind,”** or to **“keep [it] in mind,”** and remember what they had before been taught, such as:

“yet you yourself, being a wild olive tree of the field or forest, you are (or: were) grafted in within (or: among) them, you

also came to be (are birthed; are become) **a joint-participant** (a partner taking in common together with; a co-partaker) **of the Root and of the Fatness** (= sap) **of The Olive Tree** (or: of the oil of the olive)” (Rom. 11:17).

Paul wants them to call their former situation to mind so as to have a dark background for the added light (aimed to give them a deeper understanding) that he is about to shine for them as he moves into a section of his presentation which contains a more in-depth theology.

Verses 11-13 present a contrast between their former situation and the new situation that **the blood of the Christ**

created (vs. 13, below).

Epiphanius notes, “The phrase *Gentiles in the flesh* contrasts type of realities.

The type in the flesh was awaiting the time of the spirit” (Panarion, *ACCoS*,

ibid p 136). Jerome observed, “By calling the Ephesians *Gentiles in the flesh*, he shows that in the spirit they are not Gentiles” (ibid p 137).

The explanation, “[i.e.], **made by hand**,” is added to make sure that the audience understands that he is speaking of physical circumcision, in the phrase just preceding it, and in this technical religious and cultural term and act, Paul is referring to the Jews – in contrast to the Gentiles (the physically

uncircumcised). There may be another reason for his using this qualifying marker of circumcision: the uncircumcised nations were the historical enemies of Israel. Young David speaks disparagingly of Goliath as "this uncircumcised Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:26). We will see, below that Christ has made peace between these longtime religious-cultural adversaries who he is at present rhetorically contrasting.

The direct association that he makes here, between "**the nations**/Gentiles" and "**uncircumcision**" should be noted, for these are both technical terms for "non-Jews" and the latter term is

interchangeable with the former. In Gal. 2:7 Paul speaks of,

"the message of goodness, ease and well-being concerning (or: with reference to; in consideration of; pertaining to; separated for; belonging to; having characteristics and qualities suited to; for the context of; relative to; as it relates to) **the Uncircumcision** (= those not of the Jewish religion, being from pagan religions or Hellenistic culture)..."

Then in 3:6, below, we see this same category of people groups:

"In spirit the nations (the

Gentiles; the ethnic multitudes; non-Jews) **are to continuously be joint-heirs** (fellow-participants by allotment) **and a Joint Body** (sharing together the same body) **and joint sharers** (partakers; participants) **of The Promise,"**

and vss. 2:13ff, below, point out how their former categorization has changed. Nonetheless, these terms are frequently found in other NT writings to indicate that the writers are speaking to or of those who were "non-Jews," and so we need to be alert to how each writer and each context is using the term "**nations**/Gentiles" or "uncircumcision." In 3:1, below Paul speaks to these

former Gentiles of Asia Minor as, "**you folks, the nations** (non-Jewish ethnic multitudes; the Gentiles)." By that plural phrase he was signifying "the rest of the world" – i.e., all those who were non-Jews. We read in Gal. 3:8a,

"Now the Scripture – seeing before [as a picture] that God is now progressively liberating the nations into rightwised relationship (delivering the ethnic groups of non-Jews into the Way pointed out and freeing them from guilt)..."

Then Paul there finishes this verse with a quote of Gen. 12:3 and 22:18,

"All the nations, ethnic groups

and multitudes will continuously and progressively be inwardly blessed (receive the inner Word of wellness; participate within the Good Word) **in a union with you"** (Gal. 3:8b).

With all this in mind, we should understand that Paul is primarily speaking about people groups (not individuals), or all of humanity, when we read his inclusive or unifying remarks in the rest of this essay, for he makes it plain in 3:8, below,

"To me, the one far inferior to (or: less than the least among) all of those set apart (or: the saints; the holy people), was given this

grace and joyous favor: to myself address the nations (non-Jews; Gentiles; ethnic multitudes) with the good news of (or: whose source is) the untrackable (untraceable; or: not-searched-out and unexplored) riches of the Christ

(or: to for myself declare and bring to the ethnic groups the message of goodness, ease and well-being of the unexplored wealth which is the Anointed One)."

Also, in Rev. 15:4b we find that,

"the multitudes (nations: ethnic

groups) **WILL** continue arriving, and they **WILL** continue worshiping in Your presence (in Your sight; before You)."

So thus do we read in vs. 12, below, that he is speaking about the category of Gentiles, or, non-Jews.

12. that (or: because) **you were, and continued on being for that season** (or: in that appointed situation), **apart from Christ** ([the] Anointed One; = [the] Messiah): **people having been alienated from the state of being a citizen** (or: estranged from citizenship in the commonwealth and society) **of, and which is, Israel and [being] strangers pertaining to the arrangements of** (or:

foreigners from covenants and testamentary dispositions whose origin is) **The Promise and the assurance, continually having no expectation** (or: hope), **and [were] folks without God** (or: godless; atheists) **within the ordered System** (world of culture, religion and governments; or: the aggregate of humanity).

We should note, first of all, that their prior position and condition was “**for that season** (or: in that appointed situation).” In God’s “**purpose of the ages** (a fore-designed aim, plan and object [which He is bent on achieving] of the unspecified time-periods; 3:11, below),” **THAT season** was not

intended to continue indefinitely. It was an “appointed situation” in relation to both God and Israel, and between Israel and the Gentiles (uncircumcised multitudes). Because of what follows in this verse, they (not being a “called-out people,” as Israel was) were **apart from Christ**, since the Messiah pertained only to Israel and its “olive tree society” (Rom. 11:17).

Yahweh’s selection of Israel to be a set-apart nation (Ex. 19:6) had the effect, by definition, of alienating, and making strangers of, the ethnic multitudes (the non-Israel nations). But this was only to be for an appointed time (until the new creation in the Messiah) and the specific

situation of the age of the Mosaic Law. The nations were not a part of that religious and theocratic arrangement. Rather it was the **Israelites** (or, “the Congregation of Israel”),

“whose [is/was] the placing in the condition of a son (or: the deposit of the Son; the setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son) **and the glory** (the things which call forth praise and bring a splendid reputation) **and the arrangements** (or: covenants; [other MSS: the Covenant) **and the placing of the Law** (or: even the setting of custom and

legislation by/as [Torah]) **and the sacred service and the promises.**” (Rom. 9:4)

What they were alienated from (**the state of being a citizen**, etc.) is a term that has been discussed in a section by Hermann Strathmann (*TDNT*, Vol. VI, WM. B Eerdmans, 1968 pp 516-535). This particular term, *politeias*, is only used twice in the NT and, “is not used in an abstract sense of the state or constitution... but only in the sense of ‘civil rights,’ whether meant literally or figuratively” (p 534). Other than here, it is used only by Paul, concerning himself, in Acts 22:28. Here, however, Strathmann concludes that it is “used in

the figurative sense of the privileged religious position of Israel as the recipient of the promise” (ibid p 535), pointing also to 2:19, below, where they were informed that they had become,

“fellow-citizens (folks residing together in a City) **of those set apart** (the holy ones): **even God's family** (members of God's household).”

David H. Stern (*Jewish Commentary of the NT*, Jewish New Testament Pub., Inc., 1999 p 582) cites p 526 of Strathmann's article (cited above) concerning this word's use in the LXX, that *politea*,

“does not mean civil rights,

constitution, or state, [but] rather the pious order of life which, ordained by the Law of Moses, is inherited from the fathers. [With one exception, it] is a religious and moral concept rather than a political concept; it denotes the 'walk' determined by the Mosaic Law" (brackets Stern's).

As to the cognate *polis*, Strathmann affirms that it "never means 'state'," and that its use in the NT is thus, "completely non-political. *Polis* simply means an 'enclosed place of human habitation' as distinct from uninhabited areas.... The word denotes a town-like place without municipal standing" (ibid pp 529-30).

This information becomes important when we read Heb. 12:22-23,

“you folks have approached so that you are now at Mount Zion – even in a city of a continuously living God; in "Jerusalem upon heaven" (or: in a Jerusalem pertaining to and having the character and qualities of a superior, or added, heaven and atmosphere; or: in Jerusalem [situated] upon, and comparable to, the atmosphere) – also among ten-thousands (or: myriads) of agents and messengers (people with a/the message): [that is] in (or: to) an assembly of an entire

people (or: an assembly of all; a universal convocation) **and in** (or: to) **a summoning forth** (or: a called-out and gathered community) **of firstborn folks having been copied** (from-written, as from a pattern; or: enrolled; registered) **within [the; or: various] atmospheres** (or: heavens)..."

Also, this informs our interpretation of Rev. 21:10, in which "the bride" is metaphorically seen:

"the set-apart (or: holy) **city, Jerusalem, progressively** (or: habitually; or: presently) **descending out of the**

atmosphere (or: heaven), from God,”

along with the figurative descriptions that follow. Recall, again, Gal. 4:26,

“the Jerusalem above is (continues being) free, who is (or: which particular one continues being) our mother.”

A central aspect of what they had **been alienated from** is specified in 4:18, below,

“having been and continuing being alienated (estranged) away from the Life of God (or: God's life; or the life which is God).”

So we can see here that being included in the “olive tree” (Rom. 11:17), or “the

people of God,” meant participation in the LIFE of God – now that is solidarity in the extreme: God + humanity!

I conflated the genitive and appositive functions of the phrase “**of, and which is, Israel.**” The appositional rendering presents the combined results of the action described in vs. 14, below,

“**making** (forming; constructing; creating; producing) **The Both [to be] one.**”

The name “Israel” is maintained to show the continuity of God’s plan, and as a reminder of the fact that the Gentiles were grafted into Israel – and thus, also the continued reference to Israel and Jerusalem (e.g., in the book of

Revelation). Yet with the “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17), we have a new situation as we find in Col. 3:10-11,

“then [be] suddenly clothing yourselves with (or: entering within) the new one (the fresh one which existed only recently), the one being continuously (or: repeatedly; habitually; progressively) renewed (made back up new again, in kind and character) into full, accurate, added, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight which is down from and corresponds to the image (an exactly formed visible likeness) of its Creator

(of the One framing and founding it from a state of wildness and disorder), **wherein** (or: in which place) **there is no Greek** [figure of the multitudes who are non-Jews, and of those who are cultured and civilized] **and Jew** [figure of a covenant people of God], **circumcision and uncircumcision** [figure for religious in-groups and out-groups; there is no longer a covenant people versus non-covenant people], **barbarian** [foreigner who speaks a different language], **Scythian** [figure or example of wild, uncivilized

groups], **slave, freeman, but to the contrary, Christ [is] all, and within all**

(or: Christ [is] all humanity, and within all mankind; or: Christ [is] everything or all things, and within everything and all things; [note: the Greek is plural, and is either masculine, signifying “mankind,” or neuter, signifying all creation, in these phrases]).”

Or, as Gal. 3:28 instructs us,

“Within [Him; us], there is not (there does not exist) Jew nor

Greek (or: Hellenist).”

But prior to the Christ event, they were still **“strangers pertaining to the arrangements of** (or: foreigners from covenants and testamentary dispositions whose origin is) **The Promise and the assurance.”** Paul informed the folks of the province of Galatia of the good news of the new arrangement: that,

“Now since you folks belong to Christ (or: have [the] Anointing as your source and origin; or: So since you people have the qualities and character of Christ, and [are] that which is Christ), **you are straightway and consequently Abraham's Seed:**

heirs (possessors and enjoyers of the distributed allotment), **down from, corresponding to and in the sphere of Promise!**” (Gal. 3:29).

The singular “**Promise**” in these texts refers specifically to the coming of the Messiah who would bring all the “promises” into fruition and inaugurate the new Age of Messiah.

Witherington suggests that Paul’s use of the term **Israel**, here, is “the sort of incorporation theology that one already finds in the discussion of the Jew and Gentile in Romans” (ibid p 258). Marius Victorinus saw that, “The true way of Israel consists in living according to the

Spirit, thinking according to the Spirit..." (ibid p 137).

The Gentiles had "**no expectation** (or: hope)" because they had not been promised a messiah for them; they were not descendants of the promised seed (Isaac), so as to have inherited the promise that was given to Abraham – at least they were not aware that God's plan all along was to include them in the blessing of which He spoke in His arrangement with Abraham.

Along with this, they had no expectation of resurrection, to which Paul referred in 1 Thes. 4:13-16,

"folks continuously having no expectation (or: hope).... the

dead people within Christ (or: in union with [the] Anointed One) **will continue raising themselves up first** (or: will one-after-another be standing up again in [the or their] first place)."

So let us consider the final phrases: **“and [were] folks without God** (or: godless; atheists) **within the ordered System** (world of culture, religion and governments; or: aggregate of humanity).” I suggest that in tying the two meanings of *kosmos* together (**the ordered System** and “the aggregate of humanity”) we can see that Paul is talking about the human condition before the advent of Jesus Christ. We were all

“continuously existing being dead ones” (2:1, above) because we were without the Life of Christ (or: apart from the Tree of Life), as 4:18, below, specifies. This is just another way of describing the Gentiles as being Gentiles – as not being a part of the covenant community within which there existed the light of God and the expectation of the Promise. It was the same as being a branch that is separated from the Vine (Jn. 15:1ff), a field that became overgrown with thorns and thistles (Heb. 6:8), being people with God’s inherent fervor dwelling upon us (Jn. 3:36). Paul is asking them to consider all of this.

13. But now, within, in union with and

centered in Christ Jesus, you – the folks once being (continuously existing) **far off** (or: at a distance) – **came to be** (were birthed; are generated; are suddenly become) **near, immersed within and in union with the blood of the Christ** (the Anointed One; = the Messiah).

The opening phrase, **But now...**, answers to the opening phrase of 2:4, above, “**But God...**” This is what makes all the difference for humanity: God’s eschatological deliverance that is **within, in union with and centered in Christ Jesus**. He is the existence into which we have been rescued. Coming to be **near** is realized by being placed into

the Christ. The change of place and sphere is described as being **immersed within and in union with the blood of the Christ**. Now being **near** means being “grafted into” (Rom. 11:17) the Community of Israel with participation in **the citizenship which is Israel**. The affirmation of vs. 14a, below, combined with the **far off... near** contrast, here, creates an echo of Isa. 57:19,

“I have seen his way, yet I shall heal him and give him rest, and I shall dispense comforts to him and to his mourners, creating the produce of the lips, ‘Peace, peace to the far and to the near,’ says Yahweh” (CVOT).

In Mic. 4:2-3a we read,

“Many nations will come... to [the] Mount of Yahweh, and to the house of the Elohim of Jacob, and He shall direct us out of His ways that we may walk in His paths.... He will judge between many peoples and arbitrate for staunch nations afar off... and nation shall not lift the sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more” (CVOT).

Isa. 5:26 foretells,

“And He lifts up a banner for a nation from afar; He whistles for it from the outmost part of the earth, and behold, quickly, fleetly

it is coming!” (CVOT).

And Isa. 49:1, “Listen to Me, O coastlands; pay attention, you peoples from far away!” (NRSV).

Then Isa. 66:19,

“I will place a Sign among them and I will send some of their delivered to the nations.... and they will tell of My Glory among the nations” (CVOT).

In this verse Paul tells us that these ancient prophecies have been fulfilled, in Christ. Peter affirmed this on the Day of Pentecost,

“For you see, the promise is (continuously exists being) to and for (and in?) you folks, as well as

to (for; in?) your children – even to and for and in all people: to and for and in the folks [being] a long way off – in such an amount as [the] Lord [= Yahweh] our God would call to [Himself]!”
(Acts 2:39).

Schnackenburg instructs us, “The difference between those once ‘far’ and ‘near’ is abolished” (ibid p 111). The aorist phrase, “**came to be,**” is another instance of “the Divine passive.” Their “birthing” into this change of position was the act of God. His **blood** generated their new existence.

The figure of **the blood of the Christ** calls to mind Heb. 10:19, 22,

“Therefore, having freedom, openness and boldness of speech which comes from being citizens, brothers (= fellow members), with a view to the Entrance of the set-apart places (or: into the Pathway-into the midst, pertaining to the Holiest Place, which is the separated ones and which pertains to the sacred folks) – within and in union with the blood of Jesus.... we can be continuously and progressively approaching (or: drawing near) with a true heart in union with full-assurance from the completed act of faithfulness

(or: centered within [the] full-carrying from [His] loyalty and fidelity), **the hearts having been sprinkled from a misery-gushed consciousness of what is evil or unserviceable** (or: a joint-knowledge full of labor; a conscience in a bad condition)..."

The picture here in Heb. 10 is a development of Heb. 9 which describes Christ fulfilling the Day of Atonement, entering into the holy of holies ("**into the atmosphere and heaven itself**" – Heb. 9:24 – where we are now enthroned) of the new temple (His body – 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:16) to "sprinkle" our hearts with His blood. "[**We**] have

approached.... to and in blood of sprinkling..." (Heb. 12:22, 24), and, **"into an obedient hearing** (or: [focused] to being centered in a listening and paying attention with compliance) **and a sprinkling with Jesus Christ's blood** (or: a sprinkling of blood, which is Jesus Christ)" (1 Pet. 1:2). We are informed in 1 Jn. 1:7b that,

"...the blood of Jesus, His Son, keeps continually and repeatedly cleansing us (or: is progressively rendering us pure) **from every sin."**

14. You see, He Himself is our Peace (or: continuously exists being our joining and harmony [= Shalom]) – **the One**

making (forming; constructing; creating; producing) **The Both [to be] one, and within His flesh** (= physical being; or: = system-caused crucifixion) **is instantly destroying** (unbinding; unfastening; loosing; causing to collapse) **the middle wall of the fenced enclosure** (or: the partition or barrier wall): **the enmity** (cause of hate, alienation, discord and hostility; characteristics of an enemy), Paul uses the word **Peace** in the context of the unification (the joining) of humanity which has the effect of destroying **the enmity** that had existed between Jews and Gentiles. It is enlightening to consider both the Greek and the Hebrew meanings of this word:

“The basic feature of the Greek concept of *eirēnē* [peace] is... a state, i.e., ‘time of peace’ or ‘state of peace,’ originally conceived of purely as an interlude in the everlasting state of war.... primarily no more than the passionately asserted, emotionally felt and palpable opposite of [war].... the opposite of disturbance, e.g. laughing.... the ‘state of rest’.... a ‘peaceful attitude’... the absence of hostile feelings.... in everyday reality it implies the legal security of the *pax Romana*...” (TDNT, Vol. II, WM B Eerdmans Pub., 1964,

“The Greek concept of *eirēnē*,”
Werner Foerster, p 400-02;
brackets added).

“1... *shalom* can bear a common
use and yet can also be filled with
a concentrated religious content...
this means that there is something
imprecise about it in almost every
instance.... At root it means
‘well-being,’ with a strong
emphasis on the material side....
bodily health or well-being and
the related satisfaction....
prosperity... peace.... stability of
relationship.... relationship rather
than a state....*shalom* occurs
when there is reference to a

covenant.... (Ezk. 34:25; 37”26)
.... Isa. 54:10, ‘My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.’ 2. *shalom* as the gift of Yahweh.... Yahweh creates *shalom* in the heavenly spheres, high above all human affairs (Job 25:2). But He is also the pledge of *shalom* to man. He blesses the people with *shalom*. [*cf* Ps. 35:27; 85:1 ff; 122:6; 147:14].... ‘righteousness and peace have kissed each other’3. *shalom* in the prophetic message.... From Micaiah, the son of Imlah, to Ezekiel there is a minority of

prophets of doom who passionately resist the message of salvation proclaimed by false prophets. In this conflict... the catchword upon which everything turns is *shalom*. [e.g., Jer. 28:9; 1 Ki. 22:5ff; Mic. 3:5ff; Jer. 6:14; 14:13; Ezk 13:16] 4. *shalom* as an element in eschatological expectation... even when the term is not always found in the relevant passages [e.g., Isa. 2:2; 9:2-7; Zech. 9:9].... [T]here is no specific text in which it denotes the specifically spiritual attitude of inward peace. There are, indeed, more passages in which it

is used of groups rather than individuals.... it manifests itself in the form of external well-being... something that can be seen.... in its most common use, *shalom* is an emphatically social concept.” (*TDNT*, Vol. II, WM B Eerdmans Pub., 1964, “*shalom* in the OT,” Gerhard von Rad, p 402-406; brackets added; references original).

The combined historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as the current usages during the time of Paul, should inform our understanding of what Paul is meaning in the context of this passage. The passage of Isa. 9, in which the Son

is called "The Prince of Peace," involved "a great Light" shining "in the land of the shadow of death," and calls to mind John 1:5. But the Isa. passage goes on to speak of "the increase of [His] government and peace" in His kingdom, "to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice..." (vss. 6-7), all of which are relational aspects among people. Kenneth Wuest, points out that *eirēnē*, "peace," comes from the Greek verb *eirō* "which means 'to join.' That is, when things are disjointed, there is lack of harmony and well-being. When they are joined together, there is both" (*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, Vol. I, Wm. B.

Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973, Eph. and Col. p 24). Liddell and Scott (*Gr-Eng Lex*, Oxford, 1968, p 491) defines *eirō*:

"fasten together in rows (as a necklace); string together (especially in speech)." It is Christ that joins us. Paul's topic of joining people groups (Jews and Gentiles) fits well into the prophetic pictures (e.g., Isa. 52:7) concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Today we benefit from the union accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We can also make personal applications of what this act of God can do for our lives: in our societies, our families, and even within our interior selves. Jesus made a

welcome promise in Jn. 14:27,

“I am continuously sending off (releasing away; hurling off) peace to (or: for; by; in; with) you people. My peace I am constantly giving to you (or: in, by, for you folks). I Myself am not giving [it] to you the way (or: according as) the System (the world of religion, politics and culture) continually gives [it]. Do not let your heart be constantly shaken, disturbed or agitated, neither let it be habitually timid (shrinking, as with palpitations; responding cowardly).” [compare Deut. 31:8;

Josh. 1:9]

Witherington sees the use of the two terms, **middle wall** and **fenced enclosure**, as “another example of Asiatic repetition,” and continues,

“The former refers to a wall between two rooms or houses, and so its purpose is division of space. The second term, however, refers to a fence or hedge (see Isa. 5:2, LXX; Mk. 12:1), the purpose of which is to keep something or someone out. Despite the attractiveness of the suggestion that this refers to the wall around the Court of Israel in the Jerusalem Temple with signs

warning Gentiles to keep out (see Acts 21:27-31; Josephus, *Wars* 5.194), it should probably be rejected. Paul is not discussing a particular sign or wall, but that which separated Jew and Gentile, and that is surely the Mosaic Law (*cf* Col. 2:14 on decrees of the Mosaic Law). Furthermore, it is doubtful that Gentile Christians in Asia would have recognized such an allusion to the partition wall of the Jerusalem Temple since it is unlikely that more than one or two had ever been in the Temple.

Letter of Aristeas 139 refers to how Moses “surrounded us with

unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples” (ibid p 259-60).

He footnotes (ibid n 47): “As Caird, *Paul’s Letters*, pp 57-58, points out, it was the whole Temple, not just the partition wall... that was destroyed in AD 70.”

In regard to **[Christ] Himself [being] our Peace**, Furnish comments,

“Salvation, then, is understood as that cosmic peace which is established when all things and all men are reconciled to God and hence to one another through the redemptive deed of Christ (2:14-

24)” (ibid p 835).

Furnish further observes,

“Reconciliation does not require the capitulation of one side or the other; it involves the transformation of both” (ibid p 839).

Schnackenburg sees vss. 14-18 as,

“a kind of christological excursus... [so] that the former relationship between Israel and the Gentile world can be discussed... and through [Christ] *WE* have access to the Father (vs. 18).... The cosmic bringing of God’s peace in Christ is transferred in Eph. to the

relationship of Israel and the Gentile world.... The dividing wall, the ‘fence’ (Genitive of Apposition) is ‘the Law of the Commandments with the statutes’ and the parties at enmity are the Jews and Gentiles. We can see the progress from a general picture to the particular. The Masculine expressions ‘the two’ (*tous duo* vs. 15) and ‘both’ (*tous amphoteros* vs. 16) come after the Neuter ‘the two’ (*ta amphotera* [vs. 14]) and the metaphorical ‘tear down the partition’ before the factual ‘destroy the Law’.... The Neuter

(the two parts)... can stand for the two groups of humanity ‘estranged’ by the Law” (ibid p 111-14; emphasis original; brackets added).

This, of course, happened with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as this essay affirms. It had come “**within His flesh** (= physical being; or: = system-caused crucifixion)” – which answers to “**within and in union with the blood of the Christ**” (vs. 13, above). But the realization of this “**One New Humanity**” (vs. 15, below) was also because of His resurrected flesh (Lu. 24:39). Resurrected existence, as described in vss. 5-6, above, is also

what makes this union possible.

The theme of this passage may further be seen as an echo of the resurrection prophecy concerning Israel as a valley of dry bones, in Ezk. 37:1-14. There, vs. 5 explains,

“Thus says my Lord Yahweh to these bones: Behold, I [will] bring spirit (or: breath) into you, and you will live.”

Then, in that same chapter, Ezekiel is told to take two sticks, one for Judah (i.e., the southern kingdom) and one for Joseph (i.e., Ephraim, representing the northern kingdom), and is instructed:

“Bring them near, one to the other, into one stick for yourself that they

may become one in your hand.... I [shall] take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will convene them from all around... I will make them one nation.... They will become My people.... and David My servant [will be] their Prince for the Age. And I will contract with them a covenant of Peace.... When My sanctuary come to be in their midst for the Age” (vss. 15-28).

Paul used a similar analogy in Rom. 11:17-27, there using the metaphor of branches of an olive tree. The conclusion of God’s plan was described

in Rom. 11:32 as God having mercy on all humanity, as He brings all things back into Himself (Rom. 11:36).

David, as a figure for the anticipated Messiah, was also referenced in Ezk. 34:23-26,

“And I will set up one Shepherd over them – my Servant David; He shall feed them.... And I will make with them a covenant of Peace.... And I will cause the shower to come down in His season; there shall be showers of blessing.”

Then, in Jn. 10:14-16, we find Jesus identifying Himself as this Shepherd:

“I, Myself, am the Ideal (the

Beautiful; the Fine) **Shepherd....**
And I constantly have (hold;
possess) **other sheep which do**
not exist (or: are not) **from out of**
this fold (or: sheep pen), **and it is**
binding (or: necessary) **for Me to**
progressively lead those also,
and they will continue listening
to (will habitually hear and pay
attention to [implying: obey]) **My**
voice, and they [other MSS: it;
there] **will progressively become**
One Flock, One Shepherd.”

15. **rendering useless** (nullifying;
rendering down in accord with inactivity
and unemployment) **the Law** (or: the
custom; = the Torah) **of the implanted**

goals (or: concerning impartations of the finished product within; from commandments; which was inward directives) **consisting in decrees** (or: prescribed ordinances), **to the end that He may frame** (create; found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder) **The Two into One New** [p46 & others: common] **Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making** (progressively creating) **Peace and Harmony** (a joining; = shalom);

“Through Christ the gentiles are brought into communion with Israel. The new era of undivided humanity is the new age. This is

all symbolized and realized in the heavenly, cosmic Christ, who rules over all, thus uniting the universe.” (Murphy, *ibid* p 361)

Witherington insightfully points out, “Nothing is said here about only the ceremonial law being the focus. It was the Torah as a whole that separated Jews from Gentiles. This entire Law, says Paul, has been annulled by the death of Christ, and the enmity and distance between peoples that it created has been destroyed.” (*ibid* p 260).

He footnotes (*ibid* n 54): “As MacDonald, *Colossian, Ephesians*, pp

244-45, rightly points out, there is little or no basis in early Jewish literature for not taking the Law as a package deal... This is why [Paul] speaks of the Law in the singular and not about ‘laws’.”

(brackets added)

In Col. 2:14, we see it put similarly,

“anointing and wiping out the handwriting in the decrees (bonds; bills of debt; ordinances; statutes) put down against (or: with regard to the effects of the thoughts or suppositions, and the results of the appearances of what seemed [to be], corresponding to) us, which was continuing to be under, within and set in active

opposition to us, and He has picked it up and lifted it from out of the midst, nailing it to the cross (or: on the execution stake).”

Not only did Christ’s death “nullify the Law/custom/Torah – which was inward directives,” but the “**destroying**” of vs. 14 was “**rendering the Law useless!**” It was replaced by a new arrangement, a new covenant (Heb. 8:8) which has, “**an implanted goal** (impartation of the finished product within; inward directive) **new in kind and quality**” (1 Jn. 2:8). Jesus defines this new one in Jn. 13:34,

“I am giving to you men a new

implanted goal (an inward purposed directive different from that which had been formerly; an impartation of a finished product and destiny that is new in kind and character): **that you folks are to be continuously and progressively loving** (or: should constantly love and accept) **one another, just as** (correspondingly as; to the same level as; in the sphere as) **I love you folks so that you also may constantly** (or: would habitually) **love and accept one another.”**

Furthermore, Rom. 8:2 instructs us,
“For the principle and law of,

from and which is the spirit and attitude of 'The Life within Christ Jesus'

(or: For you see, the Law of Life's spirit, joined with [the] Anointing of Jesus; or: For the Spirit's law of life within Christ Jesus; or: the Law [= Torah] from the Breath-effect, which is Life in union with [the] Anointed Jesus)

frees you away from the Law of the Sin (or: the principle of failure and the missing of the target; the code of behavior that produces error; the principle of

deviation from the goal) **and the Death** (or: immediately set you [other MSS: me] at liberty from the law that deals with and has the character of sin and death).”

[comment: = the principle of the old Adamic life, and Israel's Torah]

This was “**the end**” that God had in view: **that He may frame** (create; found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder) **The Two into One New** [p46 & others: common] **Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself.** Union with Christ was God’s creative way of “**continuously making** (progressively

creating) **Peace and Harmony** (= shalom).” Union with humanity was the goal of the incarnation: to become **“Emmanuel,”** God with and among us (Mat. 1:23), and was why He,

“He empties Himself (or: removed the contents of Himself; made Himself empty), **receiving** (or: taking; accepting) **a slave's form** (external shape; outward mold), **coming to be** (or: birthing Himself) **within an effect of humanity's** (mankind's; people's) **likeness”** (Phil. 2:7).

This was not done to create a “new people of God,” as theologians have posited. Rather the uniting of Israel with

the ethnic multitudes was “to create a new, unified humanity,” with ALL now being “God’s people.”

Again, this was not just uniting the Jewish church with the Gentile church which would include Gentiles in the covenant. He is speaking, here, of “**One new, and common, Humanity,**” or as he says in 1 Cor. 15:45, the “eschatos Adam,” the “Second Humanity” (vs. 47). This is why Paul uses the phrase “**a new creation**” (which is the noun form of the verb “**frame/create**” here in this verse) in 2 Cor. 5:17 and Gal. 6:15. As he said in 1 Cor. 15:43-4,

“[Adam – the seed of humanity was] **sown within corruption...**

sown within dishonor... [but] **it is being habitually** (or: repeatedly; constantly; one after another; progressively) **awakened and raised up within, and in union with, power and ability. It is habitually** (continually; repeatedly; presently) **being sown a body having the qualities and characteristics of a soul** (a soulish body; or: = a body animated by soul; or: = a natural entity); **it is habitually** (repeatedly; constantly; presently; one after another) **being awakened and raised up a spiritual body** (a body having the

qualities and characteristics of the Breath-effect; or: = a spiritual entity).”

In that same chapter, vs. 47 informs us,
“The first human [was/is] forth from out of the earth, made of moist soil and mud; the Second Human [is made] out of heaven”

This second human is the one that is seated in the added heavens (vs. 6, above), and as Col. 3:11 instructs us,
“wherein (or: in which place) there is no Greek [figure of the multitudes who are non-Jews, and of those who are cultured and civilized] and Jew [figure of a covenant people of God], circumcision and

uncircumcision [figure for religious in-groups and out-groups; there is no longer a covenant people versus non-covenant people], **barbarian** [foreigner who speaks a different language], **Scythian** [figure or example of wild, uncivilized groups], **slave, freeman, but to the contrary, Christ [is] all, and within all**

(or: Christ [is] all humanity, and within all mankind; or: Christ [is] everything or all things, and within everything and all things; [note: the Greek is plural,

and is either masculine, signifying “mankind,” or neuter, signifying all creation, in these phrases]).”

As Martin observes, “The key-thought of the whole passage is *one new man in place of the two...*” (ibid p 1112; emphasis original). Chrysostom saw that, “The Greek does not have to become a Jew. Rather, both enter into a new condition. His aim is... to create both anew.... Even though the creation is invisible it is no less a creation of its Creator” (ibid p 140).

Dan Kaplan pointed me to the period of Israel's history when the Persian Empire

supported the first return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple. In Ezra 3:1 we find a statement and a picture of unification for the purpose of rebuilding the temple. In this verse we see that after the folks had settled in their cities, "the people gathered as ONE MAN in Jerusalem." Here in this sermon, Paul uses the symbol of "One New Humanity" as a picture of the unification of all people groups into one humanity, with the first-fruits of this being the ongoing construction of a spiritual temple that is composed of a united people that lacked divisive social, cultural and religious categorizations, as well as there being no identity markers.

16. and then should fully transfer, from a certain state to another which is quite different, The Both – centered in, and within the midst of, One Body in God (or: make completely other, while moving away from what had existed, and fully reconcile The Both, in one Body, **by, to, with and for God**), **through the cross** (execution stake) – **while in the midst of Himself killing the enmity and discordant hatred** (or: killing-off the characteristics of enemies within it).

The verb of the first clause is often simply rendered “reconcile” (e.g., NRSV, KJV, NASB). This form of the verb has *apo-* prefixed to it, and so,

since adding a preposition to a verb is often read as intensifying the force of the verb, I rendered it with the modifiers **fully**, or “completely.” The NWT also adds the word “fully,” here, as does Rotherham’s version, and Witherington suggests the word “thoroughly” to modify the verb (ibid p 261). So, in the parenthetical expansion I offer: “fully reconcile.” But translating this verb from its Greek elements seems to shed more light on this apocalyptic passage. The root idea is “other,” or “another.” To this the preposition *kata-* was prefixed, which in composition can imply a certain state or existence that has been laid “down” or established (e.g., in this

case: enmity; discordant hostility; separation). The root idea of the preposition *apo-* implies movement “away from” a position or situation. Putting these together we have: **fully transfer from a certain state to another which is quite different**, or, “make completely other while moving away from what had existed.” This seems to accurately describe what the context has been telling us about these “two groups,” and more fully to explain what God did with Christ to and for all of humanity (2 Cor. 5:19, where the same verb, minus *apo-*, is used). We must keep this picture in our minds: both groups (Jews and Gentiles) were

transferred from their "state" of being Jews and Gentiles, into another "state" which is quite different from how they had existed before. This is why there is, in God's economy and purpose, no longer the classifications of Jew and Gentile in the new creation. He has brought both groups into the Christ and has dissolved those prior categories and classifications. Now mankind is one.

"The Both [are] centered in, and within the midst of, One Body in God."

What a picture!

For emphasis I translated the definite article in the noun phrase that immediately follows: **The Both**. Many versions do not translate the article, and

render it just “both.” The NRSV gives the reading, “both groups,” which accurately gives the implication from the phrase being plural. But I wished to show the correlation with the phrase, **The Two**, in the previous verse.

As Furnish points out (ibid p 839), this **One Body** can refer both to the crucified Christ and to “**the called-out community, which is His body**” (1:22-23, above). However, the immediate context of this verse which follows the phrase “One Body,” and which modifies this phrase, makes references to **God, the cross and within Himself**. Most commentators want to make this passage, from vs. 11 to vs. 22, to be speaking

about the “church,” or as I render it, “the called-out community.” I will grant that this passage includes “the church/called-out,” because Paul is addressing the sacred communities in this general essay. They are the “**you folks**” from vs. 1 of this chapter to vs. 22. All the same, the term “called-out (or, church)” is not specifically mentioned in this chapter, much less in this section from 11 to 22. As Theodoret pointed out, it happened, “in the one body [Christ] that was offered on behalf of all, so that they [the called-out communities] may at last be made one body” (ibid p 140; brackets added). But now, the **One Body** is the complete, corporate Christ -- the New

Humanity, the last Adam. Everyone no longer exists just within God (Acts 17:28), but also now within the midst of Christ, as we read in Col. 3:3,

"for you folks died, and your life has been hidden so that it is now concealed together with the Christ, within the midst of God (or: in union with God)."

But each one's life comes out of concealment through resurrection, and this happens,

"each person within the result and effect of his or her own class (or: ordered place; appointed position [in line]; arranged time or order of

succession; = place in a harvest calendar, thus, due season of maturity)...” (1 Cor. 15:23a).

Notice that he is not speaking of making Judaism and Christianity into “**one new humanity**” (vs. 15, above), but rather the **circumcision** and the **uncircumcision** into one new grouping. The listeners had once been “**the nations** (non-Israelites; the ethnic multitudes; the Gentiles),” vs. 11, above. He is speaking of people groups that had been alienated because God had chosen Israel to be a nation that was separate from all other nations (for a season – vs. 12). The enmity was between the chosen ethnic group, Israel, and all the other ethnic groups of

mankind. These two categories composed the whole of humanity, the first “Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45-49). It was all the rest of humanity (other than Israel) that were “**the folks far off,**” as contrasted to “**the people nearby,**” i.e., Israel (vs. 17, below). The **enmity** that was **killed** was the “discordant hatred” that existed between Israel and the Gentiles. The **One Body** (Jesus Christ, the Messiah) was the place where the **full transfer** would take place. The death of Jesus on **the cross** – “**the immersion** (baptism) **which [He Himself was then] progressively being immersed** (baptized)” – and His burial took both Israel and all the Gentiles (the

first Adam; the first humanity) to the grave and destroyed the Law that **consisted in decrees and killed the enmity** which had separated humanity into two groups: us and them. And so the Gentiles, "**came to be** (were birthed; are generated; are suddenly become) **near, immersed within and in union with the blood of the Christ** (the Anointed One; = the Messiah)" (vs. 13, above). And if they are near, they are by this characterization "in Christ" – even if not yet alive to, or aware of, Him.

The work of the cross made all of humanity “completely other, while moving away from [the distinction] that had existed, fully reconciling” **The Two**

groups/classifications of humanity. Chrysostom said, “He brought them together, doing away with all that estranged them” (ibid p 140).

The “**He Himself**” of vs. 14 that did this transforming work “**within His flesh**” did it all “**centered in, and within the midst of, One Body in God.**” Here the noun “God” is in the dative case, but there is no preposition given in the text, so we must look to the context and to the potential functions of the dative. This first rendering, “**in God,**” once more calls to mind Col. 3:3,

“for you folks died, and your life has been hidden so that it is now concealed together with the

Christ, within the midst of God
(or: in union with God).”

When did they die? They died in and with the Messiah. Paul informs us that,
"for you see, Christ's love (urge for accepting reunion)
continuously holds us together.
[We are] deciding (discerning; judging) **this: that** [some MSS add: since] **One Person** (or: Man) **died over [the situation of] all mankind** (or: for the sake of all); **consequently all people died** (or: accordingly, then, all humanity died)" (2 Cor. 5:14).

So in the plan and purpose of God, all humanity died when Christ died.

Now since all of the prepositions used to render the case of the word, **God**, make sense to the context, I have the rest of them all on offer in the parenthetical expansion: “make completely other, while moving away from what had existed, and fully reconcile The Both, in one Body, **by, to, with and for God.**” Within **One Body**, His own – as the Head of the “last Adam,” He transferred both groups from a state of separation and enmity into a state of union: the state of being "**One New Humanity.**" This was done by Christ “with God” (2 Cor. 5:19), and “**by God**” (by the Son doing the work of the Father), and “**in God**” (the sphere of the work of Christ; the

realm to where He has raised us up), and “to God” (as all of Israel’s offerings and sacrifices were), and “for God” (because God so loves the aggregate of humanity – Jn. 3:16 – and it was God’s will and purpose for it to be done).

Through the cross Jesus took all of humanity (the first humanity, Adam) to the grave, as **One body** and then raised all humanity up as **one Body** – the second humanity (1 Cor. 15:47), the corporate Christ, "**the True and Genuine** [corporate] **Light which** (or: Who) **is continuously** (repeatedly; progressively) **enlightening** (giving light to) **every person** (or: human) **continuously** (repeatedly; progressively;

constantly; one after another) **coming into the world**" (Jn. 1:9; *cf* Mat. 5:14).

17. **And so upon coming, He brings goodness and proclaims as good news** (or: as a message of ease and wellbeing), **Peace** (harmony; lack of discord; [= shalom]) **to you, the folks far off, and Peace** (harmony; = shalom) **to the people nearby,**

Although God's Peace gives a personal, individual experience, feeling and environment, the corporate interpretation is what is in view here. This was the core of the **goodness** that was proclaimed as **good news** to humanity. It is especially within this context that we should employ Paul's words in Col.

3:15,

“let the Peace (or: joining; [= *shalom*]) **of the Christ** (belonging to and originating in the [Messiah]; the harmony which is the Anointing [other MSS: God]) **continuously umpire** (act as a judge in the games) **within your hearts** (= in union with the core of your being) – **into which [peace] you folks are called** (were called; were invited), **within one body...**”

Christ's peace (the Peace which is Christ: vs. 14a, above) comes to everyone – Christ proclaimed it far and wide; near and far – and it comes to all

"within one body," for He has made the **far off** and **the folks nearby** to be **one new humanity** (vs. 15b, above).

We see from the Gospels that **the people nearby** were the first to experience the **goodness** that Jesus brought, and to hear His proclamation of the message of ease and well-being: **Peace** to everyone, both **to folks far off, and to people nearby,** as

“Now, after the handing over of John, Jesus came (or: went) into the Galilee [district], continuously heralding God's good news (or: the message of goodness, ease and wellness which is God and which pertains

to God and has its source in God) **in a loud, public proclamation, and constantly saying, "The season and appointed situation has been fulfilled** (The fertile moment has been filled up and now continues full and is now ripe) **and God's kingdom** (the reigning and ruling of God as King; God's activity of exercising sovereignty) **has approached and is now near at hand and is close enough to touch** (= has arrived and is now accessible)!" (Mk. 1:14-15a)

As is evidenced both through the book of Acts and the letters of Paul, **the folks**

far off (the Gentiles) were the next ones to hear. It is important to note that BOTH these groups needed to hear the message, and to ultimately come to understand that “God is no longer operating under the old economy” (Witherington, *ibid* p 261). The **Peace**, the harmony and the "joining together" that is with the Christ, the lack of discord between Jews and Gentiles through their unification in the New Humanity, had come to all of humanity (near and far). All distinctions between those prior categories had been removed, and “a new basis of unity and harmony is created in Christ” (Grassi, *ibid* p 346). The “**the folks once being** (continuously existing) **far off** (or: at a

distance) – **came to be near**” (vs. 13, above), making **“The Both [to be] one... within His flesh”** (vs. 14), that is, **“The Both within One Body – with, by, in, to and for God through the cross (execution stake) – within Himself killing the enmity”** (vs. 16). This was a corporate action, not an action upon individuals. It was humanity-wide.

Marius Victorinus comments,

“This refers to the Gentiles and Jews. For the Jews are obviously close and the Gentiles far off. Yet the Savior himself has brought the gospel to the Gentiles.... [and] by his advent has truly preached peace...” (ibid p 142; brackets

added).

In this verse, he restates the thoughts expressed in vss. 12-13, and joins these to what he next said in vs. 14. He nails down the central point: it is the same message to the two groups that have now been made one – Peace, the Peace that Christ has given to all mankind (the one new “corporate” body). This **good news** of **Peace** between people groups, and among all humans, is something that still has not been understood or received. Folks are still waiting for others to change or do something (like join their particular group or sign some membership agreement) rather than seeing that this new arrangement is the

work of God, through Christ's death and resurrection. But here Paul has simply proclaimed the fact.

Martin also observes, “*He came* in the person of His apostolic messengers who carry the gospel of peace (*cf* Rom. 10:15)” (ibid. p 1112; emphasis original). Schnackenburg comments, “But Christ’s bringing of peace... has reconciled the whole of humanity to God...” (ibid p 126). This is complete inclusion.

18. that (or: because) through Him we, The Both, continuously have (hold and possess) the procurement of access (conduct toward the presence; admission, being led), within one Spirit

(or: in union with one Breath-effect and Attitude), **to** (or: toward; face to face with) **the Father**.

It happen **through Him**, i.e., within the **One Body**, because He took everyone into Himself, so that NOW there is,

“the Spirit's oneness within the bond of the Peace, [being] One Body” (4:3f, below).

Now there is no difference, **The Both have access and admission within one Spirit** (4:4, below) **to the Father**.

Notice that he did NOT say that “now the Gentiles also have access...” No, in God's economy there are no longer those two categories for they are all now One New Humanity. The term **access** (etc.) is

a cultic word that reaches back to Israel's tabernacle and temple. In that old arrangement (or: covenant) only one Israelite, the chief priest, had "access to the Father," and that happened only one time a year, on the Day of Atonement. But all has changed; the new has come and **The Both** (now including every former Israelite as well as well as all former Gentiles) **continuously** (not just once a year) **have, hold and possess** the procurement of **access** (or: the conduct toward the Presence; admission; a being led – as sons; Rom. 8:14) **within one Spirit** (or, "in union with one Breath-effect" which gave life to the last Adam) to be "face to face with" the **Father**. We

simply need to let folks know about this. We find this new situation described in the admonition of Heb. 4:16,

“We should, then, be repeatedly and habitually coming to the throne of Grace ([= mercy seat and place of Grace's authority]; or: the throne which is grace; the throne that is marked by grace and whose source is joyous favor) with freedom in speaking and outspoken boldness as a citizen who has no fear of reprisal, so that we can at once receive and take mercy as well as grace and favor into a timely (seasonable; well-suited) response to a cry

for help.”

This is further laid out for us in Heb. 10: 19. **Therefore, having freedom, openness and boldness of speech which comes from being citizens, brothers (= fellow members), with a view to the Entrance of the set-apart places (or: into the Pathway-into the midst, pertaining to the Holiest Place, which is the separated ones and which pertains to the sacred folks) – within and in union with the blood of Jesus;**

20. **a Way (Path; Road) which was done anew (or: which He innovates and makes new in**

species, character or mode, within and in the midst) **for us and in us, recently slain and yet living, through the veil that is His flesh** (or: which way through the veil He did anew for us – that is, His flesh (= His body): recently slain, and now living) –

21. along with a Great Priest [enthroned] upon God's House (or: the house from God) –

22. we can be continuously and progressively approaching with a true heart in union with full-assurance from the completed act of faithfulness (or: centered within [the] full-carrying from

[His] loyalty and fidelity), **the hearts having been sprinkled from a misery-gushed consciousness of what is evil or unserviceable** (or: a joint-knowledge full of labor; a conscience in a bad condition), **and then the body having been bathed in and by clean water.**

We see an apocalyptic picture of this in Heb. 12:22-24, where it again speaks of the “blood of [the] sprinkling” and “the new arrangement (or: covenant).”

The Father is our one goal, our one focus, but by being seated with Christ, in the Father’s presence, we become able to love the world and the aggregate of

humanity just as He does (Jn. 3:16a). We also need to keep in mind that we, both individually and corporately, are God's temple, and so the Father is both within and among us – we are His home.

19. Consequently then (or: Thereupon), **you folks no longer continuously exist being strangers** (foreigners) **and sojourners** (folks being or living beside a house; temporary residents in a foreign land), **but in contrast, you continually exist being fellow-citizens of those set apart to be sacred people** (or: folks residing together in a City belonging to, and composed of, the holy ones): **even God's family** (members of God's household),

This, then, is the conclusion of what he has been saying, up to this point. His audiences (**you folks**, who had been strangers to the covenants and relationship to Yahweh that had existed with Israel) were **no longer existing as strangers/foreigners and sojourners**, or as being temporary residents living in a foreign country. The first term points back to their past, as described in vs. 12, above. The second term expands on this thought, almost being synonymous. Witherington suggest that this is the rhetoric of “Asiatic variation,” but which could include “God-fearers or even proselytes,” and that Paul’s point is that all of these “no longer have any sort

of second-class status” (ibid p 261). Schnackenburg tells us that by Paul using the second person “(‘you are’)” and the “backward-pointing ‘no longer’” that it is made “certain” that this reference is “back to vss. 11-12” (ibid p 120), and looking back, we see in vs. 11 that he was speaking of **“you, the nations** (multitudes; ethnic groups; Gentiles; non-Israelites) **in flesh.**” It is “the nations -- the Gentiles” that **“no longer continuously exist being strangers.”** God has done a work that involves all **the nations** -- not just the called-out, covenant communities that function as His temple (the first-fruits) among the nations. The folks that Paul is addressing

were once Gentiles, but the category of Gentile no longer exists. This verse is speaking of joining together (bringing Peace among) all nations as one humanity, one family of God which has One Father. The subject here is "people groups," not individuals or local communities.

Now their new **continual existence** is described as being "**fellow-citizens** (*sumpolitai*) **of those set apart to be sacred people,**" or, "folks residing together in a City (the 'Jerusalem which is above'; Gal. 4:26) belonging to, and composed of, the holy ones." And Witherington points out that, "Those 'beside a house' (the literal meaning of

paroikoi) have become *oikeioi*, those who belong to a house” (ibid p 261-2). So prior **sojourners** are now **God’s family**, or “members of God’s household.” Keep in mind that our TWO GROUPS that have been the subjects of this passage (Jews and Gentiles), which became “One new Humanity” in the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45 – the corporate, cosmic Christ), have now also become **God’s family and household**.

The called-out communities (which Jacob/James called, “**a specific FIRST-fruit of His created beings**” – Jas. 1:18) are described in 1 Pet. 2:5 as, “**living stones, continuously being erected** (or: progressively

constructed and built up), [**being**]
a spiritual house (a building with
its source being the Spirit, with
the characteristics of a Breath-
effect)...”

The FIRST-fruit pointed to, announced
and (via the Waving of the Sheaf
Offering) sanctified the whole harvest.
Paul said,

"Now since (or: But if) **the**
Firstfruit [is] holy (set-apart and
consecrated; sacred), **the**
kneaded mixture (the result of
the lump which is mingled and
reduced to a uniform consistency
by treading, kneading or beating)
also [is]" (Rom. 11:16a).

20. being fully built as a house upon the foundation of the sent-forth representatives (or: emissaries) and prophets (folks who had light ahead of time), Jesus Christ continuously being a corner-foundation [stone] of it (or: there constantly existing an extreme point and head of the corner, or, capstone/keystone: Jesus Christ Himself),

This house is built upon a different foundation than was Moses' house (Heb. 3:2ff), which was founded upon the Law. Here, Christ's **house** (Heb. 3:6) is **being fully built... upon... the sent-forth representatives and prophets**. We see these representatives and prophets

mentioned again, in the context of the Christ-event and the called-out folks, in 3:5, below, then again in 4:11. But the older tradition was that the category “prophets” was a reference to the OT prophets that pointed to the Messiah. Origen’s view is that,

“These are fitting words to cite against those who would divide the Godhead and think that the prophets belong to one God and the apostles to another” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 143).

It was at the suggestion of my friend and fellow-translator, Eddie Browne, that I went to the linguistic root and idea behind the term prophet, which, in its

use over time, had developed a semantic range. In its OT use, we find the prophets bringing the Word of Yahweh to the people. That Word was a light (knowledge; understanding; guidance on their path) for them. We find that the Word **“was life... and the life was continuing being, and began progressively existing as, the Light of mankind”** (Jn. 1:4). The term *prophētēs* (transliterated, “prophet,” and in common usage meant “a spokesman or interpreter for God; a seer”) is from *pro-* (before; in advance; ahead) and *phēmi* (an utterance). The interesting thing is that *phē* is from *phōs* (light). In Ps. 119:105, we read, “Your word is a lamp

to my feet and a light to my tracks [or: path]” (CVOT). Thus is my suggested rendering for prophets: “folks who had light ahead of time” – and who then passed on this light to the people. You could also say that the “seer” saw the light (knowledge) ahead of other folks. The NT prophets saw the Light of Christ ahead of other folks, and became God’s spokesmen/spokeswomen and spread the light of the Good News to the world. They became “the light of the world,”

“You folks, yourselves, exist being (are) the light of the ordered System (the world of culture, religion, politics, government and secular society; =

the human sociological realm). **A city located up on a mountain** (or: situated on top of a mountain range) **continues unable to be hidden or concealed**” (Mat. 5:14).

We see this fulfilled in Rev. 21:24a, concerning the City (God’s body of resurrected folks), the New Jerusalem (our mother; Gal. 4:26),

“And the multitudes (nations; people groups; ethnic groups; or: non-Jews) **will continue walking about** (i.e., living their lives) **by means of her Light.**”

These folks are the firstfruits of the body of The Prophet, Christ (Jn. 1:21; Acts

3:22).

In Mat. 16:18, Jesus used a related term in a similar way to Paul's use of the term **foundation**, to create a corresponding picture,

“And you see, [it is] upon this: the rock mass (or: bedrock) [that] I will progressively be constructing and building up My house – the called-out community.”

In Rom. 9:32, Paul, in reference to Christ, says,

“They dash against, trip and stumble on (or: by) ‘the Stone that caused the Stumbling-effect,’” [Isa. 8:14; Lu. 2:34;

Hos. 14:9; 1 Pet. 2:7-8]

and in the next verse quotes Isa. 28:16,

“Look and consider! I am repeatedly placing in Zion a 'Stone of Stumbling,' and a 'Rock of a trap-snare' ...”

In a different context which references Israel's exodus history in the wilderness, Paul instructs us concerning the Rock which gave them water, and thus figuratively baptized them:

“Now the bedrock (or: cliff rock) was the Christ (or: the rock mass was existing being the Anointing)”
(1 Cor. 10:4).

And in 1 Cor. 3:11, Paul informs us that,

“no one can (or: continues able

to; is having power to) **lay another foundation** (or: to place or set another foundation [Stone] of the same kind) **beside** (or: in addition to and distinct from) **the One lying** (or: continuing being laid): **which is** (continues being) **Jesus Christ** (Jesus [the] Anointed One; = Jesus, [the] Messiah).”

As you see from the alternative renderings, **corner-foundation [stone]**, extreme point and head of the corner, and capstone/keystone, there are different ways in which the Greek term can be understood. Ps. 118:22 (*cf* Mk. 12:10; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7) tells us,

“The stone which the builders rejected came to be [used] for the Head of the corner.”

Marius Victorinus, in referring to this stone, rightly observed,

“From it begins the foundation of the corner which joins and couples two things to make them one” (ibid p 143).

Since both sides of the discussion have merit, I suggest that Christ is both the Alpha and the Omega of His building. The final pronoun of the verse, *autou*, is ambiguous. It can be rendered “it,” referring to the foundation, or it can be rendered “Himself,” referring to Jesus Christ, as the parenthetical rendering has

it. As with most ambiguities in Scripture, I suggest we see both as the reality.

21. within and in union with Whom all the home-building (all the construction of the house; or: = every house that is constructed, or, the entire building), **being continuously fitted [and] progressively framed together** (closely and harmoniously joined together; made a common joint by a word), **is continuously and progressively growing into a set-apart temple** (or: separate, different and holy inner sanctuary) **within [the] Lord [= Christ, or, Yahweh]:**

Whether we see Christ as the foundation

(the Beginning) or the keystone that hold the whole portal together (the End), it is union with Him, and residence within Him, that makes **the building of the home**, both its construction and, finally, the entire building, to be **continuously fitted and progressively framed together** (i.e., a unity via constant and habitual union with Him and with one another). This is an organic structure, for it is **continuously and progressively growing**. Its current existence and its continued future destiny is that of being God's home, which is **a set-apart temple** – or, a separate, different and holy inner sanctuary (*naos*). The word for temple, here, does not speak of the

outer courts, but rather of the inner – the holy place within us, and the holy of holies: our innermost being that is there joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). This dwelling is located within the midst of humanity – as the tabernacle was pitched within the midst of the camp of the twelve tribes of Israel – but it is an inner place which directs outward behavior from the mercy seat. In Rev. 21:3 God's home is described in the historical term "tent/tabernacle,"

"Consider! God's tent (the Tabernacle of God) [is] with mankind (the humans), 'and He will continue living in a tent (dwell in a Tabernacle) with them, and they

will continue being (will constantly exist being) **His people, and God Himself will continue being with them."**

This describes the called-out communities (the temple/tabernacle) being here on earth, with the rest of mankind that has not yet been added to the covenant communities. But note that it is "mankind" that is described as being "His people."

In Col. 2:7 we are described as,

“being people having been rooted (or: having been caused to take root) – **even ones being constantly and progressively built upon The House** (i.e., added

to the structure) – **within Him**; **also being folks repeatedly made steadfast and progressively stabilized with good footing within the faith** (or: confirmed by the conviction; made secure for trust and loyalty), **just as you are taught** (or: were instructed), **continuously superabounding** (being surrounded by more than enough) **within it – within gratitude and thanksgiving** (or: in an expression of the ease and goodness of grace, as well as the well-being of favor).”

This verse is echoed in 3:17, below, as

well as in Col. 2:19,

“getting strength from (or: apprehending and becoming strong by) the Head (or: the Source), from out of Whom all the body (or: the entire body) – being constantly fully furnished and supplied to excess with funds and nourishment, and progressively joined cohesively (welded together; knitted and compacted together; united and made to go together as in mounting for copulation) through the instrumentality of the joints goes on growing and increasing God's growth

(or: the growth of God; the growth having its source in God; the growth pertaining to God; the growth and increase which is God; or: the growth from God).”

The building/temple/body metaphors are seen at various points in 1 Cor., from 3:9 to 12:27; *cf* 4:16, below. The themes of life, growth and inter-relationships are colorfully displayed in these writings. There are both the senses of stability (rock) and fluidity (spirit; growth) in this new creation. One might wonder whether Christ as the foundation rock was a picture of “the Law-fulfilled” within Him. This thought might be seen

as corresponding to “the Root” in the olive-tree metaphor of Rom. 11:17.

Another picture of this grows from Jn. 12:24, when Jesus was speaking of His approaching death in the metaphor of planting a seed:

“unless the grain of wheat (or: kernel of corn; = seed of an agricultural crop), upon falling into the earth (the ground; the field), should die, it by itself continues remaining alone. Yet if it should die, it proceeds to bear much fruit (= it produces a harvest of many grains, or, seeds).”

In this comparison, in order for a seed to

bear fruit the roots must remain in the soil while the plant is growing. One does not dig up the roots and prop them up in the air to get fruit from the roots. The fruit comes from the branches, but they draw nourishment through the roots. The roots (in our comparison, the Law) remain buried, as does the foundation of a large building. The Messiah was the goal-fulfillment, and thus the “end” of the Law. But it was also the foundation for the new building – even if that foundation was dug down and buried, as we read in Lu. 6:48,

“He is like a person proceeding in building a house, who dug [in the ground] and deepened [the

**trench], and then put [the]
foundation upon the rock-mass.”**

We do not live in a foundation, but our house in which we live is founded upon it. We, His temple, are the ones who have been chosen to manifest God to the world. With the grain metaphor, we do not feed on the roots (here, the Law), but rather upon the resurrected Grain of the plant that is growing above the ground (earth) in the air (atmosphere; heaven). Ambrosiaster concluded,

“This means that the household of God is built upon both the old and the new covenants. For what the apostles preached had been foretold by the prophets.... in this

case he is speaking of the foundation in the prophets of old” (ibid p 143).

Returning to vs. 21, above, the unity of humanity is therefore to be demonstrated here by His temple being in the midst of the ethnic multitudes – though with its (our) life in the heavens, and constantly descending as the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2), to minister to those multitudes – as an example within their midst:

“closely and harmoniously joined together; made a common joint by [His] word.” I offer this final rendering,

“made a common joint by a word,”

from the compound verb, *sun-*

armologeō; *armologeō* is from *harmos-*,

a joint, and *-logos*, a word, thought, idea, message. It is Him who is the Word (Jn. 1:1ff) and the Message of goodness that has been spread to humanity that joins together (*sun-*) all people into the greater House of the Second Humanity. Since we are growing into a habitation (Jn. 14:2, a *monē*, a dwelling and remaining place), and this place is **within [the] Lord** (*cf* also, Acts 17:28), and God is **increasing** (Col. 2:19, above), then we should not expect to at some point arrive at something static or unchanging. Paul, with all that was unveiled to him, was still “**consistently pursuing.... continuously pressing forward, pursuing down toward**” so

that he could **“intimately and experientially know Him”** (Phil. 3: 12, 14, 10a). He maintained a goal: that he **“may be found within Him** (or: in union with Him)” (Phil. 2:9). He looked at his life as though being a participant in the games, which required a single focus: to win the prize of the contest. Thus he laid everything else aside, **“habitually considering** (or: regarding) **all things** (all; everything) **to be a loss** (a disadvantage; a bad bargain; damage; a forfeit; a penalty)... **to the end that [he] may have the advantage of Christ** (or: could maintain the gain of [the] Anointing; enjoy the assets of, or make a profit from, [Messiah])” (Phil. 3:8). The

life in Christ, in God's reign, was built upon the "finished work" of the Messiah, but that was not the end, it was the beginning. It was the foundation (of which Paul and others of his generation were a part), and all people since are one after another (1 Cor. 15:23) being built into the structure, as the Rock grows into a kingdom/reign/sovereign-influence-and-activity that fills the earth (Dan. 2:35-45).

22. within the midst of (or: in union with) **Whom you folks, also, are continuously and progressively being formed a constituent part of the structure** (or: being built together into a house) – **into God's down-home place**

(place of settling down to dwell; abode; permanent dwelling) **within [the] Spirit** (or: in spirit; or: in the midst of a Breath-effect and an attitude).

This is basically a restatement of what he has been saying, adding that this situation exists “**within [the] Spirit.**” As you see, there is no definite article before “Spirit,” but it still could be speaking of the Holy Spirit, for this parallels “**within the midst of Whom**” in both this verse, and in vs. 21, above. Since “**down-home place**” is modified by “**God’s,**” it is saying the same thing as, “**a set-apart temple** (or: separate, different and holy inner sanctuary) **within [the] Lord** [= Christ, or,

Yahweh],” in vs. 21, above. This “place” is within God, but Paul also may simply be saying here that the existence of God’s home is a sphere of existence, i.e., “in spirit,” instead of just repeating the idea of vs. 21b in different words. Furthermore, he may be indicating that God lives “in the midst of Breath-effects” that periodically come to us for His purpose with regard to us. The word “spirit” can also mean an “attitude.” Because we have “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16), and because He has given to us His Attitude, Paul reminds us,

“You see, this way of thinking (this attitude and disposition) is continuously within and among

you folks (or, as an imperative: So let this minding be habitually within you folks) – **which [is] also within Christ Jesus**” (Phil. 2:5),

and so He dwells within our renewed attitudes towards life and all things. He actually lives with us, and as David instructed Solomon,

“Yahweh searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts” (1 Chron. 28:9b).

Then in Prov. 20:27 we find,

“The lamp of Yahweh is the life-breath of mankind, searching all the chambers of the inner being” (CVOT).

In 4:3, below, Paul gives the admonition

of,

“repeatedly hurrying to make every effort to constantly keep (watch over to guard and protect) the Spirit's oneness (or: the unity of the Breath-effect and spirit; = agreement of [your] attitude) within the bond (the link, tie and connection that joins two things; the binding conjunction which results in union) of the peace (the harmony and tranquility; the state of untroubled, undisturbed well-being; [= the shalom]).”

In all of this we **are continuously and progressively being formed** and “built together into a house” that is **within the**

midst of and in union with God. Marius Victorinus suggests, “Here he cleverly adjusts his language to form an exhortation. They... are still being built up” (ibid p 144). The passive voice of verb ("the divine passive") means that God is the one that is doing the forming and the building. This is good, if not staggering, news. It is not up to us, although He uses other people as His hands and arms and feet. He works through (and from the midst of) everyone to accomplish His purposes.

Chapter 3

1. From and pertaining to this grace (or: In favor of this; For this gracious cause) **I, Paul, [am] the bound one** (or: prisoner; captive) **of, from and belonging to Christ Jesus in behalf of** (or: over [the situation of]) **you folks, the nations** (non-Jewish ethnic multitudes; the Gentiles).

He does not say that he is a prisoner of Rome, but is one of the host of captives that the ascended Christ led captive (4:8, below). Furthermore, the reason for being **bound** (to Christ) is over the situation of the ethnic multitudes (**the nations**, not just the covenant communities): he is bound in loyalty by

his mission to the Gentiles. But he also was likely a prisoner in Rome at this time.

The opening phrase, **From and pertaining to this grace**, presents first the ablative (function showing source: from) and then one function of the genitive (pertaining to) of the demonstrative adjective, **this**. In the parenthetical expansion on offer are two potential idiomatic renderings which, although such are common in the translations, I think miss Paul's reference to **grace** (*charin*, the accusative form of *charis*), which is so common in his writings, and which he specifies in the very next verse. Reading

this as a reference to grace makes this phrase look back to all that he has just presented in the previous chapter and at the same time transitions to “the dispensing within the household, which is God’s **grace** and favor” in the next verse.

Paul now gives his own origin, as well as his personal authorization (as a sent-forth emissary and representative), as being **Christ Jesus**. Reading the genitive as a possessive, he is saying that he **belongs to Jesus** (another way of saying that he is Christ’s slave, as in Rom. 1:1). Paul embodies his message; his life and relationship to Jesus gives testimony and evidence of the good news which brings

us to freedom (Gal. 5:1), but also of extreme allegiance to Christ. Just as Jesus identified with His brothers in Mat. 25:35-40, Paul could be saying the reverse of that equation if we rendered the genitive in apposition, “Paul, the bound one which is the Messiah, Jesus [in the flesh again, i.e., in Paul].” Paul’s life and mission are now **in behalf of [them], the nations.**” He is “the prisoner of the Christ... over [the situation of] the non-Jewish ethnic multitudes.”

2. **Since indeed** (or: If at least; or: Certainly) **you folks heard** (or: hear; listened to) [**and thus, obey**] **the house-law** (or: detailed plan; the dispensing

within the household; the administration; management of the household; or: the distribution) **of the grace of God** (or: from the grace which is God; which is God's grace; or: which is favor from God) – **which is being given by me unto and into you folks** (or: given to me with a view to you folks) –

The verb "hear; listen" is the timeless aorist, so it can refer to a past event, or to what is presently happening with the spread of the good news. For the Jews (such as Paul) the idea of obedience was inherent in the word "hear," so I have inserted this expectation by Paul in the bracketed expression. This term **house-law/dispensing/etc.** reaches back to

1:10, above. There Paul referenced it to “**a detailed plan of the effects of that which fills up the appointed seasons and fertile moments,**” but here he simply describes it as being **the grace of God** (etc.). It is God’s grace and favor that **fills up the appointed seasons** that came in the Age of the Messiah. His “**House-law**” is Grace, and “it is favor from God.” The two phrases in *tēs charitos tou theou* that modify “house-law (etc.)” can be rendered in apposition, possession, as a subjective genitive, or as an ablative, and thus the variations on offer in the parenthetical expansion:

a) which is God's grace

- b) belongs to God's grace
- c) from the grace which is God
- d) which is favor from God
- e) or even (rendering both terms as ablatives): from a favor from God.

His "house-law, dispensing, administration, management, detailed plan and distribution" has the character of grace, the qualities of favor. All these English terms express the one Greek term, *oikonomia*, which I have first given as "**house-law**," its most literal rendering. It is simply an expression of, and a manifestation of/from, God. His detailed plan is good news. Paul also terms it, "**the principle and law of, from**

and which is the spirit and attitude of 'The Life within Christ Jesus'" (Rom. 8:2). It is neither complex nor hierarchical. It is a dispensing of mutual serving in love. It overwhelmed and consumed the seed from which it grew: the Law (which had to fall into the ground and die).

It first came to the Jews, through Jesus and then the Jerusalem community, but now it **is being given**, by Paul in this case, **unto and into [the Gentiles]**. The gift first to Paul, and now being given by him, is explained in the next verse: it was what "was made know to him" through the unveiling of the secret, which was a new house-law of Grace which

came from, belonged to and pertained to, Jesus Christ (vs. 1, above).

3. that, in accord with an unveiling (or: down from and in line with a revelation; in keeping with a disclosure), **the secret** (or: mystery) **was made known to me – even as I before wrote** (or: wrote aforetime), **in brief –**

The phrase “**in accord with an unveiling**” first of all affirms the genre of communication in which the “**house-law of the grace of God**” came to Paul and the others (vs. 5b, below). It was apocalyptic (which is an adjective derived from the noun that means “unveiling, etc.” – Greek: *apocalupsis*), which means that it was revealed by

God and had previously been “veiled” or “covered” and could not be “seen” (e.g., by a “seer”) and thus was not common knowledge or something that was taught in the histories, prophecies or religious traditions (*cf* Gal. 1:15). It required a disclosure from God, and, especially in the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, it was often communicated by visions and symbolic material and so was usually figurative in nature.

The preposition “in accord with” (*kata*) denotes the direction “down,” so this unveiling came from “above” – a reference to God, heaven and the realm of spirit. That it was “in line with” denotes the conforming parallel

association between the antecedent and the object of the preposition. This “disclosure” was in line with a “revelation” and thus had the form and character of apocalyptic literature and a “God-encounter” (a theophany). Its importance to humanity, as a message from God, was “in keeping with” a “disclosure” that would effect the relationship between God and humans. “The apocalyptic frame is evident. God has a plan that is a mystery hidden for ages that is now revealed” (Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, ibid p 362).

Paul wrote of this secret being made known, in Col. 1:26,

“**the Secret** (or: sacred mystery)

having been hidden away and remaining concealed away from the ages (or: from [past] eons), as well as away from the [past] generations, yet now (at the present time) is set in clear light in His set-apart folks (or: was manifested to His holy ones; is caused to be seen by His saints; is shown for what it is, for His sacred people).”

Note the variety of functions that the dative allows in the final phrase of this Col. verse, first rendered, “set in clear light **IN** His set-apart folks.” This is a pattern for us. We are to show forth His light and make clear what had been a

secret in the old covenant days, and even before that.

We see that this was not the first letter that he had sent to this region, and he expects his audiences to be aware of the disclosure of **the secret** which he is amplifying in this letter.

4. toward which [end] you, the folks continually reading (or: habitually reviewing and recognizing; progressively gathering up knowledge), **are constantly able and continue with power to comprehend** (conceive; understand; apprehend) **my understanding** (insight; confluence; my sending insights together) **in the secret** (or: mystery) **of the Christ** (or: which is

the Anointed One [= the Messiah]; from the Christ; with the character of the [Messiah]),

He did not consider the understanding contained in this secret revelation to be only for the wise, the educated or some elite folks within the communities to which he was writing. The knowledge that came from the disclosure (vs. 3, above) was something that all addressees of this sermon, upon **continually reading**, habitually reviewing and progressively gathering up [its] knowledge, were **constantly able and continued having power to comprehend** – which was, in fact, Paul's **understanding** and insight **in the**

secret of the Christ!

The last phrase, **of the Christ**, I next rendered as apposition: “which is the Anointed One.” As an ablative, this could be understood as “the secret [that came] from the Christ,” implying that Christ was the source of this revealed knowledge. Schnackenburg suggests that this is “a characterising Genitive” (ibid p 133), which would inform us that what Paul and others were proclaiming “had the character” that we see in Jesus, the Messiah. Read as “the mystery or secret of the Christ,” it is saying that this unveiling is all about Christ, and that it belongs to Him – and not to another. It is implied that it was the new reality

of their having the Spirit which would give them the ability and the power, as he points out in the next verse by the phrase **in spirit**. By this same Breath-effect that Paul received, they too would be able to “apprehend [his] sending insights together” to picture in their minds how the Messiah-event WAS the secret plan which God had all along. We see in the writings of Paul how he would reach back into Israel’s story and create a “confluence” of how things stood together in the OT Scriptures which gave “insight” to him concerning the Christ.

5. which to other generations (or: for births of a different kind; in and during generations of another nature) **was not**

made known to the sons of mankind (humanity; the humans) **as it is now** (at the present time) **uncovered** (unveiled; revealed) **in spirit** (or: within a Breath-effect; or: in union with [the] Spirit) **by** (or: to; in; among) **His set-apart emissaries** (or: consecrated representatives that were sent forth from Him) **and prophets** (folks having light ahead of time),

This **secret** was something new and was not a part of what had been previously known in different generations – both within the old covenant folks, and among the ethnic multitudes. The phrase, “**other generations**” refers, first of all, to past history – for both Jew and Gentile. Also,

it was not given to folks who had been born under special circumstance or with special innate abilities (i.e., “for births of a different kind”). Furthermore, it **was not made known** “in and during generations of another nature (e.g., either more highly advanced or more primitive).” None of **the sons of mankind** (or, “humanity”) had this mystery **made known** (i.e., by God – the “divine passive”) to them before the advent of the Messiah. Note the scope of this “making known”: mankind; humanity (not just to “Club Christiania”). This was only happening “at the present time” – **now**. Regarding the subordinate clause, “**AS it is now uncovered...**”

Schnackenburg explains,

“The conjunction *hos* (as) does not in context signify a difference in degree but a completely new occurrence” (ibid).

We can understand (from the second half of this verse) that even though **the secret of the Christ** was **unveiled** and **made known** to Paul (vs. 3, above), it was also **uncovered by, to and among** the other **set-apart emissaries** and folks who had this light ahead of time.

The dative form of the phrase **His set-apart emissaries** allows for the instrumental function, **by**, which signifies their integral position in God’s saving event. The proclamation of the

Gospel is phase two, for as Rom. 10:14 informs us, “**how can they at any point hear apart from a person continually making public proclamation** (habitually publishing and extensively heralding)?” But this can also simply say that this secret was “revealed to” them, or it can speak spatially and be saying that it was “unveiled in, or among, His consecrated representatives that were sent forth from Him.”

The phrase with the term **spirit** can speak of the realm or sphere in which the “uncovering” happened, or locate them as existing “within a Breath-effect,” or it can signify how it happened: by being “in union with [the]

Spirit.” However we read this, we can conclude that it was a spiritual occurrence which came from God.

6. (or, reading the phrase "in spirit" with the next phrase rather than the previous one:) **In spirit the nations** (the Gentiles; the ethnic multitudes; non-Jews) **are to continuously be joint-heirs** (fellow-participants by allotment) **and a Joint Body** (sharing together the same body) **and joint sharers** (partakers) **of The Promise** – [along with the rest], **resident within** (or: of the assurance in union with) **Christ Jesus through the good news** (or: [spreading or coming to be] throughout the midst by means of the message of goodness, ease and well-

being)

The *Concordant Literal New Testament* also has “in spirit” modifying “**the nations,**” rather than modifying, “**it is now uncovered...**” in vs. 5, above. In the Greek text, the phrase lies directly between “the prophets” and “the nations.” Both readings of the text make sense. If we have it modify “the nations,” then vs. 5 would read, “[the secret] is now revealed to and by the sacred spokespeople and prophets” and here in vs. 6, this secret is:

“In spirit the nations (etc.) are to continuously be joint-heirs and a Joint Body and joint sharers of The Promise.”

This all happened “in Christ” Who is the giver of the Spirit. This new creation is “in the Spirit,” just as the kingdom is “within us.” It is the Spirit of Christ indwelling the Gentiles (the expectation of glory – Col. 1:27) that has joined them to Israel’s olive tree (Rom. 11:17). Verse 17, below, instructs us that we are, **“to inhabit** (dwell down in; take up permanent abode in) **the Christ** (or: to house the Anointed One; or: to make a house in the sphere of the Anointing), **through the faith and by means of the trust within your hearts, being folks having been rooted** (or: having taken root) **and now**

established and placed on a foundation within the midst of and in union with Love (or: having been grounded and rendered firm, centered in love and unambiguous acceptance).”

Love, faith/trust within our hearts, the Christ – all these are “**in spirit.**”

The three nouns rendered **joint-** are all prefixed with the same preposition: *sun*. To reproduce in English the effect of this repeated use of the same prefix, Moffatt renders these phrases, "co-heirs, companions, and co-partners of the Promise," but what he translates “companions” is literally a “**sharing of the same body.**” This new entity of

“One New Humanity” (2:15, above) is
“**God's down-home place within [the]
Spirit**” (2:22, above).

“**The Promise [is] resident within
Christ Jesus.**” The ethnic multitudes are
“fellow-participants by allotment”...
through the good news. Another way to
read “**through**” (*dia*), by conflating two
meanings of the preposition, produces
the alternate rendering: “... joint
partakers of the assurance, in union with
Christ Jesus [spreading] throughout the
midst by means of the message of
goodness, ease and well-being.” In his
letter to the province of Galatia, Paul
addressed the subject of “the Promise”
in 3:14-29,

"Now since you folks belong to Christ (or: have [the] Anointing as your source and origin; or: So since you people have the qualities and character of Christ, and [are] that which is Christ), you are straightway and consequently Abraham's Seed: heirs (possessors and enjoyers of the distributed allotment), down from, corresponding to and in the sphere of Promise!" (vs. 29).

Then in ch. 4:28 he concludes,

"Now we [other MSS: you folks], brothers (= fellow believers; = my family), down from (or: corresponding to; in the

sphere of) **Isaac, are**
(continuously exist being)
children of Promise (or: ones-
born of [the] Promise)."

We, His first-fruits, His temple, have been born from the Promise that is **resident within Christ Jesus**. When it is time for their birth (within whatever age has been appointed for them), everyone else shall also be His "born-ones," as was Paul -- alluded to in the next verse.

7. of which I came to be (was birthed; became) **an attendant** (a server; one who renders service and dispenses) **in accord with, down from, in the sphere of and commensurate with the gift of God's grace and the joy-producing act**

of favor – that being given to me (or: by me) in accord with (or: down from; corresponding to; to the level of; in line with; in the sphere of) the operative, effective, internal working energy of His power and ability!

The immediate antecedent of “**of which**” is “**the good news**” – this verse being a continuation of vs. 6, in the text. The verb that follows, **came to be**, can also be translated “was birthed,” and I included this concept since this happened by the action of Jesus (when Paul was on the road to Damascus), and Jesus had told Nicodemus that the Jews needed to be “born again” in Jn. 3:7b, “**It is necessary and binding for you**

folks [note the plural: this means “you Jews” or “you Pharisees” or “you, the Jewish leadership”] **to be born back up again to a higher place** (or: for you people to be given birth from above).”

He was birthed into a position or function within the kingdom, and thus “became” an attendant **“in the sphere of and commensurate with the gift.”**

The gift is **God’s grace: the joy-producing act of favor.** In his being “born back up again to a higher place” he was receiving this gratuitous **act that produced joy** which he then spread about, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. This gift was given to him **in accord with (etc.) the operative,**

effective, internal working energy of His power. Witherington reads these two “**in accord with**” constructions in this way:

“The parallel *kata* phrases have the rhetorical effect of emphasizing the source and power of the gift given to Paul.... This is redundancy not just for its own sake but for the sake of emphasis and impressing the point on the audience...” (ibid p 266).

Schnackenburg (ibid p 135 n 21) points us to 1 Cor.15:10,

“Yet in (or: by; for; with) God's grace, and joyous favor which is God, I am what I am, and His

**[placed]-into-me grace (or:
[birthed]-into-me joyous favor)
was not birthed to be empty, but
on the contrary, I toiled to
exhaustion by hard labor in
excess of them all – yet not I,
but rather God's grace and
favor, together with me [other
MSS read: which {is} with me].”**

The term **attendant**, or “one who renders service and dispenses,” is in the semantic range of the parallel thought in vs. 2, above, “**the house-law** (or: the dispensing within the household; the administration; management of the household; or: the distribution).” So Paul has picked up that theme, again, and

here we also have another phrase using the same preposition (*kata* – **in accord with**, etc.) that opens vs. 3, above. There these terms and phrases are related to “the grace of God” and “the unveiling of the secret.” Here, his work and function relates to “**the gift of God’s grace**,” but then this idea is expanded in his description that this grace was given to him, “**in accord with** (*kata*, again) **the operative, effective internal working energy of His power and ability**. This gives us another picture of what he described in 2:22, above, as happening “**in [the] Spirit, or in spirit**.” This kind of intensifying redundancy (for emphasis, to drive the point home) is

what Witherington describes as “a frequently used technique in epideictic rhetoric, especially of the Asiatic sort” (Witherington, *ibid* p 266). In other words, Paul had a purpose for writing this way which had his audience in mind (rhetoric of this sort being the social entertainment of the day, in the Hellenistic world, especially).

The "divine passive" (indicating the action by God) is once again seen in the expression, "**that being given to me.**" But note that this dative phrase flows into Paul's mission of dispensing, so that what was given "to" him is also now being given "by [him]." The divine passive is still seen in this second

rendering, but Paul is now the instrument through which God is giving **the gift of God's grace and the joy-producing act of favor** to other folks.

Paul also describes what God made him and his associates in 2 Cor. 3:5b-11, and there describes the difference between the old covenant and the new:

“... our competency (adequacy; sufficiency; qualification) [is] forth from out of the midst of (having its source in) God, Who also adequately qualifies us (or: made us fit, competent and sufficient) [to be] attending servants and dispensers of an arrangement that is new in

quality (or: pertaining to a new kind of covenant that has a different character and is fresh and effective) – **not of [the] letter** (or: not pertaining to the result of that which is written down; not having its source in the effect of a written text), **but in contrast, of a Breath-effect** (or: pertaining to the result of [the] Spirit; having its source in and being the effect of spirit and attitude), **for the effect of letter habitually kills** (or: the result of writing something into a text repeatedly puts away in death), **yet the Spirit** (or: the spirit; the

breath-effect; the Attitude)
continuously gives life (or:
repeatedly makes alive;
progressively forms life;
habitually creates life)!

“Now since (or: if) the attending service of the Death (or: the dispensing of provision from death; the serving of provisions and support, which is the death) – **being one that has been formed by a beaten impression of types and the outlines of patterns that exists as engravings within letters and the effects of written texts chiseled on stones – was birthed and came into existence**

within glory, so that the sons of Israel came to be continuously unable to intently gaze into the face of Moses, because of the glory and manifestation which came from his face – which [glory] was being progressively unemployed so as to be brought down to having no work, to be ineffective and nullified – how shall not rather the attending service and dispensing of the provision of the Spirit continue being within glory?

“For since (or: if) the attending service and dispensing of the corresponding evaluations and

commensurate decisions which follow the pattern (or: separations for condemnation; judgments which are down-decisions against folks) **[had] glory, to a much greater degree does the attending service and the dispensing of the fairness and equity in rightwised relationships** (or: righteousness from covenantal inclusion: that which corresponds to the Way pointed out, and which turns us in the right direction) **progressively surround and continuously exceed in glory** (or: habitually overflow with a manifestation

which calls forth praise and brings a good reputation)!

[comment: it would seem that Paul is casting the Law as a dispenser of condemnation, and is contrasting that to the Good News – casting this latter as a dispenser of “righteousness” and a servant for folks being turned in the right direction]

“In fact, even that which had been made glorious, [by comparison] has not been glorified so as to now be glorious – in this respect: on account of

the transcending glory which is constantly surpassing [that] and progressively over-casting [us]. You see, since that which was being progressively unemployed and brought down to doing no work – even being made ineffective and nullified – [came] through glory, to a much greater extent is the continuously remaining one (the dwelling, abiding and enduring one) [existing] within the midst of glory.” Cf Rom. 15:16

The term “**operative... energy**” that modifies the final phrase “of His power and ability” is a noun that has *en-*

prefixed to it, which gives the sense that this is an “**internal working**,” whether that be within an individual, or within a corporate body, and fits the image of God living “within” His temple (i.e., within people or amidst groups of people). This term is found only here and in 1:19, above, in the NT. The idea, once again, is that this new arrangement in God’s economy in His relationship with His creatures is one of His personal use of **His power and ability** to bring joy to mankind, with them being His dwelling place (2:22, above). The expansion of the term **grace** (*charis*) which is a cognate of **joy** (*chara*) yields the phrase, **the joy-producing act of**

favor (which is a version of the definition given by Jim Coram).

8. To me, the one far inferior to (or: less than the least among) **all of those set apart** (or: the saints; the holy people), **was given this grace and joyous favor: to myself address the nations** (non-Jews; Gentiles; ethnic multitudes) **with the good news of** (or: whose source is) **the untrackable** (untraceable; or: not-searched-out and unexplored) **riches of the Christ**

(or: to for myself declare and bring to the ethnic groups the message of goodness, ease and well-being of the unexplored wealth which is the Anointed

One),

The first half of this verse is echoed in 1 Cor. 15:9,

“For I myself am the smallest (thus: the least one) of the sent-forth people (envoys; representatives), who am not adequate to reach [the stature] to be normally called a sent-off representative or emissary, because I pursued and persecuted God's called-out (or: the community of the called-out).”

Jerome (ibid p 149) noted here that Jesus told his apprentices, in Mt. 20:26,
"... whoever may be now wanting or should continue

intending to become great (or: = to make himself to be important) **among you, he will continue** (or: proceed in) **being your attending servant."**

Grassi observes that "Christ had literally to 'capture' him (Phil. 3:12)" (ibid p 346). Paul elaborates on this in 1 Tim. 1:15-16,

"Christ Jesus came into the ordered System (the world of secular culture, religion, government and economy; or: the cosmos) **to rescue failures** (to deliver those missing the target; to save and make sinners healthy and whole; to restore outcasts to their

rightful position), **of whom I myself exist being first** (or: am foremost). **But nonetheless, through this I was mercied** (or: I am given mercy), **to the end that within me first** (= as the foremost case) **Jesus Christ may point out so as to publicly display every emotion which is long in arriving** (all long-suffering patience) **with a view to being an underline** (toward [being] a subtype; as facing a sketch or outline; for a pattern) **of those about to be habitually believing** (or: progressively trusting; one-after-another placing faith) **upon Him,**

[that is,] into the midst of eonian life (into Life which pertains to and has the qualities and characteristics of the Age [of Messiah]; into life of, and which lasts through, the ages).” *Cf* 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11

Paul uses the same descriptive term **untrackable** in Rom. 11:33,

“O, the depth of [the] riches (wealth; resources) **and wisdom and intimate, experiential knowledge and insight of God** (or: from God)! **How unsearchable** (inscrutable) **the effects of His decisions** (the results of the distinctive

separations, judicial awards, judgments and evaluations from Him), **and untrackable** (untraceable) **His ways** (paths; roads).”

The adjective **untrackable** “comes from the noun for footprint or track” (Witherington, *ibid* p 267 n 81). This calls to mind the imagery that Jesus used in Jn. 3:8,

“The wind constantly blows where it presently sets its will, and you constantly hear its sound, but yet you have not seen and do not know from where it is coming, nor where it is going. Thus is everyone (or: does

everyone constantly exist being) – the one being birthed, having been born forth from out of the midst of the Spirit (or: Breath-effect; Attitude).”

Again, the **riches of Christ** are “**within [the] Spirit** (or: in spirit; or: in the midst of a Breath-effect and an attitude)” (2:22, above).

9. and to illuminate all people (give light to everyone) **[as to] what [is] the execution of the detailed plan and household administration of the secret** (or: mystery) **pertaining to that having been hidden** (concealed) **away, apart from the ages** (or: disassociated from the [past] periods of time), **within the**

midst of God – in the One forming and founding (framing, building and settling from a state of disorder and wildness)
all things (the Whole; everything) –
Verses 9-11 present an apocalyptic world view: **the secret... hidden away apart from the ages... in union with the highest heavens... God's wisdom... the called-out community... the authorities, privileged folks on elevated positions... a purpose of the ages... formed in Christ.** And all this is a picture of what then existed (**now**, at [that] present time – vs. 10). They lived in the conjunction of the ages (Mat. 24:3; Mk. 13:3; Heb. 9:26).

Verse 9 is a continuation of vs. 8 where

he just said, “**to myself address the nations** (non-Jews; Gentiles; ethnic multitudes) **with the good news.**” Now he tells them that the reason is “**to illuminate ALL people** (give light to everyone) with this good news.” His message is for everyone, to enlighten them (note the inclusive language; *cf* comments on 2:11, above). And now we see that his message was about **the execution of the detailed plan** concerning the **administration of the secret**. Keep in mind that he is speaking metaphorically and is painting with large brush-strokes of what seems to be generalities: his message of illumination was **pertaining to that having been**

hidden (concealed) **away, apart from the ages** (or: disassociated from the [past] periods of time), **within the midst of God**. In vs. 5, above, he spoke of “**other generations**,” so we know that he has human history in mind. We know that the secret is the Christ-event which brought the good news of the new creation of joining what was a divided humanity into One New Humanity. But this information had been hidden in God, and no one knew about it. Here he is referring to this secret having been hidden **in the Creator: the One forming and founding** (framing, building and settling from a state of disorder and wildness) **all things** (the Whole;

everything) – so the reference point would seem to be the creation of the universe, and yet at the same time can be referring to the **founding and building** of His **down-home place**. Col. 1:26a

brings these two time-frames together,
“the Secret (or: sacred mystery) having been hidden away and remaining concealed away from the ages (or: from [past] eons), as well as away from the [past] generations...”

We see similar language in the book of Daniel. In Dan. 2:28 he tells the king, **“But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets** and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be **in**

the latter days.” It is important to note that the secret that Daniel revealed to the king concerned a sequence of kingdoms and times that would lead up to the fourth kingdom (which I suggest was the Roman Empire with its ten provinces) when “a Stone was cut out without hands [figure of God doing the action] which smote the image upon its feet [the final kingdom in the vision, the time of the Roman Empire] and broke THEM (all the kingdoms of the world, in that time sequence) to pieces” (2:34). In this apocalyptic vision, **the Stone** (sound familiar? a figure of the Messiah, the Foundation stone or the Keystone – 2:20, above) “became a great mountain (figure

of a kingdom – *cf* 2:44) and filled the whole earth” (2:35).

Now in 1 Jn. 2:18 he is telling the people, “**we constantly know by experience that it continues being a last hour** (= a closing moment [of the age]).” In 1 Pet. 1:20 he speaks of Christ, “**being set in clear light and manifested upon [the] last part** (or: final; [*p*72 and others read plural: last things, circumstances or aspects]) **of the times** (or: of the [or: these] successive chronological time periods).” Those were momentous times of the 1st century as the age of the Law came to an end and the age of the Messiah came into being and made all things new (Rev. 21:5) –

with a new covenant and a new humanity (figuratively, a new heaven and a new earth).

With the language of an apocalyptic world view in mind, we can proceed to more descriptions. Remember that the OT visions usually spoke of God interacting with humans and human kingdoms.

10. to the end that now (at this present time), **in union with the highest heavens, God's greatly diversified wisdom** (the exceedingly varied in colors [as in a tapestry or the Veil] wisdom which is God; or: the many-phased wisdom from God) **could be made known – through the called-out**

community – to the governments (or: rulers; sovereignties; chief ones) as well as to the authorities and folks with privilege among those situated upon elevated positions

(or: made known through the summoned and gathered congregation: by the original members and the folks who have the right, that is, among the upper-heavenly folks; or: made known by means of the ecclesia with the founders and people having the privilege – in union with these celestial ones, within the midst of the things situated upon the atmospheres and among the folks

[residing] upon the atmospheres),

The end in view, for Paul, was the illumination of the ethnic multitudes concerning their present time, and how the Christ-event – which was **in union with the heavens** – as the manifestation of **God's greatly diversified and many-phased wisdom** that concerned all humanity (both Jew and Gentile in One economy of His Kingdom) has actually affected them. It was the time when the culmination of God's purpose of the ages (next verse) **could be made known** (through apocalyptic revelation) **to the governments as well as to the authorities and folks with privilege among those situated** (in societies and

governments) **upon elevated positions.** This is apocalyptic language to describe world situations and people groups. The term “**now**” reinforces his argument that what follows pertains to the Christ-event and its present effects upon humanity. The emphatic phrase, “**in union with the heavens,**” implies that this is a work of God and a manifestation of His reign over the earth. As a contrast to all the Jewish wisdom literature (e.g., Prov. 8:27ff; Wis. 8:4, 6; 9:9; etc.), Paul sets this example of **God’s wisdom** apart, and thus above all the rest, by terming it “**greatly diversified**” – literally “exceedingly varied in colors,” as with a tapestry that

depicts a scene or tells a story: here the story of the wisdom which IS God. The Veil that defined and was the entrance to the holy of holies in the Tabernacle was multi-colored and also was made with cherubim (Ex. 26:31 ff; 36:35). Heb. 10:20 tells us that the anti-type of this Veil was His flesh (and in this Priestly act He was representing and including a multi-colored humanity). It can also be considered to imply “many-phases” – implying both the time involved with the growth of His **down-home place**, its world-wide effects and its place in the ages to come, or the phases of His plan that began before the creation. The mission to the Gentiles is – at least –

phase two of the wisdom which also came “from God,” following the cross and His resurrection (combined with the giving of the Holy Spirit), and which has from that time to the present been lived out through his multi-colored body, the called-out folks.

Next Paul instructs us that this wisdom was to **be made known to the governments**, or to rulers, sovereignties and chief ones throughout the world.

This also applied to **the authorities**, and to **folks with privilege** (another meaning of “authorities”) in societies and governments that are **upon elevated positions** in these governments, societies or economies.

This second phase of the Christ-event (the expanding of the Age of the Messiah) happens **through the called-out community** (or: through the summoned and gathered congregation; or: by means of the ecclesia). We saw this beginning in the book of Acts. It continues in our day. It is always a “**now**” situation. Paul described this in Rom. 10:13-15, but note his statement just before this,

“You see, there is no distinction or separation made by putting asunder in order to define or distinguish between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord (Owner; Master) of everyone (or:

for the same One [being] Lord of all) **is continuously being enriching...**" (vs. 12a).

This calls to our context in 2:12-19, above.

The two plural nouns following the verb are in the dative, so the parenthetical expansion presents optional functions, along with other lexical meanings of the nouns:

- a) by the original members and the folks who have the right...
- b) with the founders and people having privilege...

The final prepositional phrase is first given rendering *ouranos* from its basic meaning of "a vault, ceiling, or roof"

that is “elevated” above the ground or the earth. Since this is not a literal passage, but an apocalyptic, figurative, plural expression, and the noun is prefixed by *epi-*, on offer is the translation: **among** (*en* with a plural noun) **those** (plural definite article) **situated upon elevated positions**. This seems to best correspond with referents: **governments... authorities... folks with privilege** and provides a quite natural picture that the apocalyptic context is describing. Alternate options for this phrase are:

- a) among the upper-heavenly folks
- b) in union with these celestial ones

c) within the midst of the things situated upon the atmospheres

d) among the folks [residing] upon the atmospheres.

Recall 2:6, above, that He has, “**He jointly roused and raised** (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us]) **together within the things situated upon the heavens**” (*cf* the parenthetical expansions there). Yet they were, and we are, still residing upon the earth, physically. This is a picture of an internal and spiritual reality, just as His reign and kingdom are within us – His “house plan.”

In this present context, it would have

referred to the sent-forth people preaching to the priests (whose place was in the figurative heavens: the temple) and Jewish leaders in the book of Acts, or to Paul speaking before the governors and kings (also in the book of Acts), or to John who was told in Rev. 10:11, “**It presently necessitates you** (or: It is now binding [for] you) **to prophesy** (to exercise the function of a prophet) **again upon peoples and multitudes** (nations; ethnic groups) **and tongues** (languages) **and many kings.**” The apocalyptic picture in Rev. 21:24 instructs us that, “**the kings of the Land** (or: earth) **continually carry** (bring; bear) **their glory** [Codex Vaticanus

adds: and honor] **into her.**”

Paul and his associates were already making God’s wisdom know, as he said in 1 Cor. 2:7-8,

“we habitually speak God's wisdom within the midst of a secret (or: we normally speak – in [the form or realm of] a mystery which only the initiated understand – the wisdom which is God): the [wisdom] having been hidden away and remaining concealed, which God before marked out and set its boundaries (or: previously designed) – before the ages – [leading] into our glory (our

manifestation which calls forth praise; our good reputation), **which [wisdom] not one of the rulers** (leaders; chief people) **of this age know** (or: came to know) **by intimate experience or insight. For if they knew, they would not likely have crucified the Owner of the glory.”**

Note that the “**rulers**” of which he speaks were the ones that crucified the Messiah. Their position of being “over” the people made them (in apocalyptic terms) “upper-heavenly folks, the celestial ones” who lived in the highest social, governmental and religious levels of the Empire. They were

“situated upon the atmospheres” where people lived and breathed.

In Lu. 11:49a, Jesus says, **“That is why (or: On account of this) the Wisdom of God also said, 'As emissaries I will proceed sending off prophets and representatives unto them (or: into the midst of them)...”** And in Mat. 11:19 He reminded them, **“Well, Wisdom was set and deemed in right relationship with fairness and equity in the Way pointed out – from its deeds (works and actions)!”** Then in Lu. 21:15 he told His apprentices,

“You see, I Myself will continue giving to you people a mouth (= ability and an opportunity to

speak) as well as wisdom, to which all your opponents, who are repeatedly lying in ambush against you, will not continue being able to at any point stand in opposition to or resist, nor to speak against or contradict.”

The last phrases of the second half of the verse can be rendered, beginning with the instrumental dative: “by the original members and the folks who have the right, that is, among the upper-heavenly folks.” Since Paul was speaking of their present situation, “the original members (*archais*)” could be referring to that first generation of Christ’s emissaries. They were the temple of that day, which was a

figure of God's home (a "heavenly" abode), and so were the "upper-heavenly folks" – the priests of this new order. For another picture of this, see Heb. 12:22ff which describes the called-out as "Jerusalem upon the heavens."

The final rendering [beginning with the associative dative] of these phrases on offer are: "with the founders (*archais*) and people having the privilege – in union with these celestial ones, within the midst of the things situated upon the atmospheres and among the folks [residing] upon the atmospheres." This apocalyptic description is of those referred to in 2:6, above.

11. **in accord with** (or: down from; corresponding to) **a purpose of the ages** (a fore-designed aim, plan and object [which He is bent on achieving] of the unspecified time-periods) **which He formed** (forms; made; constructs; creates; produced) **within the Christ by our Lord and Owner, Jesus** (or: in union with Jesus the Anointed One [= Messiah], within the midst of and for our Lord and Master),

This is “**made known**” (vs. 10, above) “**in accord with (*kata*)” a purpose, and this purpose, or, “fore-designed aim, plan and object” spans **the ages of unspecified time-periods**. With God we have expectations lying ahead for**

humanity. It is **the greatly diversified wisdom** (Christ) which is the **purpose** of all the **ages**, and which is **now made known** to humanity.

Now consider this apocalyptic and creation-wide picture that he describes as that **which He formed within the Christ**. This would be speaking of the cosmic and corporate Christ which Paul calls the “*eschatos Adam*” and the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:45-50) of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) “which He creates/made/produced within the Christ,” where it also informs us that “**we can and should** [B reads: will] **also bear and wear the image of the supra-heavenly One** (or: belonging to the One

having the quality and character of the finished and perfected atmosphere; or: from the fully-heaven [sphere]; of the added-sky person)” – 1 Cor. 15:49b.

This was accomplished “**by our Lord and Owner, Jesus.**” Or, the combined phrases can be read, “which He (i.e., God) produced in union with Jesus, the Anointed One, within the midst of and for our Lord and Master.” This would call to mind 2 Cor. 5:19a,

“God was existing within Christ (God was and continued being in union with [the] Anointed One) progressively and completely transforming [the] aggregate of humanity (or: world) to be other

[than it is]...”

The statement here in vs. 11 concerning God's "intention" can be seen as a decision made by God prior to the creation of the ages. But more than this, it affirms there being a purpose for everything and that each -- both of creation and of humanity -- has "a fore-designed aim, plan and object." We find the shortest statement and overview of this plan in Rom. 11:36,

"forth from out of the midst of Him, then through the midst of Him (or: through means of Him), and [finally] into the midst of Him, [is; will be] the whole (everything; [are] all things; or: =

Because He is the source, means and goal/destiny of all things – everything leads into Him)! **By Him** (In Him; To Him; For Him; With Him) **[is] the glory** (the manifestation of that which calls forth praise; the reputation; the notion; the opinion; the imagination; the credit; the splendor) **on into the ages."**

This means that those folks,

"having been brought under the curse, continue proceeding on your way, away from Me, into the eonian fire

(or: fire for an undetermined period of

time; the fire which comes with the Age [of Messiah]; the fire pertaining to and having its source in the Age; the age-lasting fire; the fire having the quality and characteristics of the Age) – **the one having**

been prepared and made ready in (or: by; with; for) the person who thrusts [something] through [folks] (the adversary; one who casts [something] through the midst and causes division; the 'devil') as well as in (or: by; with; for) his agents (messengers),"
(Mat. 25:41)

will find their end within "**the midst of Him.**" The plan of the ages also shows that there is purpose for these same folks, who,

"will continue going off (or: coming away) into an eonian pruning

(a lopping-off which lasts for an undetermined length of time; an age-lasting correction and rehabilitation; a pruning which brings betterment and which has its source and character in the Age; a cutting off during the ages)" (Mat. 25:46a).

Keeping in mind that **the ages** are **formed and produced within the Christ**, we must conclude that all things are within Him, and we should perceive **purpose** for the apocalyptic picture shown in Rev. 20:14-15,

"the Death and the Unseen (or: = the grave) **are cast** (or: were thrown) **into the lake** (or: basin; artificial pool) **of the Fire** (or: the marshy area where there is fire). **This is the second death: the lake of the Fire** (or: the basin which is fire). **So if anyone is not found** (or: was not found) **written within the scroll of** (or: which is) **The Life, he is cast** (or: was

thrown) **into the lake of the Fire** (or: the artificial pool having the character and quality of the Fire; the marshy area from the Fire; the shallow basin, where there is fire)."

We observe a similar apocalyptic picture where folks who have been marked by the character of the beast's thinking and activities are,

"... **being examined** (scrutinized with the touchstone to test his "mettle") **within Fire and Deity** (or: in union with Fire, even Divine qualities) **in the presence of** (before; in the sight of) **the set-apart agents, and in the**

presence of (before) the little Lamb" (Rev. 14:10b).

Everything has purpose, and these pictures in Rev. 20 and 14 have their symbolic interpretation explained in the prophetic picture from Israel's prophet Malachi 3, where Yahweh is described as,

"like a refiner's fire... and He will sit like a refiner and a cleanser of silver, and He will cleanse the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and like silver..." (vss. 2b-3a).

Yahweh identified Himself as "King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts," and then says, "I am the First, and

I am the Last" (Isa. 44:6; CVOT). We find the risen Christ speaking the same thing in Rev. 1:17, "**As for Me, I am the First and the Last** (or: I Myself continuously exist being the first one as well as the Last One)." The entire story of humanity, from "the Alpha to the Omega" (Rev. 1:11) and all the ages in between, **He formed within the Christ, by our Lord and Owner, Jesus.** To understand what Paul has said in this verse, we must enter into the 1st century thinking of Jewish apocalyptic literature and imagery. Here we should also keep in mind Paul's references elsewhere in this essay, e.g., where in 2:7, above, he speaks of "**the continuously oncoming**

ages," and in 3:21, below, he uses the phrase, "all the generations (births; progenies) of the Age of the ages."

Another witness to vs. 11, above, is Heb. 1:2,

"upon [the] last of these days spoke to us in a Son whom He placed (or: sets) [as; to be] Heir of all (or: One who receives all humanity as an allotment; or: heir of all things; or: One who received everything as his allotted inheritance) through Whom He also made the ages."

And in Heb. 11:3 we are informed that, **"In faith and by confident, loyal**

trust, with the mind we constantly perceive (or: with the intellect we now understand) the ages to have been completely equipped by (and, or: thoroughly adjusted to; knit together and put in order in) God's gush-effect (or: the result of that which flowed from God; or: a declaration or speech that had the source, character and qualities of God; or: a spoken word which was God), into the [resultant situation]: the thing continuously being seen (being looked at and observed) has not come into being from out of the

midst of things which are normally appearing."

We cannot leave this topic of the ages without citing the inclusive picture of, **"Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and on into the ages"** (Heb. 13:8).

He is the Anointed Savior throughout all the ages that He formed within Himself.

12. within, and in union with, Whom we continuously have (progressively possess and hold) **the freedom of speech** (or: boldness, which comes with citizenship, to publicly speak the truth of a matter – without fear of reprisal) **and conducted access** (escorted admission), **in the midst of trust** (confident reliance

and loyalty), **through His faithfulness, trust, confidence and loyalty!**

Schnackenburg suggests that the opening phrase indicates “the sphere of salvation” (ibid p 142).

Witherington points out that the “two nouns about speech and access are governed by one definite article (‘the free speech and access...’), [thus are] two dimensions of the same reality” (ibid; brackets added). In 2:18, above, we saw that the united group of **The Two** (Jew and Gentile) now have “**the procurement of access** (conduct toward the presence; admission, being led), **within one Spirit** (or: in union with one Breath-effect and Attitude), **to** (or:

toward; face to face with) **the Father.**”
Now this same access exists in the
sphere of **trust, confident reliance and
loyalty, THROUGH His faithfulness** (to
the will of the Father, the cup that the
Father had given to Him to drink – Mk.
14:36; Jn. 18:11 – to endure the cross),
His trust in the Father, His confidence in
God’s plan and purpose, and His **loyalty**
to humanity. We read in Heb. 3:5-6a,

**“And so on the one hand, Moses
[was] faithful and loyal in the
midst of His whole house....**

**Christ [is faithful and loyal] as a
Son upon His house...”**

Paul describes this same thing in Rom.
5:2,

“through Whom, also, we have had and now hold the conducted approach and access (or: the act of bringing toward to gain entrée), by [His] faithfulness (or: in this trust; with that confidence; for loyalty), into this grace and joyous favor within which we have stood and in union with which we now stand, and so we keep on celebrating, speaking loudly and boasting upon the expectation (or: expectant hope) of God’s glory.”

This same topic is described in terms of the Temple cultus in Heb. 10:

19. Therefore, having freedom,

openness and boldness of speech which comes from being citizens, brothers (= fellow members), with a view to the Entrance of the set-apart places (or: into the Pathway-into the midst, pertaining to the Holiest Place, which is the separated ones and which pertains to the sacred folks) – within and in union with the blood of Jesus;

20. a Way (Path; Road) which was done anew (or: which He innovates and makes new in species, character or mode, within and in the midst) for us and in us, recently slain and yet living,

through the veil that is His flesh
(or: which way through the veil
He did anew for us – that is, His
flesh (= His body): recently slain,
and now living) –

21. along with a Great Priest
[enthroned] upon God's House
(or: the house from God) –

22. we can be continuously and
progressively approaching with
a true heart in union with full-
assurance from the completed
act of faithfulness (or: centered
within [the] full-carrying from
[His] loyalty and fidelity), **the**
hearts having been sprinkled
from a misery-gushed

consciousness of what is evil or unserviceable (or: a joint-knowledge full of labor; a conscience in a bad condition), **and then the body having been bathed in and by clean water.**

23. We can and should be continuously retaining (holding down to have in possession) **the unwavering same Word** (or: unbent like-thought and similar message; or: unbowed, binding association-agreement) **of the expectation** (or: from the unwavering expectant-hope), **for you see, the One promising [is] Faithful, Trustworthy and**

Loyal!

In connection with Heb. 10:20, here, call to mind Jesus' description of Himself in Jn. 14:6,

“I Myself am the Way (or: Path), the Truth (the Reality) and the Life. No one is presently going to, or progressively coming toward, the Father, except through Me (through means of Me, or, through the midst of Me).”

The Father dwells in the midst of His home, i.e., His temple -- us. Jesus is the inward journey to Him there, as well as the outward journey to Him in other folks, and to everywhere. Christ's Life (figured in "His blood") has been

"sprinkled" upon our heats (Heb. 10:22b, above).

13. Wherefore I myself continually ask (or: request) not to be constantly despondent (or: repeatedly fainthearted) within my pressures and squeezings on behalf of you folks (or: over your [situation]). Whatever, it is [for] your glory and reputation (or: – something which is a manifestation which calls forth praise with regard to you).

Witherington sees this as a transition verse, with the rest of the chapter being a concluding prayer in which he sees an echo of Col. 1:23-29 (ibid). Here, we are reminded of what Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:12,

“So then, the Death is repeatedly and progressively operating and inwardly working within us, yet that Life [is constantly operative] within you folks.” (*Cf* also vs. 15, there)

In 2 Tim. 2:9-10 we similarly read,

“I am continually experiencing bad situations (suffering evil; experiencing bad treatment and conditions of poor quality) to the point of bonds (imprisonment) as a worthless worker (a criminal), but by comparison, the Word of God has not been bound or imprisoned, and thus remains untied! Because of this [fact], I

continue remaining under to support all people and to patiently endure all [situations], on account of the selected and picked-out folks, to the end that they, also, may hit the target of deliverance – that [which is] within Christ Jesus (or: resident within Christ: inherent in the Anointing) – together with glory (or: an appearance; an opinion; an imagination; a manifestation which calls forth praise) which has the characteristics and qualities of the Age (or: eonian glory; an age-lasting reputation).”

14. On account of this I continually

bend my knees (= in loyalty, respect and reverence) **to** (toward; or: face-to-face with) **the Father** [other MSS add: of (or: Who is) our Lord Jesus Christ], Paul is drawing his audience into his own relationship to God and into his understanding of God in His relationship with all of humanity. In regard to this personal reference of **bending [the] knees in loyalty, respect and reverence**, consider this picture as he uses this same term in Phil. 2:10-11, **“to the end that within The Name: Jesus!** (or: in union with the name of Jesus; in the midst of the Name belonging to [Yahweh-the-Savior]), **every knee** (=

person) – **of the folks upon the heaven** (of those belonging to the super-heaven, or [situated] upon the atmosphere) **and of the people existing upon the earth and of the folks dwelling down under the ground** (or: on the level of or pertaining to subterranean ones; [comment: note the ancient science of the day – a three-tiered universe]) – **may bend** (or: would bow) **in worship, prayer or allegiance, and every tongue** (= person) **may speak out the same thing** (should and would openly agree, confess, avow and acclaim) **that Jesus**

Christ [is] Lord (Master; Owner)
– [leading] into [the] glory of
Father God (or: unto Father
God's good reputation;
[progressing] into a manifestation
which calls forth praise unto God
[the] Father)!”

Heinrich Schlier points to Mk. 15:19
where the soldiers mocked Jesus,
“**repeatedly kneeling, continued doing
obeisance** (bowing down; [pretending]
worship) **to Him**,” and concludes from
this and other contexts:

“... no distinction is intended
between bowing the knee and full
prostration. Genuflection is linked
with prayer... with greeting...”

with homage.... The gesture thus expresses supplication, abasement, worship, subjection etc.” (*TDNT*, Vol. 1, WM B Eerdmans Pub., p 738).

In Rom. 11:4b, Paul quotes 1 Ki. 19:18 in reference to those who do not “**bend the knee to Baal**,” indicating both worship and serving that idol god. He quotes Isa. 45:23 in Rom. 14:11,

“The Lord [= Yahweh] is saying that in Me (by Me; to Me; for Me) every knee will repeatedly bend in worship, or, to sit down (or: I live, says the Lord, because every knee will repeatedly bend to sit down in Me), and every

**tongue will continue to agree,
bind itself and promise to God.”**

In this Isa. quote, the indirect object of the verb is the dative form of **Me**, and thus the locative function **“in Me”** suggests the idea expressed in 2:6, above, **“caused to sit.”** This calls to mind the picture of those **“continuously sitting”** around the throne in Rev. 4:4, and what Jesus told His apprentices in Lu. 22:30,

**“to the end that you folks can
continuously eat and drink at
My table, in union with My reign
and in the midst of My kingdom
and sovereign activities, and
now you can habitually SIT upon**

thrones, repeatedly making separations in, evaluations of and decisions for the twelve tribes (or: clans) of Israel.”

[note: the twelve tribes had been scattered; the last clause uses the present tenses]

Here in Eph. 3:14, “**bending [his] knees face to face with the Father**” can picture either a kneeling in adoration and allegiance, or a continual sitting in His presence, around His throne. We read in Rev. 3:21, “**I will continue giving [the right? the ability? the honor?] to SIT (or: be seated) with Me within My throne.**” Then we are advised in Rev. 20:4,

“And I saw thrones – and they SIT (or: sat; are seated) upon them, and judgment-effect (decision-result; judicial process and verdict) is given by them (or: authority to judge was given to them; decisions and separations are made by them)...”

We see an example of this in 1 Cor. 5:3 where Paul exerts this function,

“For I myself, indeed, continuing being absent – in the body – yet continuously being present alongside – in (or: by; with) the spirit (or: Breath-effect; or: attitude) – have, as being present, already sifted,

evaluated and decided about the man thus working down to this effect..."

Here, Paul's prayer is in conjunction with his "continually asking [God]" in the previous verse, and the opening phrase in this verse (**On account of this**) points back to what he had just said, "**Whatever, it is [for] your glory and reputation** (or: – something which is a manifestation which calls forth praise with regard to you)." It was for their benefit that he continually prayed **face-to-face with the Father**, and in the next verses we find the subject matter of his requests to God.

15. forth from Where (or: out of the

midst of Whom) **every family** (lineage; kindred; descent; paternal group) **within heaven and upon earth** (or: in [the] sky or atmosphere, and on [the] land) **is one after another being named** (or: spoken of, or to, by name; or: designated),

“There is here an emphasis on God as Father of all humans and especially of those who worship and properly serve him” (Witherington, *ibid* p 272). In Heb. 12:9 we read a similar inference,

“To a much greater extent, shall we not be continually placed under and humbly arranged and aligned by the Father of the spirits (or: the Progenitor of breath-effects and Mentor of

attitudes)? **And then we shall proceed living** (or: progressively live)!”

In vs. 4:6, below he informs us about, **“one God and Father of all humans – the One [descended; resting; dwelling] upon all people and [moving] through all people, and [existing] within the midst of all humanity and in union with all people and all things.”**

It is hard to find a more inclusive statement than Paul's statement, here. The phrase “within heaven and upon earth” was the ancient way of saying “in the universe,” or, “in all creation.” We should mark Paul's universal thinking

here, as elsewhere. The theme of this remark is “**family**” as is understood in the concept of **naming** a person, and people’s association with a “paternal group” (Greek: *patria*). Paul is intimating that humanity is God’s family.

16. to the end that He would give to you folks, in accord with (or: down from; in correspondence to and on the scale of) **the riches of His glory** (or: the wealth of the glory which is Him), **to be strengthened** (rendered strong; reinforced; made to grow strong and acquire strength) **in power and with ability – through His Breath-effect – for the interior person** (or: by means of the Spirit, which is Him, [proceeding])

into the midst of the humanity within,) This verse begins with a purpose clause: **to the end that...** The antecedent begins in Paul saying that he “**continually bends [his] knees** (= in loyalty, respect and reverence) **to** (toward; or: face-to-face with) **the Father**” (vs. 14), then continues in vs. 15 with an explanation of the universal inclusiveness of **every family** being related to **the Father**. So we can conclude that Paul is praying to the Father that the Father would give **strength** to his addressees, the Gentile recipients of this sermon, and “render [them] strong **in power and with ability for the interior person**. Verses 17-19, below, expand what he means by this.

Paul said this another way in 2 Cor.

4:16,

“certainly our inside [person] (= inner humanity or self) is day by day (or: from day to day; on a daily basis) being progressively made new again (or: renewed) in kind and quality so as to have a different character that is fresh and effective.”

And in Rom. 7:22 he speaks of,

“the principle and law which is God (or: the principle of God; or: the Law from God), down in (or: in correspondence with; on the level of) the inner human (or: the interior person within; the inside

humanity).”

This gift is to come “down from” (the spatial meaning of *kata*, in his apocalyptic description) **the riches of His glory**. Or, this can be read, “**in accord with** and on the scale of the wealth of the glory which is Him.” It was God’s presence among Israel (His glory inhabiting the Tabernacle in the wilderness) that made them different from all other nations. Yahweh’s presence protected them and provided for them. He gave them everything that they needed. This phrase reaches back to vs. 8, above, where he spoke of the “**riches of the Christ**,” and then back farther to 2:7 and 1:7 where it referred

to the **“riches of His grace.”** In Paul’s view of the new creation of the One New Humanity, **grace** and **glory** are equivalent to **the Christ**.

The **power and ability** (a conflation of *dunamis*, in the dative case; thus: **in** and **with** these) come to people **through His Breath-effect**, or, by means of the Spirit, which is Him, and in 2 Cor. 4:13 Paul refers to our,

“continuously possessing (having and holding) **that faith's very Breath-effect and the same Spirit of fidelity** (or: **the Spirit which itself is the Trust**; or: the spirit and attitude which itself comes from the Faithfulness [of

Christ]).”

In the bold rendering, I gave an extended meaning of the preposition *eis*, translating it “**for.**” The power and ability are **for the interior person** (*anthropos*). A more literal and central meaning is given in the parenthetical expansion where I inserted the participle “[proceeding]” to indicate the root sense of motion inherent in *eis*: movement of something from without which penetrates and enters “into the midst” of the object toward which it is “proceeding.” Wuest refers to *eis* as “a preposition of motion” and cites A.B. Bruce (*Expositors Greek Testament*), “The ‘inward man’ is viewed here as the *recipient*, that into

which the strengthening was to be poured, or the *object toward which* the gift was directed" (Wuest, *ibid* p 88; emphasis original). By means of God's Spirit, His power and ability make entrance into the midst of "the humanity within," (i.e., in the heart and mind; in the spirit and the soul). Vss. 17-20 describe the purposes for having this inner power and ability. Paul emphasizes becoming strong once again in 6:10, below,

“be constantly empowering yourselves within (or: finding or engendering ability within yourselves), **centered in and in union with [the] Lord** [= Christ

or Yahweh] – **even within, and in union with, the force** (or: strength) **of His might** (or: the mightiness of His strength and forcefulness).”

17. **to inhabit** (dwell down in; take up permanent abode in) **the Christ** (or: to house the Anointed One; or: to make a house in the sphere of the Anointing), **through the faith and by means of the trust within your hearts, being folks having been rooted** (or: having taken root) **and now established and placed on a foundation within the midst of and in union with Love** (or: having been grounded and rendered firm, centered in love and unambiguous acceptance).

Similar thoughts to those expressed here and vs. 19, below, can be seen in Col. 2:2,

“to the end that their hearts may be called near, alongside, for comfort, relief, aid and encouragement – being joined cohesively (jointly knitted; welded together) and united in love and acceptance – even into all the riches (or: wealth) pertaining to the state of having been brought to fullness (or: of the full assurance and conviction) from the comprehension (or: which is the joint-flow of discernment; of the junction of that

which is sent together for a person to be able to catch on and understand) **[leading] into full, accurate, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight of God's Secret: Christ**

(or: of the secret of the God, who is Christ; or: of the secret from God, which is [the] Anointing; [with other MSS: of the sacred mystery of the God and Father, in relation to the Christ {or: having its source in [the] Anointing; or: belonging to Christ}]).”

We saw the spatial aspect of *kata* in the

previous verse: “down from.” Now we see another spatial characterization that employs *kata-* as a prefix to the infinitive: “**to inhabit** (dwell down in; take up permanent abode in).” This infinitive serves to make this first clause a purpose statement that explains the purpose of the gifting described in vs. 16. The goal of the work of the Breath-effect (the Spirit) is to empower us “to take up permanent residence” in, or “**to inhabit**” the **Christ**.

This “dwelling down in” happens “**through the faith and by means of the trust within your hearts.**” The faith and trust are manifestations of the **power and ability** that has been **given** to us **through**

His Breath-effect (vs. 16, above). This phrase, “through the faith/trust,” here, equates to “through the Breath-effect/Spirit” of vs. 16. Note that the “dwelling down” is “**within [our] hearts,**” which equates to the phrase “[preceding] into **the interior person**” of the previous verse. There is parallelism in these two verses that expands our understanding of the work of the Spirit Who mediates the work of Christ into the core of our being, touching the essential us as a “living reality” (Schnackenburg, *ibid* p 149). Keep in mind that he is writing to folks that already have **been rooted** (or: having taken root) **and now established**

and placed on a foundation. Paul used a perfect, passive participle here. The “taking root” and the “establishing on a foundation” (also a perf. pass. part.) took place and were a finished work in the past that had a continuing reality. He wrote this sermon to covenant communities where the Seed was growing, and was at the same time established on a foundation – **within the midst of and in union with Love.** The rooting is the beginning of the growing of a plant, and the foundation is the beginning of a building (His temple). So Paul is praying that with having all this, they will continue to grow. The foundation of Christ and the sent-forth

folks (2:20, above) is **Love**, not a proclamation of condemnation, and Paul informed the Corinthians that,

“for no one can (or: continues able to; is having power to) lay another foundation (or: to place or set another foundation [Stone] of the same kind) beside (or: in addition to and distinct from) the One lying (or: continuing being laid): which is (continues being) Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

In other words, Christ is Love, and it is Him into which we sink our roots ever deeper. God’s Love is the foundation of the new creation and the new covenant/arrangement. It is the charter

and “Royal Law” (Jas. 2:8) that directs our growth and our lives. God loves His neighbors (humanity) as He does Himself (John 3:16). It is a principle of laying one’s self down on behalf of another. This is not a “one-time event,” but a way of living. All of this has come about,

“because God’s love (the urge toward reunion and the unambiguous, uniting acceptance from God) has been poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts, permeating the core of our being, through the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit;

Sacred Attitude) **being given to us** (in us; for us)” (Rom. 5:5).

We find a close parallel to the metaphors used here in Col. 2:7,

“being people having been rooted (or: having been caused to take root) – **even ones being constantly and progressively built upon The House** (i.e., added to the structure) – **within Him; also being folks repeatedly made steadfast and progressively stabilized with good footing within the faith** (or: confirmed by the conviction; made secure for trust and loyalty).”

Beginning with vs. 14 and continuing to

this point we have one long sentence. Although some read the next two verses as a continuation of this sentence, it seems natural to end it here – as a breather for the audience, as well as for rhetorical emphasis – and then read vss. 18-19, below, as a concluding unit of Paul's thought before he breaks into the doxology of vss. 20-21.

18. To this end, may you folks be fully powerful and thus act out of strength to grasp (receive down for yourselves; take possession of so as to comprehend), **together with all the set-apart folks** (saints; holy ones), **what [is] the width and length and height and depth,**
This verse begins with a purpose clause

that reaches back to the **power and ability** of vs. 16, above, and shows that the gifting from the riches of His grace, glory and the Christ, are given to enable us **to grasp and receive** and **comprehend** the immensity of God's gift of the Christ.

This last clause expresses both the total *extent and content* of the universe, and at the same time, of *the extent and content* of the new creation in Christ. It can also be a description of “**the love of, from, and which is, Christ,**” the object of **intimate experience**, in the next verse. It also reaches back to vs. 10a which speaks of, “**the highest heavens [and] God's greatly**

diversified wisdom (the exceedingly varied in colors [as in a tapestry or the Veil] wisdom which is God; or: the many-phased wisdom from God).”

Schnackenburg observes that such things can only be comprehended through faith and love (vs. 17, above), and that here they are described spatially via the concepts of **width and length and height and depth** (ibid p 145).

The existence described as being **fully powerful** so as to **act out of strength** has as its aim **to grasp**, and “receive down for [themselves]” with the idea of “comprehension” (see the synonym in vs. 20, below: **grasping with the mind**, etc.), in order **to know** (vs. 19, below)

the “4-directional totality” – i.e., the fullness of which 19b, below, speaks. The apocalyptic phrases “fully powerful” and “strength to grasp” echo the **“operative, effective, internal working energy of His power and ability”** referred to in vs. 7c, above, and vs. 20b, below.

19. and thus to know – and gain insight by intimate experience – the love of, from, and which is, the Christ [that is] continuously transcending (overshooting; being thrown over and beyond; surpassing) **personal experiential knowledge and insight, so that you folks would be filled unto all the effect of the fullness of God and**

the result of the filling from God

(or: could be filled up, unto the saturation point, with the result from the entire contents of God; or: into all God's full extent; or: unto all the effects pertaining to God's filling [you]).

[or, with *p46*, B, 462, 33: to the end that all the fullness of, or from, God could and would be filled up {33 adds: into the midst of you folks}].

The opening infinitive clause of this verse expands the object of the verb in vs. 18, “being **fully powerful and thus act out of strength** [in order] **to grasp** and comprehend.” The “mentally grasping (etc.)” the universal dimensions

of what he stated in vss. 16-17 has its purpose laid out here in vs. 19. That purpose is **“to know – and gain insight by intimate experience – the love of Christ.”** It is this **Love** that has such great **width and length and height and depth.**

The genitive/ablative form of the phrase, **the Christ**, can be read as a possessive that modifies the noun **love**: Christ’s love. Or it can be read as an ablative: the love that comes from the Christ. Or, it can be read as a genitive of apposition: **the love which is the Christ**, which would be describing and identifying the “cosmic” or risen Christ, i.e., the love that actually is the Christ,

or the Anointing.

The present participle “**continuously transcending** (etc.)” modifies the noun **love**, so I supplied the ellipsis by adding “[**that is**].” This love is “progressively overshooting and surpassing” **personal experiential knowledge and insight**.

Here Paul has just shot down contemporary Jewish Gnostics, and later Christian Gnostics, for whom “knowledge (*gnosis*)” is the main key. Love reigns supreme. The **insight** is needed in order to know God’s **Love**. Paul describes God's love in 1 Cor. 13:4-8,

"The Love (or: This unrestricted acceptance) **is habitually even-**

tempered, taking a long time to be in a heat of passion (is constantly long-enduring, long-suffering and patient; it keeps on putting anger far away; it continues slow to progress toward feelings which cause violent breathing or rushing emotions) – **it continues being usefully kind.**

The Love (or: This urge toward unambiguous, accepting reunion) **is not constantly boiling with jealousy and envy. The Love is not continuously bragging or 'showing off' – it is not habitually being puffed up; it is not conceited or arrogant. It is**

not repeatedly indecent in manner or behavior (it does not continually display lack of [good] form, rudeness or improper demeanor); **it is not habitually self-seeking** (or: not constantly pursuing its own interests or rights); **it is not continually caused to be sharp [in response] nor aroused to irritation or upset emotions; it is not habitually keeping account of the worthless thing, nor logically considering something of bad quality, nor counting the injury.** It does not continue to rejoice upon [seeing or hearing of] the

injustice, nor is it happy about dishonesty, inequity, or lack of the qualities of the Way pointed out, yet it repeatedly rejoices with the Truth (or: takes delight together in Reality). [Love] continuously covers ALL mankind; it is habitually loyal to ALL humanity; it constantly has an expectation for ALL mankind; it is continuously remaining under and giving support to ALL people.

(or, since “all” can also be neuter: It [i.e., unambiguous acceptance] progressively puts a protecting roof over

all things; it is habitually trusting in, and believing for, all things; it is continually hoping in or for all things; it keeps on patiently enduring all things.) **The Love** (or, again: This unrestricted drive toward reunion) **never –**

not even once – fails (falls out or lapses; = becomes fruitless or ineffectual; [other MSS: falls down; collapses])."

By "**knowing**" this **love of the Christ**, we will be **filled unto all the effect of the fullness of God**. Scholars normally

overlook the *-ma* ending of the Greek word *plērōma*. That ending means “the effect” or “the result” of the noun to which it is attached. Thus I rendered the noun “the effect of the fullness; the result of the filling.” The noun God is either genitive or ablative, so the second rendering is, “**the result of the filling from God.**” Three other options for this compound phrase are:

- a) with the result from the entire contents of God
- b) into all God's full extent
- c) unto all the effects pertaining to God's filling [you].

The verb of this clause can also be rendered: “could be filled up, unto the

saturation point.” The alternate MS readings of *p46*, B, etc. present a different thought. This reading points us to the purpose of God and the “fullness (*plērōthe*)” of His plans and from His acts: that they “would be filled up.” MS 33 is obviously a copyist’s attempt at interpreting Paul’s thought here – relating what is being said to the covenant communities, which are representative of the fullness of God’s plans for the Christ.

In Col. 2:9-10, we find parallel concepts and terms to those used here:

“because within Him all the effect of the fullness of the Deity (the result of the filling

from the Godship and feminine aspect of the Divine Nature) **is repeatedly corporeally** (or: bodily, as a whole; embodied; as a body) **settling down and progressively taking up permanent residence** (or: is continuously dwelling in person), **and you folks, being ones having been filled up** (or: made full), **are** (or: exist) **continuously within, and in union with, Him, Who is** (or: exists being) [other MSS: the One being] **the Head of** (or: the Source of) **all government and authority** (or: of every beginning and right; of all rule and privilege

which comes from being).”

This Col. statement reads more in line with *p46*, B, 462 and 33, above. But before moving on, we should let the purpose statement of 19b sink deep into our minds, hearts and spirits:

"so that you folks would be filled unto all the effect of the fullness of God and the result of the filling from God."

Amen!

20. But by (or: Now in) the One being continuously able and powerful to do (make; form; create; produce) above and beyond all things – surpassingly above, over and beyond things which we are repeatedly asking for

ourselves or are normally grasping with the mind (apprehending; imagining; considering; conceiving) – **in accord with** (or: down from; corresponding to; in the sphere of and along the line of) **the power and ability [which is] continuously operating** (making itself effective; energizing itself; inwardly working and in-union developing) **within us, and in union with us,**
On offer are the instrumental (**by**) and the locative (**in**) functions of the dative present participle (**able/powerful**) in the opening clause. God is **the One** who can at any point (aorist infinitive) **do, make, form, create or produce** anything that He wants to do (etc.). Vs.

21, below, opens with the dative case of the personal pronoun, **Him**, and we are instructed that “the manifestation which calls forth praise (**the glory**)” is “**by Him (etc.)**” – i.e., whatever **the One** decides “**to do**” will be “**above and beyond all things**” but will be “**in accord with the power and ability [which is] continuously operating within us – and in union with us!**” – but it will be done **by Him, to Him, for Him, in Him and with Him.**

Paul’s rhetoric demonstrates his horizon of God’s power – his view of God’s ability. I set off the descriptive, superlative flourish with dashes:

“**surpassingly above, over and**

beyond things which we are repeatedly asking for ourselves or are normally grasping with the mind (apprehending; imagining; considering; conceiving)."

This clause that modifies the infinitive, **to do** (etc.), opens with the compound adverb, **surpassingly above, over and beyond**. Wuest says of this word,

"The word is made up of *perissos*, 'exceeding some number or measure, over and above, more than necessary,' *ek* which is perfective in force here, intensifying the already existing idea of the verb, here adding the

idea of exhaustlessness, and *hyper*, 'above.' The compound word is a superlative of superlatives in force" (ibid p 91).

What God can do, make, form, create, produce is more than we can imagine or conceive. Now recall that vs. 17 and 19 are talking about Christ's love. Can you imagine God's love encompassing and permeating all of humanity? Can you conceive of God creating all people anew (Rev. 21:5)? Was God's just act in the faithfulness of the Messiah powerful enough to transform all humanity – and not just us, the firstfruits of His harvest? Can you **grasp with your mind** that the Fire of His Deity can purge out all

resistance and rebellion and rejection from out of anyone? What we repeatedly ask for (deliverance for all mankind) does not even come close to what He is able to do. Can the Living God change your mind? Or is that too much for Him? We find the preposition *kata* before the word **power-and-ability** in the final clause. His power and ability (first clause) is “**in accord with**” the power and ability which is **continuously operating within us**. It is operating **in union with us**. It is “in the sphere of and along the line of” the power which is “continuously making itself effective” in us. It is “corresponding to” the ability that is “energizing itself, inwardly

working and in-union developing” within us. Do you suppose that God is dwelling within us? Is God in solidarity with us? Can you imagine this?

21. **by Him** (to Him; for Him; **in Him**; with Him) **[is] the glory** (the manifestation which calls forth praise) **within the called-out community** (the summoned-forth congregation) **as well as within Christ Jesus: unto** (or: [proceeding] into) **all the generations** (births; progenies) **of the Age of the ages** (= the most significant, or crowning, Age of all the ages)! **Make it so** (or: Amen)!

These parallel phrases, **within the called-out community – within Christ**

Jesus, demonstrate both the unity and the union of identity that summarizes the last two chapters. Christ is both the Source and the Head of the congregation, which is in turn the living structure that houses Him, i.e., His temple that is situated in the presence of humanity (on Mt. Zion; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1). Through the Messiah, the solidarity of God with humanity is complete (Rev. 21:3). He has placed His **glory** (Himself)

WITHIN the called-out community, and this community is “in Him.” When He came to us, He brought the glory, for the glory is “with Him.” It is also “for Him,” and we reflect it (2 Cor. 3:18) “to Him” as we manifest it to other people

with whom He identifies (Mat. 25:40; Acts 9:4-5). But foremost, "the manifestation which calls for praise" -- His death and resurrection -- is **by Him**. Equal to this is the fact that God's Glory is **in Him**. As we meditate upon this word "glory," we should consider another main meaning of this word: reputation. God's reputation is demonstrated in Jesus Christ and what He has done for humanity. And now God has entrusted His reputation to the called-out, covenant communities. May we rightly represent Him to those around us.

This doxology is projected into **all the [oncoming] generations** of the **Age** (the

age of the Messiah) that is composed of all the future ages (and lifetimes of the individuals of these oncoming generations) that lie out in front of us, as the universe continues expanding! Yes, Lord, **“Make it so!”** – Amen.

Chapter 4

The second half of this sermon addresses behavioral issues that pertain to kingdom living within a called-out, covenant community. Furnish instructs us that in this second section “this author believes that the imperatives of the Christian life [which follow below] are grounded in what God has accomplished in Christ [laid out in the indicative pronouncements in the previous three chapters]...” (ibid p 841; brackets added).

As regards the nature of the advice in this section, Witherington observes that Paul is not writing to a specific group and therefore is speaking in more

general terms that would be suitable for folks throughout the region (*cf* *ibid* p 282).

1. I myself – the prisoner (or: bound one; captive) **within, in union with, and centered in [the] Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh] – **am therefore repeatedly calling you folks, as it were, alongside: exhorting, admonishing, imploring and entreating you to walk [your path]** (= behave; = live your life) **worthily pertaining to** (or: in a manner suitable to the value of) **the calling and invitation in regard to which you folks are called** (or: from which you were summoned),

Paul opens this new section by

identifying himself in his relation to the Lord. He is **the prisoner within [the] Lord**. He is one that is “bound in union with” Christ and Yahweh. He is a captive that is centered in the Lord – not in some prison or some philosophy or some system of religion. From this relationship and this position (in the Lord), he now functions as a messenger that is calling them alongside to admonish them regarding ethical behavior and the manner of living that is suitable to their **calling**. Paul used the term “call” in Rom. 8:30 and this should instruct us as to his meaning here:

**“Now [in fact, consider this]:
those whom He at one point**

before-marked-out (or: designates beforehand; [A reads: knew from prior intimate experience]), **these He also at once called** (or: calls; invited), **and whom He called** (or: calls; invites), **these He also in one stroke rightwised by an eschatological deliverance** (or: makes and sets right, frees from guilt and liberates from bondage, while making them fair and placing them in [covenant] relationships in the Way pointed out). **Now further, those whom He rightwised** (or: liberates and turns in the right direction; or: =

included in covenant), **these He also instantly glorified**

(or: makes of reputation which calls forth praise; gives a splendid appearance; gives honorable thoughts and imaginations; clothes with splendor).”

In 1 Cor. 1:9 we get another insight into our **calling**:

“God [is] full of faith, trustworthy, loyal and faithful – through Whom you folks were called and invited into a common being of and existence from (or: partnership, participation,

fellowship, sharing and communion with) **His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord** (Owner; Master).”

We should note that he is not exhorting them about being “worthy people.” His entreaty is not with a view toward “being” something more than they already are. The term “**worthily**” is an adverb which modifies the infinitive “**to walk.**” He is admonishing them in regard to how they should be living: in a manner suitable to the value of the invitation that was extended to them. God had called these folks into union with Him. This relationship which God both initiated and established created the

new covenant, which can be termed, here, **the calling**. It had created the covenant communities. In Phil. 3:14, Paul described it:

“God’s invitation to an above place (or: the upward calling from, and which is, God) within the midst of and in union with Christ Jesus.”

As noted, above, Paul begins this verse with the same Greek terms with which he begins his admonitions in Rom. 12:1,

“Consequently, brothers, I am repeatedly calling you folks alongside to advise, exhort, implore and encourage you, through God's compassions to

stand your bodies alongside (or: to set or place your bodies beside) **[the] Well-pleasing, Set-apart** (Holy; Different-from-the-usual), **Living Sacrifice by God** (or: in God; for God; to God; with God), **[this being] your sacred service which pertains to thought, reason and communication** (or: your reasoned and rational service; the logical and Word-based service from you folks; or: = temple service).”

This colors-in Paul’s views on living the Christian life, which he further describes here, beginning with the next verse:

2. with all lowliness of attitude (or: humility in frame of mind) **and gentle kindness and friendliness, with longsuffering** (even-tempered, forbearing patience; a long wait before rushing in passion; putting anger far away; passionate perseverance unto the goal), **continuously holding one another up** (or: bearing with each other with tolerance) **within the sphere of, and in union with, love** (unqualified acceptance and the urge toward union), We should be aware that, “Humility was not considered a virtue in the Greco-Roman world but was associated with craven cowering or the obsequiousness of a slave...” (Witherington, *ibid* p 284,

citing Epictetus, *Dissertations* 1.9.10; 3.24.6). Also, Paul is not “laying down a law” or “barking orders” to them. He is verbally crafting a picture for them that displays the relational beauty of a life “in Christ.”

These qualities, characteristics and manners of living are described as “**the Spirit’s fruit**” in Gal. 5:22. In 5:9, below, Paul admonishes,

“Be constantly walking about (= Habitually conduct yourselves) as children of Light (born ones from light) – for the fruit of the Light [other MSS: Spirit] [is] in union with (or: [exists] within the midst of) all Goodness (virtue;

beneficence), **Justice** (fair and equitable dealing in rightwised relationships which accord with the Way pointed out; also = covenant participation) **and Truth** (or: Reality).”

The first term that Paul uses to describe “living worthily” has to do with our **attitude** and “frame of mind.” This functioning of the inner person colors and guides our entire “walk.” Paul instructed those at Philippi in this way, using Jesus as their example:

“You see, this way of thinking (this attitude and disposition) **is continuously within and among you folks** (or, as an imperative:

So let this minding be habitually within you folks) – **which [is] also within Christ Jesus.... He empties Himself** (or: removed the contents of Himself; made Himself empty), **receiving** (or: taking; accepting) **a slave's form** (external shape; outward mold).... **He lowers Himself** (or: humbled Himself; made Himself low; degrades Himself; levels Himself off), **coming to be** (or: birthing Himself) **a submissive, obedient One** (one who gives the ear and listens)” (Phil. 2:5, 7, 8).

In Phil. 2:3 Paul used the same term as here in vs. 2, and gave a practical

definition of what this would look like:

“in humility (or: by an attitude of being in a low station; in humbleness of disposition and way of thinking) **constantly considering one another** (or: each other) **[as] those habitually holding [a position] above yourselves** (or: [as] being superior in regard to yourselves).”

In his letter to the exiles of the Diaspora (the scattering), Peter instructs everyone:

“So all of you folks (or: everyone) **tie on yourselves, as an outer garment** (or: like a slave's apron), **the humble attitude** (the lowliness of

thinking) **to, with, for and among one another** [other MSS add: continuously being ones that are humbly aligned to give support]” (1 Pet. 5:5).

Mary proclaimed, “**because He looks upon the low status** (or: = had regard for the humiliation) **of His slave girl** [1 Sam. 2:1; 1:11].... **and then lifts up high folks of low status** (or: He also exalts humble folks)” (Lu. 1:48a, 52b).

Jacob quoted Prov.3:34,

“Yet He is constantly and progressively giving greater (= more abundant; more intense; larger; more frequent) **grace and favor, therefore it is saying**

"God continuously sets Himself in opposition to, and aligns Himself against, those that show themselves above (the proud; the assuming), but He habitually gives grace and favor to the low ones (the unassuming ones; the humble ones; those of low rank)" (Jas. 4:6).

The call is to **"an above place"** (Phil. 3:14, above) and Christ **"raised [us] up, and caused [us] to sit (or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us]) together within the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens"** (2:6, above), but our attitudes

and behaviors are to be as slaves and attending servants. Jesus explain this in Mk. 10:

“You men have seen and are thus aware that those of the ethnic multitudes [who] are habitually presuming to be constantly ruling, are habitually exercising full ownership of them while habitually bringing the effects of their lordship down on them... Yet it does not exist (or: it is not) this way among you folks. To the contrary, whoever may continue intending (wishing; desiring; wanting; purposing) to become

great (or: a great or important person) **among you will continue existing being your attending servant. And whoever may continue intending** (desiring; purposing) **to be first among you folks will continue existing being a slave of everyone** (or: all)”
(vss. 42-44).

We have been called, chosen and elected to live the Life of the Lamb, and as Jesus said,

“No one continues holding (or: having) **greater love than this: that someone should place** (set; lay; lay down) **his soul** (or: soul-life; inner being; self; person)

over [the situation or circumstances of] (or: on behalf of) his friends” (Jn. 15:13).

The extent to which we include people as friends will be determined by our perception of God’s ultimate goal for humanity. *Cf* Col. 3:12-17; 1 Pet. 5:5

The next term is **“gentle kindness and friendliness.”** Paul promotes this quality elsewhere: in 1 Cor. 4:21 and Gal. 6:1, he speaks of **“a spirit of gentle kindness and friendliness.”** In 2 Cor. 10:1, he call them to his side,

“to encourage and entreat you folks through Christ's gentle friendliness (mild kindness; tender meekness) and lenient

reasonableness (or:
considerateness with full
probability for being suitable for a
situation).”

All that we need is in Christ. Living
from out of the life-flow of the Vine
produces His fruit. *Cf* Gal. 5:23, Col.
3:12, 1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim. 2:25. In Tit.
3:2 he instructs us to be folks,

**“constantly displaying all
kindness and gentle tenderness
while behaving agreeably
toward everyone (all mankind;
all humanity).”**

The inclusiveness and the scope in this
quote from Titus should inform our way
of life. In Mat. 5 Jesus taught:

5. ‘The kind, considerate, gentle, mild-tempered, humane and nonviolent folks (people who do not use force)’ [are] **happy and blessed because they, themselves, ‘will proceed to be inheriting the Land** (or: be receiving and enjoying an allotment of the earth)!’ [Ps. 37:11]

The next term further qualifies the description of the life of the community. It should be lived with “**longsuffering** (even-tempered, forbearing patience; a long wait before rushing in passion; putting anger far away; passionate perseverance unto the goal).” For many

of us, this is the opposite of the 1st Adam nature, and it can only be accomplished through the new Life that is in the Vine. The final parenthetical rendering on offer here gives the most literal description of the term. Today we might describe such a quality as “having a long fuse.” It is sometimes rendered as “tolerance.” But especially instructive is the meaning taken from Kenneth E. Bailey (*Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*, IVP Academic, 2008, p 410), “putting anger far away.” We can see an example of this attribute of God, taken from the Torah, in 1 Pet. 3:20,

“within [the] days of Noah,

when (or: while) he was continuing to be receiving forth, and taking away from, out of God's state of emotional quietness (taking a long time before rushing or being in a heat of passion; long-enduring patience) while [the] ark was progressively being prepared and equipped (constructed to readiness)...”

As in this verse, 1 Cor. 13:4 also couples this word with love:

“The Love (or: This unrestricted acceptance) is habitually even-tempered, taking a long time to be in a heat of passion (is

constantly long-enduring/suffering and patient; keeps on putting anger far away; continues slow to progress toward rushing emotions which cause violent breathing; continues passionately persevering unto the goal) – **it continues being usefully kind.**”

This word also has the sense of putting our feeling far from us, even though the passion is rising.

[Cf Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 2 Cor. 6:6; Col.1:11; 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:10; 4:2; Heb. 6:12; Jas. 5:10]

We can regard this aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) as deliverance for those to whom we show it, just as we

see this in our Lord,

“And so, make it a habit to consider the long-suffering patience (even-tempered pushing anger far away; long-waiting before rushing heatedly; passionate persevering unto the goal) **of our Lord** [= Yahweh, or Christ] **[to be; as] deliverance** (salvation; wholeness and health), **according as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you, in accord with** (or: down from) **the wisdom being given to him** (or: by him)” (2 Pet. 3:15).

The present participial phrase,

“continuously holding one another up

(or: bearing with each other with tolerance)” calls to mind Paul’s practical admonition in Gal. 6:

1. **Brothers** (= Fellow believers; = My family)! **Even if a person** (or: human) **may be at some point overtaken** (caught; laid hold of before; be surprised) **within the effect of some slip or falling to the side** (or: the result of some offense, lapse or mistake), **you folks – the spiritual ones** (the people influenced by the Breath-effect and Attitude) – **repeatedly** (or: continuously) **adjust, mend or repair such a one so as to**

thoroughly prepare and equip him, within a spirit of gentle friendliness (attitude of meekness; breath of mild kindness), **as you each are constantly keeping a watchful eye on yourself** (carefully noting yourself with regard to the goal), **and so you folks may not at some point be put to the proof** (or: and you, yourself, would not be tried, tested or harassed by some ordeal).

2. You folks be habitually lifting up and carrying one another's heavy burdens and oppressive matters (grievous weights of and

from one another), **and thus, you will continuously fulfill** [or, with other MSS: In this way, at once fill up and fulfill] **Christ's Law** (or: the law which is Christ; the law of the Anointing; [other MSS: and in this manner, at once fill up the law of the Christ {the law whose character and source is Christ}]).

When we mentally take “a low position” we can more easily (and with a firmer foundation or more solid stance) be “**continuously holding one another up** (or: bearing with each other with tolerance).” But this can only be done

“within the sphere of, and in union with, love (unqualified acceptance and the urge toward union).” What a beautiful picture this entire verse paints for us. As with the amazing statement in Gal. 6:2, above, Paul made an astounding statement concerning **love** and its relationship to the Law in Gal. 5:14,

“For, the entire Law has been fulfilled and stands filled up within one word (or: within one thought or idea; within one saying or message) – **within the one:**

‘You will continue to love your near-one (your associate; your neighbor;

the one close by your position), **as** (in the same way as; or: as he/she were) **yourself.**' [Lev. 19:18; comment: this one "expressed thought" is the idea and purpose of the Word].

And in Gal. 5:22 we observe,

“**Now the Spirit's fruit** (or: So the fruit whose origin and source is the Spirit; But the fruit which is Breath-effect; Yet the fruit of the Attitude) **is: love** (unrestricted acceptance and the drive to overcome existential separation) ...”

Then we are instructed in 1 Cor. 13:7-8,
“[Love] continuously covers all mankind; it is habitually loyal to all humanity; it constantly has an expectation for all mankind; it is continuously remaining under and giving support to all people.

(or, since “all” can also be neuter: It [i.e., unambiguous acceptance] progressively puts a protecting roof over all things; it is habitually trusting in, and believing for, all things; it is continually hoping in or for all things; it keeps on

patiently enduring all things.) **The Love** (or: This unrestricted drive toward reunion) **never – not even once – fails** (falls out or lapses; = becomes fruitless or ineffectual; [other MSS: falls down; collapses]).”

This now operates within our lives, because:

“God’s love (the urge toward reunion and the unambiguous, uniting acceptance from God) **has been poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts, permeating the core of our being, through**

the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit; Sacred Attitude) **being given to us** (in us; for us)” (Rom. 5:5b).

With all of this functioning in our lives, we can easily move into the sphere of life described in the next verse:

3. repeatedly hurrying to make every effort to constantly keep (watch over to guard and protect; maintain) **the Spirit's oneness** (or: the unity from the Breath-effect, and of spirit; the oneness which is the Spirit; = agreement of [your] attitude) **within the bond** (the link, tie and connection that joins two things; the binding conjunction which results in union) **of the peace** (or: which

is the harmony, tranquility and undisturbed well-being of shalom from the joining),

Grassi observes, “The Spirit is the single inner source of the Christian life and as such is continually moving all members toward what promotes peace and harmony” (ibid p 346). The admonition to be “**repeatedly hurrying**” is not meant to be taken in a strictly literal sense, but is Paul’s rhetoric to stress the importance of not putting-off “**every effort,**” but rather to have this as a top priority that habitually needs our attention and focus. **Oneness** is the central factor of **the peace** that the covenant community should be enjoying

and demonstrating to the cultures around it.

I love Schnackenburg's observation, "The 'unity of the Spirit' is that unity effected by the Holy Spirit, not simply an agreement on fundamental convictions or human concord" (ibid p 164).

"The Spirit's oneness," or "the unity from the Breath-effect, and of spirit," which is the life of the called-out groups, is the incarnation of God within each member of the body, and within the group as a whole. It is "the oneness which IS the Spirit. It brings an agreement of attitudes and binds-together all the body into the peace of living in oneness. It brings health and wholeness,

and wards off divisions and factions which engender bad feelings and anti-Christ attitudes. We find Paul using this same word in vs. 13, below,

“into the state of oneness from, and which is, The Faithfulness (or: the unity of, that belongs to and which characterizes that which is faith; or: the lack of division which has its source in trust, confidence and reliability, has the character of and is in reference to the loyalty and fidelity), **even which is the full, experiential and intimate knowledge** (or: and from recognition; and of discovery; as

well as pertaining to insight)
which is (or: of; from; in reference to) **the Son of God, [growing] into [the] purposed and destined** (or: complete; finished; mature; full-grown; perfect; goal-attained) **adult man...**”

The “link, tie and connection that joins things together” is seen in “**continuously holding one another up** (or: bearing with each other with tolerance) **within the sphere of, and in union with, love** (unqualified acceptance and the urge toward union),” as we read in vs. 2, above. Love is, in fact, the Spirit’s oneness. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote in ch. 3:

14. Now upon (= on top of) all these things [put on; superimpose] the Love, which continues being (or: is) a joining link and uniting band of perfection

(a tie which binds together and pertains to the goal of maturity, being the result of fruitfulness; [the] fastening connection of the finished product; [the] bond producing perfection and destiny; a binding conjunction which brings union, which is the goal).

Witherington (ibid p 280) quotes G.B.

Caird concerning the theme of group unity in this passage of vss. 3-6:

“[It] is not, in the first instance, a task to be achieved or an object of aspiration but a fact, given in the gospel, inherent in the nature of the church and its membership, guaranteed by the one Spirit who inspires it, the one Lord who governs it, the one God who is the source of its life” (*Paul’s Letters from Prison*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1976 p 71; brackets added).

Where here we have “**the Love**” being “**a joining link**” and bond of **perfection** and maturity in Col. 3:14, we are instructed in Col. 3:15a,

“Furthermore, let the peace (or: joining; [= *shalom*]) of the Christ (belonging to and originating in the [Messiah]; the harmony which is the Anointing [other MSS: God]) continuously umpire (act as a judge in the games) **within your hearts (= in union with the core of your being) – **into which [peace] you folks are called** (were called; were invited), **within one body...**”**

4. **[being] one body and one spirit** (attitude and effect of the Breath), **according as you folks were** (or: are) **also called within the midst of one expectation** (or: in union with one

expectant hope) of **your calling** (or: invitation),

This love, oneness and peace create “**one body**” that has “**one spirit** (etc.)” that all came within the “**call**” into the midst of “**one expectation.**” Paul reminds them here about their “**calling,**” which echoes his words of vs. 1, above, and the encouragement for them to walk in a manner that is worthy of this calling. Walking “worthily” is further defined here as endeavoring to “watch over to guard and protect, and to maintain” the attitude toward one another that embodies the quality of **oneness** that comes in God’s Breath and thus has a unifying effect upon the members of the

groups.

Here Paul reprises his apocalyptic picture of 2:15b-18, above:

“that He may frame (create; found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder) The Two into One New [p46 & others: common] Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making (progressively creating) Peace and Harmony (= shalom); and then should fully transfer, from a certain state to another which is quite different, The Both – centered in, and within the midst of, One Body in God

(or: make completely other, while moving away from what had existed, and fully reconcile The Both, in one Body, **by, to, with and for God**).... **because through Him we, The Both, continuously have** (hold and possess) **the procurement of access** (conduct toward the presence; admission, being led), **within one Spirit** (or: in union with one Breath-effect and Attitude), **to** (or: toward; face to face with) **the Father.**”

This inclusiveness of all humanity (**The Both** – Jew + Gentile) in the new creation is reflected in these terms, “**one body and one spirit,**” and his statement

that this takes place “**within the midst of one expectation**” reveals that there is only ONE expectation for all humanity: the calling, through the love of the Father, for the prodigal Adam to return to the Father’s house (*cf* Rom. 11:36). The universalness of this statement can be seen from the “**one Lord**” of vs. 5 and “**One God and Father of all humans**” of vs. 6, below.

5. [**with**] **one Lord** (or: Owner), **one faith** (or: faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, reliability, confidence, conviction, assurance, and trust; or: "one belief" – Bultmann), **one effect of submersion and envelopment which brings absorption and permeation to the**

point of saturation,

The **one body** that was created from the **one spirit** (that is the effect of the One Breath) has **one Lord** – Who is our One Owner and Master. This one body has but **one faith** that is Christ's faith, His faithfulness, God's fidelity, loyalty and reliability which reproduces His confidence, conviction, assurance and trust within and among the community members. This is all due to the Spirit's oneness that unified the will of Jesus with the will of the Father and produced Christ's faithful act that demonstrated God's justice, and the Way that He pointed out to us: the Life of the Messiah, which gives Itself to all of

humanity in sacrificial love.

Here I conflated the meanings of the word normally transliterated “baptism” (*baptisma*): the “effect (-*ma* ending) of submersion and envelopment which brings absorption and permeation to the point of saturation.” Envision a cotton cloth being dipped into a container of dye, and you will be able to understand what happens to us when we were “baptized (placed; inserted) into His death” (Rom. 6:3), or placed so as to be “in Christ.” As Israel was “baptized into Moses within the midst of the cloud and within the midst of the sea” (1 Cor. 10:2), so Christ body was immersed into the Spirit, enveloped by the Breath-

effect, so as to absorb and be permeated by God – to the point of saturation! In Israel’s story, the baptism in the sea symbolized a death to their life of slavery in Egypt, and a resurrection into the new existence as a free people with codified relationships. Their baptism within the cloud became a symbol for being led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14) in their resurrected life.

Jesus characterized His death as a baptism in Mk. 10, and in vs. 39 He told His disciples,

“You folks will progressively drink the cup which I Myself am now progressively drinking, and you will also be progressively

immersed in (or: baptized with) the immersion (baptism) which I Myself am now progressively being immersed, unto saturation (baptized).”

Thus, when Paul spoke of our participation in this, in Rom. 6:3, he was referring to the Christ Event (His death and resurrection), not to a church sacrament. Just as the exodus (as a type and a shadow) was a corporate experience for an entire people, Christ's exodus from the bondage of the Law and from the death of the first Adam was a corporate event for the new “one race of humanity” that He took to death with Him, as Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:14b-16a,

“[We are] deciding (discerning; judging) **this: that** [some MSS add: since] **One Person** (or: Man) **died over [the situation of all mankind** (or: for the sake of all); **consequently all people died** (or: accordingly, then, all humanity died). **And further, He died over all humanity** (over [the situation] of, and for the sake of all) **to the end that those living may** (or: could; would) **no longer live for themselves** (to themselves; in themselves; by themselves), **but rather for** (or: in; by; to; with) **the One dying and then being awakened and**

raised up over them (over their [situation]; for their sakes), **so that we, from the present moment** (or: from now) **[on], have seen and thus know** (or: perceive; or: are acquainted [with]) **no one on the level of** (or: in the sphere of; in correspondence to) **flesh** (= the estranged human nature; = the self enslaved to the System).”

Yes, there is but one baptism: Christ's. And we all died in that baptism, and have been raised up into a new creation, in the Spirit (in Christ). But this happens existentially to us one at a time, as Paul explained in 1 Cor. 15:

20. Yet now – at this present time! – Christ is roused and awake from having been raised up from out of the midst of dead people: a Firstfruit (= the first of the harvest; the Sheaf Offering, signally the beginning of the harvest [Lev. 23:10]) of those having fallen asleep, and are yet sleeping (reposing).

21. For since through a person (or: a human; or: humanity) [came] death, through a Person (or: a Human), also, [comes] resurrection of dead people.

22. For just as within Adam all keep on (or: everyone continues)

dying, in the same way, also, within the Christ, all will keep on being made alive (or: in union with the Anointed One, everyone will one-after-another be created with Life)

23. – yet each person within the result and effect of his or her own class (or: ordered place; appointed position [in line]; arranged time or order of succession; = place in a harvest calendar, thus, due season of maturity): **Christ a Firstfruit** (a First of the harvest)...

6. one God and Father of all humans – the One upon all people and [moving]

through all people, and within the midst of all humanity and in union with all people and all things.

Furnish points out that in vss. 4-6,

“The slogans in these vss. recapitulate the argument of chs. 1-3 and suggest that the unity of the Spirit is already present, as a gift, in the church. On **one body** *cf.* 2:16; on **one Spirit** *cf.* 2:18; on **one hope** *cf.* 1:18; 2:12; on **one Lord** *cf.* 2:4-7, 13-22; on **one baptism** *cf.* 1:13-14; on **one God and Father of us all** *cf.* 1:5; 3:14-15” (ibid p 841).

In 1 Cor. 8:6 we find a similar phrasing to the first declaration in this verse:

“to us (or: for us; with us) [there is] one God, the Father, from out of the midst of Whom [is] the whole (or: [are] all things) – and we [directed and proceeding] into Him – even one Lord (or: as well as one Owner and Master), Jesus Christ: through Whom [is] the whole (or: [are] all things) – and we through means of and through the midst of Him!”

With this first phrase, **“God and Father of all humans,”** Paul restates what he had said in 2:15,

“that He may frame (create; found and settle from a state of

wildness and disorder) **The Two into One New** [p46 & others: common] **Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making** (progressively creating) **Peace and Harmony** (a joining).”

All humans are God’s children. We are also instructed by rhetorical question in Heb. 12:9, “**shall we not be continually placed under and humbly arranged and aligned by the Father of the spirits?**” He loves the aggregate of humanity (Jn. 3:16), and as the paradigm of Fatherhood, He provides for, cares for and takes responsibility for all. He is “**the One upon all people.**” He is “**the**

One within the midst of all humanity.”

He is **“the One that is in union with all people and all things.”** This last phrase is a conflation that gives both the masculine and the neuter readings of the form of the word “all” in this Greek phrase.

The inclusiveness of all humanity and the pervasiveness of God within all of creation can hardly be missed in this verse. This statement should inform both our theology and our horizon for the destiny of mankind. A nod to apocalyptic numbering may be seen in the “seven unity-motifs” (Schnackenburg, *ibid* p 168) in vss. 4-6: seven is the number of completeness, perfection, or of a full

cycle (*cf* the frequent use of this number in the Book of Revelation).

7. But to and for each one of us was given (or: Now in each one of us is imparted and supplied) **the grace and the joy-producing act of favor down from, in accord with and to the level of** (or: commensurate to) **the measure of the undeserved gift of the Christ** (or: the gratuity from the Anointed One; or: the free benefit, which is the Anointing; or: the present from the [Messiah]).

Grassi points out that,

"In Eph., the source and distributor of the gifts is the Risen Christ; in 1 Cor., it is the Spirit; in Rom., it is simply God" (ibid p

In the first clause, “**was given**” is what scholars call “the divine passive,” where the passive form of the verb is a circumlocution indicating that God is the one that did, or is doing, the action. Observe the indirect object of the verb: **each one**. On offer here are three functions of the dative: “**to** each one,” “**for** each one” and “**in** each one.” We are the recipients of the gift. The gift is for us, and it is located “in” us. The “impartation” is an act of God. The gift is “**the grace**.” This term is also rendered here: **the joy-producing act of favor**, which further defines the term “grace.”

This gift comes **“down from the measure of the undeserved gift of the Christ.”** God gave us His Son as an undeserved gift to us. The grace comes from the Son that has been given to us. This **joy-producing act of favor is in accord with and to the level of the full measure of the Christ, Who IS the undeserved gift.** It is “commensurate to the free benefit, which is the Anointing.” It corresponds to the present from the Messiah – which is life from the dead, inclusion in Him Who is the Vine, and all the other benefits of the Christ. The point is not that the gift is given in a limited measure to us, but that it corresponds to the **“measure of [the]**

stature (full age; prime of life) **of the entire content which comprises the Anointed One**” (vs. 13, below).

Verse 11, below, describes what the OT quote in vs.8 refers to as **“gifts to, for, in and among mankind.”** The gifts of **“the folks sent off with a commission** (the emissaries; the representatives)” were sent into the world at large, not just into called-out covenant communities.

The passage of vss. 11-16 has erroneously been applied to just the “church,” and interpreters have considered this as specifically an “ecclesiastical” section of the sermon. I suggest that, although some of the gifts may begin with the covenant

communities (to prepare the set-apart folks – vs. 12), its implications should be read in a humanity-wide horizon because the “**work of attending service**” (vs. 12) has a view beyond the construction of the local manifestations of Christ’s body. It is a mountain (Zion – Heb. 12:22ff) that grows to fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

8. For this reason He (or: it) is constantly saying,

"Going up (or: Stepping up; Ascending) into a height (unto [the] summit) He led (or: leads) captive a captive multitude (or: He led 'captivity' captive). He gave (or: gives) gifts to mankind

(or: for, in and among the humans; to humanity)." [Ps. 68:18]

With this echo from the Psalms, and its object of His **gifts** being **mankind**, or, the humans, we again see the extent of Paul's inclusiveness: **all humans** (vs. 6, above); **mankind/humans** (here).

The "**Going up/Ascending**" speaks to Christ's resurrection and His ascension to the throne. This aspect of the work of the Messiah, "**He led captive a captive multitude**," is echoed in the passage of Isa. that Jesus applied to Himself in Lu. 4:18, the bringing "**to captives a release and liberation**." Paul might also be thinking of this psalm in connection with 1:19-23, above, which speaks of

Christ's ascension and enthronement (vs. 20), and thus His Lordship over all (vss. 21-22) with the result as stated in this rendering of 22b:

“and then by the called-forth congregation He GIVES Him [to be the] Source over [the situation] of, and for, all humanity.”

The phrase in 1:23, **“the result of the filling from, and which is, the One Who is constantly filling all things within all humanity (or: humans),”** is echoed in vs. 10, below: **“to the end that He would at once fill the Whole.”** Paul has changed this psalm that was originally spoken to Yahweh, with the verb in the second person, “You...”

Here he is speaking not to Christ, but about Him and about the historical event in the past: Christ's resurrection and ascension. The context of the psalm was Israel's deliverance from Egypt, when Yahweh led them from the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai (Ps. 68:17). Notice that the next phrase in Ps. 68:18 (not quoted by Paul, here), includes "the rebellious and stubborn." Paul is not writing to rebellious or stubborn people in this sermon.

9. **Now** (or: Yet) **this "He went up** (ascended)," **what is it if not** (or: except) **that He also** [other MSS add: first] **descended** (stepped down) **into the lower parts** (or: the under regions)

of the earth (or: which is the land; or: from the Land; or: of the ground)?

So, to what does Paul refer with this enigmatic "**lower parts of the earth**, or ground"? Does this refer to His burial, or to His incarnation? Scholars disagree on this. Some think that it refers to a descent into Sheol, or Hades, (i.e., the realm of the dead) – "e.g., Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Jerome" (Witherington, *ibid* p 288). But these terms can also simply mean, the grave, so it can also refer to what Paul was speaking of in Rom. 6:3-4 which ties in with the "one immersion" of vs. 5, above.

Yet there is also the situation described

in 1 Pet. 3:18-20,

"because even Christ (or: considering that Messiah also) **died** [other MSS: suffered], **once for all...** [He], **on the one hand, being put to death in flesh** (= a physical body), **yet on the other hand, being made alive in spirit** (or: indeed, being put to death by flesh {or: = the estranged human condition}), yet, being engendered a living one by Breath-effect {or: [the] Spirit}), **at one point journeying** (going from one place to another; passing on) **within which** (or: in union with Which), **He also**

proclaimed (published; preached; heralded) **the message to and for** (or: among) **the spirits in prison** (within a guardhouse): **to and for those being at one time unconvinced** (unpersuaded; disobedient; noncompliant) **within [the] days of Noah...**"

and many have traditionally joined these verses in 1 Pet. to this vs. here in Eph. Witherington suggests that the phrase **of the earth** should be rendered as a genitive of apposition (ibid p 288), as I have done here in the first parenthetical offering, "which is the land." We need to take into account the ancient science that

was the world-view of Paul's day which held to a three-tiered universe, which included a realm under the ground. Paul paints a picture in terms of this ancient science in Phil. 2:9-10,

“For this reason, God also lifts Him up above (or: highly exalted Him; elevates Him over) and by grace gives to Him (or: joyously favors on Him) the Name – the one over and above every name – to the end that within The Name: Jesus! (or: in union with the name of Jesus; in the midst of the Name belonging to [Yahweh-the-Savior]), every knee (= person) – of the folks upon the

heaven (of those belonging to the super-heaven, or [situated] upon the atmosphere) **and of the people existing upon the earth and of the folks dwelling down under the ground** (or: on the level of or pertaining to subterranean ones) – **may bend** (or: would bow) **in worship, prayer or allegiance.”**

These verses are clearly apocalyptic imagery, and following the quote of Ps. 68 in the previous verse the scenes that they draw should be interpreted in the light of God's eschatological deliverance of humanity: Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection and

enthronement.

Paul may have been referring to the tradition passed on to him, as recorded in Jn. 3:

13. "Furthermore, no one has ascended (or: stepped up) into the heaven (or: atmosphere) except the One descending (or: stepping down) from out of the midst of the atmosphere (or: heaven): the Son of Mankind (the Son of the human; Humanity's Son; the Son of man) – the One continuously being (or: constantly existing) within the midst of the heaven (or: atmosphere).

[with *p66* & 75, Aleph, B

and others: And yet not even one person climbed up into heaven (or: the sky), if not that one at one point descending from out of the midst of heaven (or: the sky) – the Human Being.]

14. **"And so, just as** (or: correspondingly as) **Moses lifted up** (elevated; raised up high) **the serpent, within the wilderness** (desert; desolate place) [Num. 21:7ff], **thus it is necessary and binding for the Son of Mankind** (Humanity's Son) **to be lifted up** (elevated; raised up high; exalted).

Here Jesus is connecting His ascension with the cross and the healing of mankind (*cf* the healings in the “serpent” account in Num. 21:7ff). Jesus makes another reference to descending in Jn. 6:33, 38,

“God’s bread is (or: You see the bread which is God, and comes from God, exists being) **the One repeatedly descending** (continually or habitually stepping down) **from out of the midst of heaven** (or: the atmosphere) **and constantly** (or: habitually and progressively) **giving Life to the world** (or: for the organized system and secular society; or: to

the aggregate of humanity and in the universe)....

because I have stepped down to this level (or: descended), away from the heaven (or: the atmosphere), not to the end that I should continue doing My will (purpose; intent), but to the contrary, the will (intent; purpose) of the One sending Me.”

These are allusions to the eschatological deliverance that came to “the aggregate of humanity” through the Christ event and the “giving” of the Spirit. In vss. 62-63 of this same chapter, He connects His ascending to the Spirit creating and

forming life:

“Suppose, then, you could continuously watch (contemplatively gaze at) the Son of Mankind (the Son of the Human; = the Human Being) progressively stepping back up again (or: presently ascending) to where He was being before (or: continued existing formerly)? The Spirit (or: Breath-effect; or: spirit; Breath; Attitude) is (or: continues being) the One continuously creating life (or: repeatedly making alive; habitually forming life). The flesh continues being of no help or

benefit to anything (furthers or augments not one thing). **The declarations** (gush-effects; spoken words; sayings; results of the Flow) **which I Myself have spoken to you folks are** (or: continue to be) **Spirit** (or: spirit; Breath-effect; attitude) **and they are** (or: continue being) **Life.**”

In Jn. 20:17 Jesus told His apprentices, “**I am progressively stepping back up again** (or: now ascending) **toward My Father,**” and Paul affirms this in his apocalyptic statement in vs. 10, below.

10. The One stepping down (descending) **is Himself also the One stepping up** (ascending) **far above**

(back up over) **all of the heavens** (or: atmospheres; skies), **to the end that He would at once fill the Whole** (permeate and saturate everything; or: make all things full; bring all things to full measure and completion).

The language here is again apocalyptic, and it continues the thought which he began in the previous verse, here expanding the picture. The clause, “**stepping up** (ascending) **far above** (back up over) **all of the heavens** (or: atmospheres; skies),” describes His enthronement over all. The purpose clause that follows presents us with apocalyptic imagery that is inclusive of all – all humanity and all creation. The

term **the whole** signifies the entire universe and all that is within it. Everything and everyone will be permeated with the Spirit of Christ and will be transformed (or: made new – Rev. 21:5). The parenthetical expansion of the last clause, “bring all things to full measure and completion,” expresses the extent and completed condition that will be the final product of the work of Christ. Nothing and no one will be left partially completed. All will ultimately bear the image of God, as He has purposed. When each vessel has been filled with the Spirit of the Christ (or, God), each will be in His likeness. As an apocalyptic concept, His

ascending, or stepping back up, signifies His return to His Source (God). This enables Him to come again into the cosmos and fill all things, and all people, with His Spirit – and thus, we no longer know Him “according to, on the level of, or in the sphere of, the flesh (or: Adamic nature)” – 2 Cor. 5:16. *Cf* 1 Cor. 8:6, quoted above.

11. And He Himself at one point gave (or: gives; [*p*46: has given and it now exists as a gift]), **on the one hand** (or: indeed), **the folks sent off with a commission** (the emissaries; the representatives), **yet also those who have light ahead of time and speak it before others** (the prophets), **and on**

the other hand those who announce goodness and well-being and bring good news, and then the shepherds, and finally teachers (or: the shepherds-and-instructors),

This is the result of His **“filling the Whole.”** He filled folks with Himself (His Spirit; the effect of His Breath) and enabled them to perform different functions for the body – the goal being described in the next verse.

As mentioned above, these gifts are given to and for **the whole**, as He progressively fills it. The first reading **gave/gives** are of the MSS that have the verb in the aorist (timeless) tense, which can be rendered in English either as a

simple past tense or as a simple present tense. MS *p46*, an important early MS witness, has the verb in the perfect tense – as rendered in the brackets.

The emissaries, or representatives, were sent off into the far reaches of the habitable world. Paul's norm was to bring the Light to the synagogues, but in Acts 17 we see an example of his message going to the pagans in Athens. He also served as one **“who had light ahead of time and spoke it before others** – i.e., he functioned as a prophet and as an **announcer** of the Good News. In other situations he served as a **shepherd** to the “flocks” that God had given to him for nurturing and care, and

in all situations he functioned as a **teacher**.

The organized religious system called “the church” made these functions into “offices” or “positions” within the system, and these functions became titles and a man-made hierarchy was developed. Jesus sent all of His followers out with a mission to the world. He told His disciples that they would do the work that He did. This was to be repeated as the Vine (Jn. 15:1 ff) grew more and more branches. Each branch had the same relationship to the Vine, and each branch was to have the same function: to produce the fruit of the Spirit (the DNA of the Vine).

We find other gifts from the resurrected Christ listed in other letters. We find this list in Rom. 12:

6. Now constantly holding (having; possessing) excelling grace-effects (or: gracious results of favor that carry-through), down from, in accord with and to the level of the grace and joyous favor being given to us, in us and for us, whether prophecy – [let it be] down from and in line with the above-word of the faith

(or: in accord with the analogy of the loyalty; according to the proportion

of trust; following the pattern of the corresponding relationship that pertains to the Faith; down along the upward-thought of faith or the up-message of the belief; in accordance with conformability from the faithfulness; on the level of the correspondence and ratio of confidence);

7. or whether serving
(thoroughly dispensing in attendance on a duty) – [**let us be, or live**] **in the service** (the attendance to the duty; the arrangement for provision; the aid

through dispensing); **or whether the one constantly teaching – [let the person continue] in the teaching** (the instructing or training);

8. or whether the person normally performing as a paraclete (one habitually calling alongside to aid, admonish, encourage, exhort and give relief) – **[let the person flourish] in the calling alongside to give relief and aid, as well as for admonition, encouragement and exhortation;**
the one habitually sharing (imparting; giving together) – **in**

simplicity (singleness; or: = with generosity);

the one constantly setting himself before [a situation] or being a caregiver (or: standing in front and presiding; or: being in charge of giving care or aid) – **in diligent haste** (= eagerly);

the one continuously mercying (applying mercy) – **in cheerfulness** (pleasantness; gleeful abandon).

These are functions for all of the members of the community to be performing: as services to other members of the called-out group and to all others within the group's area of

influence.

Thoughts similar to the present passage here in Eph. 4 and to this just quoted from Rom. 12 can be found beginning in vs. 4 of 1 Cor. 12, and on through the rest of that chapter. Paul's affirmations there, beginning with vs. 27 and on through 13:4, are worth comparing:

27. Now you folks yourselves are, and continuously exist being, Christ's body (or: a body which is Anointed; or: a body whose source and character is Christ) – and individually [you are] members of a part [of it] –
28. whom also God Himself, indeed, placed within and in

union with the called-out community. [Now He] first [set] those sent off on a mission (emissaries; envoys; representatives); second [He placed] folks who have light ahead of time and speak it before others publicly [on behalf of God] (spokesmen [for God]; prophets); third [He set] people who teach. Then after that [He gave] abilities and powers, adding then effects of grace which result in cures and healings. [He also gave] folks who take [things] in hand, in place of another, and grasp with

**their mind and apprehend the
replaced [situation] and
exchange**

(or: those who lay hold of
the other side of something
in order to aid and assist;
or: occasions of receiving
in turn or in exchange; or: =
helpful services; supports
given in turn) [**and
provided] situations and
skills for steering the
course** (or:

abilities to guide and direct
action; acts of pilotage; helmsman
abilities and services; wise
counsel and guidance; =

administrative and managerial skills). **[He then gave] species** (or: families; races; kinds) **of languages** (or: tongues).

29. [So you see that] not all [are] folks sent off on a mission (representatives; envoys; emissaries). **Not all [are] those who have light ahead of time and speak it before others in public** (prophets). **Not all [are] people who teach** (teachers; instructors). **Not all [have] abilities or powers.**

30. Not all constantly hold (habitually have or possess) **effects of grace which result in**

cures and healings. Not all habitually speak in multiple languages (or: are constantly speaking by tongues; or: normally talk to tongues [figure of people groups of other cultures]). **Not all are continually interpreting** (or: habitually translating).

31. Yet, you folks be constantly boiling with fervor (habitually fervent in zeal) [**for; seeking; supporting; in devotion to**] **the greater effects of grace and favor!** And still, I am now **progressively pointing out and showing you folks a path** ([the] Way) **corresponding to**

transcendence

(or: a road which accords with a casting-something-over [someone] on their behalf; a pathway in the sphere of excess and extravagance; = an incomparable way):

1. If ever I could habitually speak (or as an indicative: If I continuously speak) **in or with the languages of the human groups** (or: by the tongues of mankind) – **or even of the agents** (or: messengers) – **yet am not constantly having and continuously holding love, I have**

come to be a continuously sounding (or: blaring; booming out; resounding) [piece of] brass (or: copper; bronze) or a repeatedly clashing basin or a continuously clanging cymbal!

2. Even if I am continuously holding light ahead of time (or: repeatedly have prophecy), and I may have seen, and thus know, all the secrets (or: every mystery) and all the intimate knowledge (or: insight; *gnosis*), and if I now continuously possess all the faith and trust – so as to repeatedly transport mountains (or: to change the

place and position of mountain
after mountain) – **yet do not
habitually possess** (or:
progressively have) **love and
unambiguous, unrestricted
acceptance, I am** (I exist being)
nothing!

**3. If further I should dole out all
my habitual subsistences in
morsels of food – even if I
should hand over my body! – so
that I could boast [C, D and other
later MSS read: so that I will be
burned], and yet do not
habitually possess and
progressively have love, I
continue being benefited**

(furthered; augmented; helped; profited) **in not even one thing.**

[note: love (*agapē*) – "unambiguous love;" "an ecstatic manifestation of the Spiritual Presence;" "the drive toward reunion;" "participation in the other one;" "the acceptance of the other one as a person... the power of reunion with the other person as one standing on the same ultimate ground..." – Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, pp 134-137; *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century*

Protestant Theology, p
200]

Just as Paul segues from speaking about gifts and service to the topic of **love** here in 1 Cor. 12 and 13, we saw in vs. 2, above, that his discussion on God's gifts to humans also operate in the sphere of **love**. You cannot function in His gifts apart from “**continuously holding one another up** (or: bearing with each other with tolerance) **within the sphere of, and in union with, love** (unqualified acceptance and the urge toward union).”

12. **facing and with a view toward the bringing down of the fresh and timely, for the preparation** (mending; knitting together; adjusting; fitting; repairing;

perfectly adjusting adaptation;
equipping; completely furnishing) **of the
set-apart folks** (the saints; the holy
ones) **unto a work** (or: into an action;
into the midst of a deed or task) **of
attending service and dispensing,
[leading] unto** (or: into) **construction**
(house-building) **of the body which is
the Christ** (or: whose source, character
and quality is from the Anointed One; or:
the body formed by the Anointing),
The gifts that have been given to
humanity (vs. 8, above), that are listed in
vs.11, have the purposes that are
presented here, in vs. 12. The noun that I
rendered “**the bringing down of the
fresh and timely, for the preparation**”

describes a process. The root idea comes from the verb *artizō* and has the idea of “bringing the fresh and timely,” and to this is added the prefix *kata-* (down). The bringing down of the fresh and timely develops into a preparation to do something, or a fresh repair or adjustment of equipment. The extended meanings in the parenthetical expansion “(mending... etc.)” show the semantic range that this noun covers. The prefix can also be understood as an intensifier, and so we have the options of “the perfectly adjusting adaptation,” or, “the completely furnishing.” Examples of the verb’s use will instruct us as to the use and meaning of the noun (used in the NT

only here). A literal, practical situation is seen with fishermen, in Mat. 4:21,

“continuing in thoroughly adjusting, mending and preparing their nets.”

With this picture in mind, we find Jesus using this verb concerning the training of disciples:

“A disciple (or: student; apprentice) is not over the teacher, but yet upon having been thoroughly prepared and adjusted down (= instructed and adapted), he will continue being like (or: as) his teacher” (Lu. 6:40).

He does not say who will do the

preparation and adjusting, but the passive voice of the verb strongly points to the “divine passive,” i.e., it will be God, or Christ, that will perform this. This is put clearly in Heb. 13:20, 21,

"Now may the God who is Peace.... at once render you folks thoroughly equipped (fitted; adapted) in the midst of all good and in every virtue, immersed in, and in union with, the blood of a thorough arrangement (or: a covenant) pertaining to and having the qualities of the Age (or: an eonian – through the ages – settlement), in order to at once

do (produce; perform) **His will** – **progressively creating** (forming; producing) **within you folks and in union with you people the well-pleasing and satisfying [result] in His presence and sight, through Jesus Christ, in Whom** (and: for Whom, by Whom, and to Whom) **[is] the glory** (the reputation and the manifestation which calls forth praise) **on into the ages of the ages."**

A similar statement is made in 1 Pet. 5:10,

“Now the God of all grace and favor... will continue getting

[things, or, you] down and prepare [them, or, you] (or: repair [them; you]; fit, knit or adjust [them; you] thoroughly), will continue setting [things; you] fast and establish [them; you], will continue imparting strength (will make [things; you] strong), [and] will progressively set a base upon which to ground and found [things and you]" (1 Pet. 5:10).

Paul's use of the passive of this verb in 1 Cor. 1:10 is ambiguous; it could refer to God doing the mending directly, or through the teachers and leaders in Corinth:

“to the end that you can all keep on speaking the very same thing, and there may not continue being tearing splits-effects (divisions; schisms; rifts) among you folks, but you should progressively be folks having been mended, knit together and restored so as to be adjusted down, attuned on the same level, fitly and completely united within the very same mind and in the very same opinion (consent; sentiment; the effect of your intimate experiential knowledge and insight).”

In 2 Cor. 13:11, we have a similar

situation in his use of an imperative admonition with a view to their submitting to it:

“be continuously adjusted so as to be completely equipped and fully made ready while being thoroughly knitted together into perfect unity.”

In Gal. 6:1, the mature (spiritual) folks of the province are called upon to adjust or mend (etc.) someone who may “slip up”:

“Even if a person may be at some point overtaken within the effect of some slip or falling to the side, you folks – the spiritual ones – repeatedly (or:

continuously) **adjust, mend or repair such a one so as to thoroughly prepare and equip him, within a spirit of gentle friendliness.**”

In 1 Thes. 3:10 it is Paul and his associates who wish to have a positive effect upon the community:

“to freshly adjust to correspondence (or: thoroughly equip, fit, knit together, mend and bring into agreement) the things lacking (the shortcomings or deficiencies) of your faith and with regard to your loyal trust.”

So these processes are given, through the service of the sent-forth folks

(representatives), the prophets, the announcers (“evangelists”), the shepherds and the teachers to assist **the set-apart folks** in being able to do some **work, action or task**. Paul then specifies that these deeds are those of **attending service and dispensing**. This work of service has in view, and leads to, **construction of the body which is the Christ**. We see this same mixing of metaphors in 1 Cor. 3:6-17. There Paul begins with a metaphor of planting something (vs. 6) and in vs. 9 describes the covenant community as “**God’s farm,**” and then calls them “**God’s building.**” Next, in vs. 10, he refers to himself as “**a skillful master-**

carpenter,” and in the rest of the passage admonishes the folks to make sure that they are using the right material for building **“God’s temple”** (vs.17), and to take care not to **“habitually spoil, ruin, wreck or corrupt”** it. He uses these metaphors to speak about those who function in the above-listed capacities (vs.11, here) as they serve the **“set-apart folks,”** and are thus building God’s temple, which is composed of these same **“holy ones”** (*cf* 1 Cor. 3:17b). But the **“house-building”** of the body – whose source, character and quality is from the Anointed One – is not the final goal. The goal is described in vs. 13.

Paul leaves “**a work of attending service and dispensing**” open-ended as to what sort of service is meant, but indicates that it should lead, or have a view, to **construction of the body** – i.e., to build folks up. However, 2 Cor. 3:6-8 adds light to this:

“Who also adequately qualifies us (or: made us fit, competent and sufficient) [to be] attending servants and dispensers of an arrangement that is new in quality (or: pertaining to a new kind of covenant that has a different character and is fresh and effective).... the attending service and dispensing of the

provision of the Spirit (or: which has its source in the Breath-effect; marked by, pertaining to and being the effect of the spirit and attitude) ...”

He further qualifies the character of “service” in 2 Cor. 4:1,

“while continuously possessing (having and holding) this attending service and dispensing of provision – correspondingly as we were mercied (shown mercy), we do not habitually behave with a bad attitude, or perform in a worthless manner, or act from out of a mood or motive that is poor in quality, or,

become discouraged.”

And then, in 2 Cor. 5:18 we read the glorious pronouncement,

“Yet further, all these things [are] (or: the Whole [is]) forth from out of the midst of God – the One transforming us to be completely other [than we were] (or: bringing us into another place or state of being; changing us to correspond with other [perceptions and conceptions]; altering us to be conformed to another [person]; changing us from enmity to friendship; reconciling us) in Himself (or: with Himself; by Himself; to Himself; for

Himself), **through Christ, and giving to us the attending service of, and the dispensing from, the transformation [for folks] to be other [than before]**

(or: the change into another [position]; the changing to correspond with other [situations; perceptions]; the alteration to be another [person]; the change from enmity to friendship; the reconciliation).”

With this insight we can better understand the words of Jesus to His followers:

“the person habitually trusting

and progressively believing into Me, the works (actions; deeds) which I Myself am constantly doing (habitually performing; progressively making, constructing, creating, forming) that one also will proceed doing (performing; making; creating), and he will progressively be doing greater than these...”
(Jn.14:12).

And then Paul adjusts our thinking on this in Phil. 2:13,

“for you see, God is the One habitually operating with inward activity, repeatedly working within, constantly causing

function and progressively producing effects within, among and in union with you folks – both the [condition] to be habitually willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action, repeatedly operating to cause function and habitually setting at work so as to produce – for the sake of and over the pleasing good form and the thinking of goodness in delightful imagination.”

13. [to go on] until we – the whole of mankind (all people) – can (or: would) come down to the goal (or: attain;

arrive at; meet accordingly; meet down face-to-face): **into the state of oneness from, and which is, The Faithfulness** (or: the unity of, that belongs to and which characterizes that which is faith; or: the lack of division which has its source in trust, confidence and reliability, has the character of and is in reference to the loyalty and fidelity), **even which is the full, experiential and intimate knowledge** (or: and from recognition; and of discovery; as well as pertaining to insight) **which is** (or: of; from; in reference to) **the Son of God, [growing] into [the] purposed and destined adult man** (complete, finished, full-grown, perfect, goal-attained,

mature manhood) – **into** (or: unto) [**the**]
measure of [the] stature (full age;
prime of life) **of the entire content**
which comprises the Anointed One

(or: which is the result of the full
number which is the Christ; of the
effect of the fullness from the
[Messiah]; from the effect of that
which fills and completes that
which refers to the Christ; of the
result of the filling from, and
which is, the Christ) –

Here Paul makes it clear that the goal of
the work, actions, tasks and deeds that
the set-apart folks are to be producing
are to continue UNTIL “**the whole of**
mankind” can “arrive and meet face-to-

face” in “**the state of oneness**” that came into existence (2:15, above) “**from The Faithfulness**” of Christ’s work on the cross. This means that “all people” (*pas* in the plural, with the masculine definite article) will eventually arrive at the unity of the faith, which is also characterized as “being loyal” to Christ. On this verse, Schnackenburg comments that, “The second expression ‘the complete person’... reminds us of the ‘new race’ which Christ has created... (2:15),” but he, as most commentators, sees this as applying only to “the Church” (ibid p 184). We find a corroborating witness and admonition in Phil. 3:14-15a,

“continuously pressing forward, pursuing down toward [the; or: an] object in view (a mark on which the eye is fixed): into the awarded contest prize of God's (or: the award which is God's) invitation to an above place (or: the prize from, and which is, the upward calling from, and which is, the God) within the midst of and in union with Christ Jesus. Therefore – as many as [are] people who are mature (ones who have reached the goal, being finished and complete) – we should constantly be of this frame of mind (have this attitude

and opinion; think this way; be minding and paying attention to this).”

Paul had in mind,

“the intent that we may place every person (or: human) finished (mature; perfect with respect to purpose; complete; as having reached the goal of destiny) by [our] side, within and in union with Christ” (Col. 1:28b). *Cf* 3:19, above.

This goal involves **“the full, experiential and intimate knowledge (or: recognition; discovery; insight) which IS, and is from (or: of), the Son of God”** and has a **purposed destiny** to

being and having “complete, finished, full-grown, perfect, goal-attained, mature manhood.” This “man” is the *eschatos* Adam, the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:45-49) – keep in mind that this is 1st century, Palestinian apocalyptic language – that will **“measure [to the] stature of the entire content which comprises the Anointed One.”** The body of the Christ is a corporate entity that will eventually include every person **(the whole of mankind).**

Consider that **the full... knowledge** came **"from the Son of God."** He is the source (this is the ablative reading) of **the experiential and intimate** “recognition, discovery and added

insight” of (the genitive reading) God’s Son. Christ’s faithfulness, and His trust of the Father, brought all humanity into **the state of oneness**, and this gave us complete knowledge of the Last Adam (and the new US), who is God’s Son. Humanity can now come to understand itself through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The “oneness” and unity (vss. 3-6, above) which includes the whole of mankind is **“the entire content which comprises the [cosmic, resurrected, spiritual] Christ.”**

The final compound phrase has these other optional renderings:

- a) which is the result of the full number which is the Christ

b) of the effect of the fullness from the [Messiah]

c) of the effect of that which fills and completes that which pertains to the Christ

d) of the result from the filling from, and which is, the Christ.

These four translations express the *-ma* ending of the term “entire content; full number, fullness, etc.,” and thus we have the understanding that the “complete adult male (*andra*)” in this apocalyptic picture represents “the result” of the full number “which is the Christ.” As Nyland notes (ibid p 371 n 11), this is an unusual use of the word “adult male” (for another apocalyptic use of this

word, *cf* Rev. 12:5, where the form of the noun is *arsen*). I find it insightful that H. Schlier (*Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrieif*, 1930, p 28) takes a figurative interpretation of this phrase. Of this Johannes Schneider comments that,

“He expounds Eph. in terms of the concepts of Persian Gnosticism, and sees in the *teleios anēr*, the heavenly *anthropos*, i.e., Christ, ‘the supreme point of His own *plērōma* [result of fullness].”
(*TDNT*, II, p 943; brackets added).

Schneider and others reject this association, but Schlier’s picture seems

consistent with this context.

The complete number of humanity comprising the **measure** of the **stature** is both the effect and the result of “the filling from the Christ” into each human, and is “the effect of that which fills and completes” everything that “pertains to the Christ.” It is Christ within all the people of all the nations which is our expectation of His ultimate glory (Col. 1:27).

14. to the end that no longer (or: no more) **would or should we exist being infants** (immature folks; not-yet-speaking ones), **continuously being tossed by** (= being caused to fluctuate from) **[successive] waves and**

repeatedly being carried hither and thither (or: around in circles) **by every wind of the teaching** (or: from what is taught) **within the caprice** (the throw of the dice; versatile artifice; games of chance; the trickery) **of mankind, in readiness to do anything** (amoral craftiness; working everything; or: = while stopping at nothing) **with a view toward and leading to the methodical treatment** (or: the systematizing or technical procedure) **of The Wandering** (from the straying; which is the deception; [A adds: of the thrusting-through; or: from the person who casts {divisiveness or harm} through the midst of folks]).

The “**we**” in this verse is the same “**we**” in vs. 13: **the whole of mankind**. This is the goal toward which end “the saints” are to be working in service to humanity. As the image of God (which is Christ, the completed “Adult Male”) is constructed and lifted up, He (through His Spirit working within His body) will draw all mankind to Himself (Jn. 12:32).

The maturity and “adulthood” of the previous verse is contrasted to the immaturity here of **being infants** (*cf* 1 Cor. 3:1; 13:11). The new humanity was born in the resurrection of the Christ (the realization of “**you folks to be born back up again to a higher place** {or:

for you people to be given birth from above}” in Jn. 3:7). This one new humanity began as an infant, but its destiny is to grow into the full stature of the Christ. Paul admonishes them in 1 Cor. 14:20,

“Stop becoming little boys and girls in or by [your] way of thinking and use of intellect, but still be infants – non-speaking babies! – in the worthless, the ugly and the poor of quality or the evil. Yet progressively come to be mature as folks which manifest the purpose (full-grown; perfect; ones having reached the goal and express the

destiny; or: = adults) **in [your] way of thinking and use of intellect.”**

We see a different comparison between childhood and maturity in Gal.4:

3. Thus also we ourselves, when we were progressing from infants to minors, we continued being folks having been enslaved under (or: by) the System's elementary principles (the rows, ranks and series of the organized system of culture, economy, government in secular society and religion, as well as of the world and universe; or: the rudimentary things pertaining to

the cosmos).

4. Yet when the effect of the filling of the time came (or: that which was filled up by time reached full term), **forth from out of a mission** (or: from out of the midst of [Himself]), **God sent-off His Son, being Himself come to be born from out of a woman, being Himself come to be born under [the rules, authority and influence of] Law**, [*cf* Ex. 19:17, LXX: “under {Sinai}”]

5. to the end that He could (or: would) **buy out** (release by purchase; redeem; reclaim [from slavery]) **those under [the] Law**

– so that we could and would receive and take away into possession the placing in the condition of a son (or: the deposit of the Son; the setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son; the placing in the Son)

So Paul could be referring to the Jews within the communities who have been transferred from the old covenant (infancy) to the new covenant of the Spirit (sonship – Rom. 8:1-15). The followers of the Law had different **winds of teaching** in the various sects, some employing the concept of “Corban” (Mk. 7:11ff) as a “versatile artifice” to get around moral duties to parents, or,

“working everything and stopping at nothing” (as in tithing the mint and the dill). “Systematizing” was a central characteristic of the religion that was founded at the beginning of Israel’s “wandering” in the wilderness.

Judah (Jude) wrote that, **“some people came in unobserved, from the side...”** (vs. 4). He went on to describe these in vs. 13 as:

**“wild waves of the sea,
continuously foaming out (or:
vomiting forth) their shames (or:
disgraces). Wandering and
deceived stars, for whom the
gloom of darkness (shadowy
dimness; obscurity void of**

Daylight) **has been maintained** (guarded; kept and watched-over) **unto an indefinite time period** (or: an age).”

The winds of the Judaizing or Gnostic teachings of these folks that slipped into the congregations may have caused “waves” within the communities which would give the folks a rough and dangerous journey (the metaphor of a voyage in a ship – Schnackenburg, *ibid* p 186).

The Wandering, straying and deception could also be a reference back to the partaking of the forbidden tree in the Garden. That birthed **the caprice of mankind** (note the race-wide

reference here). It brought in the concept of chance, instead of reliance upon the Sovereign Creator. The trick of the serpent birthed “the trickery of humans,” making them “**ready to do anything.**” The Disobedience (Rom. 5:19) gave birth to amoral craftiness, and every sort of work by humanity. Note the interpretative addition by the scribe of the Alexandrian MS that makes “the thrusting-through,” or “the person who casts [divisiveness or harm] through the midst of folks” (this word is traditionally rendered “devil”) the source of the “straying,” and may have been added to try to clarify the meaning of **the Wandering**, and perhaps point

back to the serpent in the Garden. Paul, in 2 Cor. 11:3, reached back to this same situation:

“Yet I continue fearing lest somehow, as the serpent thoroughly deceived (or: seduces; fully deludes) Eve within its capability for every work (its cunning ability in all crafts and actions; its readiness to do anything), the results of directing your minds should be decayed (could be ruined; would be spoiled or corrupted) away from the singleness [of purpose] and simplicity [of being] – even the purity – which [focuses us]

into the Christ (or: [leads] into the Anointing).”

Paul could also be accessing Israel’s story with this phrase. In Nu. 32:13 we read that Yahweh, “made them wander in the desert, forty years” (*cf* Ps. 107:40). Then, later in their history, in Jer.14:10 we find Yahweh saying to Judah and Jerusalem, “In this way have they loved to wander; their feet have they not restrained. Therefore Yahweh... will call to mind their iniquity and look over (inspect) and check their sins.”

The genitive of the last phrase can be seen in at least three functions here. In the bold rendering it is **the methodical treatment** – of life, of people, of

situations, or religion – that defines, or belongs to **the Wandering** from the path of the Life (figured by the Tree of Life, in the Garden story). Reading this phrase as an ablative, it states that “the systematizing [of culture; of religion; of laws] came “from the straying.” The third option tells us that the methodical treatment or the technical procedure [e.g., the temple cultus] was, in fact, “the deception” – and it was Eve that was deceived (1 Tim. 2:14), and that deception resulted in humans eating the fruit that gave a knowledge of good and evil (the Law). We also read of the **straying** in 2 Jn. 7-8,

“Since many wandering-astroy

folks (or: many who lead astray; many deceivers) **went out into the ordered System** (world of religion, secular culture, economics and government) – **those not continuously speaking like** (saying the same thing as; confessing) **Jesus presently coming in flesh** (= a physical body; or: = in [their] inner self): **this is the person wandering astray, even the one in opposition to Christ** (the one instead of Christ; the one in place of Christ; or: the anti-anointing) – **be continuously seeing to yourselves** (looking at

yourselves), **to the intent that you people would (or: may) not destroy (or: lose) what we [other MSS: you folks] did (produced; worked for)...**”

Therefore, Paul could have been referring to a number of potential situations in this verse. *Cf* 2 Thes. 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 Jn. 4:6. The reality of the warnings in 1 Tim. 4:1 have materialized all through the history of “the church” and are current today:

“Now the Spirit (or: Breath-effect) is explicitly saying that within subsequent seasons (in fitting situations and on appropriate occasions which will

be afterwards) **some of the faith** (or: certain folks belonging to this trust) **will proceed standing off and away [from the Path, or from the Community]** (or: some people will progressively withdraw from this conviction and loyalty), **habitually holding toward** (having a propensity to) **wandering and deceptive spirits** (or: straying and seducing breath-effects and attitudes) **and to teachings of demons**

(to teachings about and pertaining to, or which are, demons [note: a Hellenistic concept and term: =

animistic influences]; or: to instructions and training which come from animistic influences [= pagan religions]).”

15. But continuously being real and true (living in accord with reality and the facts; holding to, speaking, pursuing and walking in Truth; truthing it) **within, and in union with, love** (or: centered in unambiguous acceptance [of others]), **we can grow up** (enlarge; increase) **into Him – the ALL which is the Head: Christ** (or: [and] we would in love make all things grow up into Him Who is the head and source: [the] Anointed

One)!

Contrary to Schnackenburg (and others), this verse should be read apocalyptically in terms of the cosmic Christ. The syntax of the Greek text has **the All** following **Him** which is then explained immediately by “**which is the Head: Christ**” or by “Who is the head and source: [the] Anointed One.” This demands a christological, not an ecclesiastical, reading. “The ALL” reaches back to, “**the entire content which comprises the Anointed One** (or: which is the result of the full number which is the Christ; of the effect of the fullness from the [Messiah]; from the effect of that which fills and completes

that which refers to the Christ; of the result of the filling from, and which is, the Christ)” in vs. 13, above, and to, **“all the effect of the fullness of God and the result of the filling from God”** (3:19), as well as to, **“His body, the result of the filling from, and which is, the One Who is constantly filling all things within all humanity (or: humans) (or: which continues existing being His body: the resultant fullness, entire content and full measure of Him [Who is] progressively making full and completing all things in union with all things, as well as constantly filling the whole, in – and in union**

with – all people)” – in

1:23, above, where the exact same term (*ta panta*) is used that we find here in vs. 15. Above, in vs. 10 (our immediate context), we find *ta panta* applied to Christ as the goal: “**to the end that He would at once fill the Whole – the All** (permeate and saturate everything; or: make all things full; bring all things to full measure and completion).” A passage that sheds further light on the universal aspects of vs. 15, here, is found in Col. 1:

17. And He is before (prior to; or: maintains precedence of) **all things and all people, and the whole has** (or: all things have)

been placed together and now continues to jointly-stand (stands cohesively; is made to have a co-standing) **within the midst of and in union with Him,** 18. **and so He is the Head** (or: Source) **of the body – which is the called-out community** (the ecclesia; the summoned congregation) – **Who is the Beginning** (or: the Ruler; the Originator and Ruling Principle; the Beginning Power and Ability of the process), **a Firstborn forth from out of the midst of dead folks, to the end that He would be birthed** (may come into

existence; or: could come to be)
**within all things and in all
people: He continuously holding
first place**

(or: constantly being
preeminent; or: habitually
being the First One; or:
continuing being the First
Man [note: this phrase has
in Greek literature been
used as a title for a
person]),

**19. because WITHIN Him all –
the entire contents** (the result of
that which fills everything; all the
effect of the full measure [of
things]) – **delights to settle down**

and dwell as in a house (or: because He approved all the fullness [of all existence] to permanently reside within Him)

20. and THROUGH Him at once to transfer the all (the whole; = all of existential creation), **away from a certain state to the level of another which is quite different**

(or: to change all things, bringing movement away from being down; to reconcile all things; to change everything from estrangement and alienation to friendship and harmony)

and move all), **INTO Him**
– **making** (constructing;
forming;
creating) **peace and harmony**
through the blood of His cross
(execution stake): **through Him,**
whether the things upon the
earth (or: land) **or the things**
within the atmospheres and
heavens!

The called-out community is His body,
because it is a part of *ta panta* (Eph.
1:23, above) which He fills, and which
“now continues to cohesively jointly-
stand within the midst of and in union
with Him” (Col. 1:17, above).

H. Schlier informs us that the LXX

adopts the Geek use *kephalē*: head, and that this is the usual word that it used to translate the Hebrew word for head: *rosh* (although “in many passages in the LXX, *rosh* is rendered differently, esp. by *archē* [beginning] [and] *archōn* [ruler]...” *TDNT*, III, p 675 n 2; brackets added). He observes that in Isa. 9:14-15 (LXX) “*kephalē* is interchangeable with *archē*” (ibid p 675).

Another passage that we should also note here is in Col. 2:

9. because within Him all the effect of the fullness of the Deity (the result of the filling from the Godship and feminine aspect of the Divine Nature) is

repeatedly corporeally (or: bodily, as a whole; embodied; as a body) **settling down and progressively taking up permanent residence** (or: is continuously dwelling in person),
10. and you folks, being ones having been filled up (or: made full), **are** (or: exist) **continuously within, and in union with, Him, Who is** (or: exists being) [other MSS: the One being] **the Head of** (or: the Source of) **all government and authority** (or: of every beginning and right; of all rule and privilege which comes from being).

Observe that He is Head of more than just the called-out communities.

Bo Reicke makes a perceptive observation re: the word “all” in the NT, “It occurs 1228 times, to which should be added 32 instances of *hapas*. This shows a liking for the concept of totality” (*TDNT*, V, p 893).

The called-out communities (the “church”) are God’s instruments, being His first fruits, for blessing and growing up “the All” **into Him**, just as it was with Abraham, in whose Seed ALL the families of the earth would be blessed by God, and we also read in Rom. 8:21, **“because even the creation**

itself will continue being progressively set free (will be habitually liberated and constantly made free) from the slavery of, and from, decay – even the bondage of deterioration which leads to fraying and ruin – [and released] into the freedom of the glory and splendor of God’s children.”

The first clause of vs. 15 (here) leads off with a perfect participle in calling to their memory the existing reality of God’s kingdom, the life in Christ. They are able, through the Spirit, to be “continuously living in accord with reality and the facts (literally: truthing it)

within love.” This means **being real and true**, while “holding to, speaking, pursuing and walking in [the] Truth **in union with love.**” This creates an environment (which is Christ) where **we can grow up into Him,**” for our behavior (speaking and living the Truth) is “centered in unambiguous acceptance” of other people. He is not only the Vine (Who is Love and acceptance of all) and the Olive Tree into which we have been grafted (Jn 15:1 ff; Rom. 11:17ff), but He (**the All**) is the “Source” of our life and existence (Acts 17:28). The word “head,” in Greek, also means “source,” as the head or source of a river. Schnackenburg (ibid p 187) points out

the linguistic contrast between the final compound phrase of vs. 14, and the following clause that opens vs. 15. He suggests that, because of this, “**within love**” in vs. 15 should be taken with “**being real and true** (etc.)” rather than with the finite verb (“we can grow, enlarge and increase”) that follows “within love,” and cites 2 Cor. 4:2 as a similar contrasting parallel:

“not habitually walking around (= living our lives) **in craftiness** (or: in union with the capability for every work; within readiness to do anything)... **but rather, in a manifestation of the Truth and by a setting of the Reality in**

clear Light...”

16. – **from out of Whom** (or: out from the midst of Which) **all the Body** (or: the entire body) **being continuously fitted and framed together** (made a common joint by a word; laid out and closely joined together) **and constantly being knit together and caused to mount up united through every fastening** (or: joint) **of the supply of rich furnishings** (or: through every assimilation of the full supply of funds; through every touch {kindling; setting on fire} of the completely supplied requirements) **in accord with** (or: down from; commensurate to; in the sphere and to the degree of) **the operation** (operative,

effectual energy) **within [the] measure of each one part** [other MSS: member], **is itself continually making** (or: is for itself progressively producing and forming) **the growth and increase of the Body, [focused on and leading] into house-construction** (or: unto building [up] and edification) **of itself within the midst of, and in union with, love.**

We find a similar description of Christ and His body in Col. 2:19,

“... **not continuously** (or: terminating the continuum of) **getting strength from** (or: apprehending and becoming strong by) **the Head** (or: the Source),

from out of Whom all the body
(or: the entire body) – **being**
constantly fully furnished and
supplied to excess with funds
and nourishment, and
progressively joined cohesively
(welded together; knitted and
compacted together; united and
made to go together as in mounting
for copulation) **through the**
instrumentality of the joints
(connections; junctures;
fastenings) **and links** (things
bound together, as by ligaments) –
goes on growing and increasing
God's growth

(or: the growth of God; the

growth having its source in God; the growth pertaining to God; the growth and increase which is God; or: the growth from God).”

Again, the initial subject (**Whom**, or **Which**: referring to either **Christ**, or to His existence and function of being the Head/Source) is christology, and the description of HIS Body is subordinate. The description comes full circle, ending with **Love** (which God is). The Christ that is portrayed in this passage is apocalyptic, and so is His body. The “adult Man” (which includes His body) is the eschatos Adam, the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:45-47), and it (the

resurrected body – 1 Cor. 15:42) is “**a spiritual body**” (1 Cor. 15:44). The members of this body are each one made alive in their own class, or order (perhaps: member), as we are instructed in 1 Cor. 15:23. There, in vs. 22, we are informed that:

“For just as within Adam all humans keep on (or: everyone continues) dying, in the same way, also, within the Christ, all humans will keep on being made alive (or: in union with, and within the midst of, the Anointed One, everyone will one-after-another be created with Life).”

Just as all humanity comprises Adam, so

also Christ (through the finished work of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) is composed of all humanity – which makes up His body. Paul also said to the Corinthians,

“Now you folks yourselves are, and continuously exist being, Christ's body (or: a body which is Anointed; or: a body whose source and character is Christ, and which is Christ) – and [you folks are] members of a part [of it] – whom also God Himself, indeed, placed in union with the covenant community (or: set, centered within the called-out)” (1 Cor. 12:27-28a).

They were a part of the body that had been grafted into the olive tree (God's anointed people), which both historically (as Israel) and now universally (as the new, unified Humanity) were chosen out of the masses for the purpose of being His temple living among the masses; a first fruit of a new humanity that as a covenant community bares God's image and likeness to all who have not yet been existentially joined to those that are called-out for this purpose.

Not all people are made alive at the same time, as noted above. The called-out communities have been created to lay down their lives for those around

them, and to then give birth to them (*cf* Gal. 4:26; the figurative Jerusalem, the new Eve which is “the mother of us all”).

Here in vs. 16, Paul gives characteristics of the entire body:

a) **being continuously fitted and framed together** (made a common joint by a word; laid out and closely joined together)

Once again note "the divine passive" -- this is the active work of His Spirit; once **framed together** we do not simply wander apart or divorce ourselves from this common joint, or else we will be living "dis-jointed," and we will have the situation described by Paul in 1 Cor.

1:13, "Christ has been parted and remains divided into fragments!"

b) constantly being knit together and caused to mount up united through every fastening (or: joint) of the supply of rich furnishings (or: through every assimilation of the full supply of funds; through every touch {kindling; setting on fire} of the completely supplied requirements)

Paul's Asiatic rhetoric can be seen in the redundancy of these expressions. It recalls the multiple pictures to which Jesus compared God's kingdom, in His parables. But here he adds the picture of

the utilization of, or the path taken, **to mount up united**: "through every **fastening or joint of the supply**." This would indicate that the **rich furnishings** come into other parts of the body through the various members of the body. They bring (like blood vessels) "the full supply of funds" that are to be "assimilated" by the body. Now note especially the rendering "through every **touch** (kindling; setting on fire) of the completely supplied requirements." This shows the effects of what is being brought by the Spirit through these members of the body.

c) **continually making** (or: is for itself progressively producing and

forming) **the growth and increase of the Body [focused on and leading] into house-construction** (or: unto building [up] and edification) **of itself within the midst of, and in union with, love.**

God's life is empowering the body "for itself" to be "progressively producing and forming "the growth and increase." The focus is on the progressive "house-construction" as He continues building His temple. We also see that this is all happening "**in accord with** (or: down from; commensurate to; in the sphere and to the degree of) **the operation** (operative, effectual energy) **within**

[the] measure of each one part [other MSS: member].” He puts His "effectual energy" into each "measure" of "each part/member." It is a living organism. The sphere of all of this is His **love**. It requires union with love in order to accomplish all this.

Schlier concludes, “As the *kephalē* He is thus the concrete principle of the bodily growth.... The body grows up to the heavenly Head.... the heavenly goal of this body” (ibid p 680).

17. This, then (or: therefore), **I am continually saying** (laying it out) **and giving evidence of** (or: attesting to) **within the Lord: no longer are you folks to be continuously walking** [your

path] (i.e., conducting yourselves; adjusting your behavior) **according to the way that the nations** (the multitudes; the non-Israelites; the Gentiles; the ethnic or special or pagan groups) **are continuously walking around** (behaving; living) – **within the empty purposelessness** (vanity; futility; nonsense; idle nothingness; fruitless worthlessness) **of their mind** (or: intellect),

We see in Paul's opening this next section of the sermon with "**then** (or: therefore)" that he is basing the following admonition on the previous sixteen verses. He is saying, "With all this in mind," don't act like those who

have not yet come to the understanding that you folks have been given. You previously acted mindlessly while living your lives, but (and here he uses the infinitive as an imperative) you are “**NO LONGER to be continuously walking [your path]** (i.e., conducting yourselves; adjusting your behavior)” as you once did, and as they still do!

Paul is not just “**continually saying**” this, but he is progressively “laying it out” (root idea of *legō*) for them as he attests to them by **giving evidence** in the argument of this admonition. He is giving his authority for this as his being, “**within the Lord,**” i.e., as being positioned “in Christ.” Below, in 5:8, he

calls to their minds that,

“you folks were once existing being darkness (dimness; obscurity; gloom; shadiness), yet (or: but) now [you are] light, within and in union with [the] Lord.”

They are, in fact, in the same position as Paul, and it is this new realm of existence (that of “being light”), “within the Lord,” that is the reason for their behaving in a new way, as he goes on to explain, below.

He then goes on to describe the kind of life to which he is referring: **empty purposelessness**. How depressing a description. But it (along with the

parenthetical expansions of the Greek term) is an accurate characterization of a life that is not continuously joined to the Vine (Jn. 15:5b-6; “withered and fruitless,” good only for fuel when making a fire). This same word is used in Rom. 8:20,

“For you see, the creation (or: that which was formed, framed and founded) was placed, arranged and aligned under subjection in the empty purposelessness (or: subordinated to vanity and by futility; made supportive to fruitless nonsense: in worthlessness, for nothingness),

not voluntarily or willingly (from out of [its] being), **but rather because of** (through; on account of; for the sake of) **the one** (or: the One) **placing [it] under and arranging [it] in subjection** (or: in supportive alignment) – **based upon an expectation** (or: expectant hope).” *Cf* 2 Pet. 2:18

Paul quoted Ps. 94:11 to the folks at Corinth,

“[The] Lord [= Yahweh] continues, by intimate experience, knowing the reasonings (thought processes; designs) **of humanity, that they are and continue being fruitless**

and to no purpose” (1 Cor. 3:20, where he changes “humans” to “the wise”).

We also find in Jewish literature, “You see, indeed, all people (humans) in whom, with whom or for whom ignorance of God was continuing in existence at [their] side [are] in and by nature empty, purposeless folks (vain, nonsensical, fruitless people of idle nothingness), and even from the good things that are seen were not healthy or strong (= were unable) to see, and thus know, the Being One (or: Him that continues existing; the One who is), nor in

repeated considering or by habitual paying attention to the works [that He had done] did they accurately know or recognize the Craftsman” (Wis. of Sol. 13:1; LXX, JM).

On this view from Jewish wisdom literature, see my *Just Paul: comments on Romans*, Harper Brown, 2014, pp 19-52, on Rom. 1:18-3:20. Also, Douglas A. Campbell’s *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*, Wm. B Eerdmans, 2009.

18. being folks having been, and still yet being, darkened in (or: by) the divided thought and the thing passing

through the mind, having been and continuing being alienated (estranged) away from the Life of God (or: God's life; or the life which is God) – through the ignorance continuously existing (or: being) within them [and] through the petrifying (becoming stone; callousness; = insensitivity from dulled perception) of their heart,

Here he goes on to more fully describe “**the empty purposelessness**”:

being darkened – i.e., having not light of the Life (Jn. 1:4)

divided thought passing through the mind – *dia-noia*

alienated from God's life.

This happens **through the ignorance**

that is continuously exiting in folks, and **through the petrifying of the heart.**

Paul develops this negative picture of the human condition through parallel, “coordinated participles.... [that] are to be taken together as a connected, unified statement” (Schnackenburg, *ibid* pp 196-7; brackets added). The alienation, away from the Life of God, began in and by **the divided thought and the thing passing through the mind.** Instead of gaining wisdom (Gen. 3:6ff), this dualism (knowledge that separates and divides reality into perceptions of “good” and “evil” – i.e., the Law) ushered in alienation. Instead of entering into the knowledge of God, humans

experienced **ignorance continuously existing within them** and a **petrifying of their heart**.

The condition of **“being alienated (estranged) away from the Life of God (or: God's life; or the life which is God)”** is what the Scriptures metaphorically refer to as the state of **“death.”** This is what Jesus meant in His characterization of the Law scholars and Pharisees:

“you continue closely resembling whitewashed (i.e., smeared or plastered with lime) tombs (sepulchers; grave sites), which indeed, from outside, continue being made to appear in the

prime of beauty, for a time – yet inside they contain a full load of bones of dead folks, as well as every uncleanness” (Mat. 23:27). Cf 2:1, above.

And so we read of Jesus observing this heart-condition among the Jews, as well (and not only among the ethnic multitudes of the nations, i.e., the Gentiles), where He was,

“being increasingly grieved and experiencing pain and sorrow with [them] at the petrifying of their [collective] heart (also: the covering-over of their heart with a hard, thick layer of flesh)” – Mk. 3:5.

As a part of making the Jews and the ethnic multitudes (**the nations**; the Gentiles) one new humanity, we read how God was leveling the playing field by blinding the eyes of the Jews, in Jn. 12:40,

“He has blinded their eyes with the present result that they are still blind, and He hardened (or: petrified) their heart, to the end that they could (or: should; would) not see with [their] eyes nor could they direct [their] mind so as to perceive and get the thought in (or: with) the heart and be turned, so I, Myself, will proceed to heal (or:

cure) **them.**” [Isa. 6:10]

Paul echoed this in Rom. 11:25,

“You see, I am not willing for you folks to continue being ignorant of this secret (or: mystery), brothers (= fellow believers; family) – in order that you folks may not continue being prudent, thoughtful or discreet by [other MSS: among or within; other MSS: beside] yourselves (or: = be conceited) – that a petrifying, from a part (a stone-like hardening in some measure; a callousness [extending over] a part), has been birthed and come into existence in Israel

(or: has happened to Israel) **until which [time]** (or: to the point of which [situation]) **the effect of the full measure** (or: the result of the entire contents; or: = the full impact and full compliment of forces) **from the nations** (or: of the ethnic multitudes; or: – which are the Gentiles –) **may enter in.”**

He indicates that the “**until...**” of the last clause of this Rom. verse is something that has already happened, as seen in 2:12-22, above. Cf 2 Cor. 3:14ff. In Israel’s history we read of Pharaoh, in Ex. 4:21b, “But I [= Yahweh] will harden his heart...” and then in 7:3, “but I will harden Pharaoh’s heart...” and

again in 9:12, “But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart...” (NETS). Of hardening in Israel, *cf* Ps. 95:8; Isa. 6:10; 63:17; Jer. 7:26; 17:23; 19:15.

19. which certain people, being folks having ceased to feel pain (being insensible, dulled or callous), **gave themselves over** (abandoned themselves) **to outrageous behavior** (excessive indulgence; wantonness; licentiousness), **into every unclean performance** (work, trade, business or labor of impurity) **in greed** (always wanting more; covetousness; schemes of extortion; = wanting more than one’s due, in disregard for others).

Being alienated from Life (vs. 18,

above) means being dead – and a dead person does not “**feel pain.**” All of humanity became “comfortably numb” to the pain of others -- and to the presence of God within creation. Being alienated from God results in the giving of ourselves over to **outrageous behavior, unclean performance** “in always wanting more.” The human predicament – the reason for the need of The Deliverer – is “abandonment to excessive indulgence.” It is from the conditions described in these verses that people need to be rescued and given life.

20. But you folks did not learn the Christ in this way,

The recipients of this sermon had already **“learned the Christ,”** and were now being reminded of this. Paul spoke of the instruction given to the folks in Colossae this way:

“Therefore, as you folks take along and receive (or: took to your side and accepted) the Christ – Jesus, the Lord (the Owner; the Master) – continue walking about (i.e., ordering your life) within Him (and: in union with Him), being people having been rooted (or: having been caused to take root) – even ones being constantly and progressively built upon The

House (i.e., added to the structure) – **within Him; also being folks repeatedly made steadfast and progressively stabilized with good footing within the faith** (or: confirmed by the conviction; made secure for trust and loyalty), **just as you are taught** (or: were instructed)...”
(Col. 2:6-7a).

In vss. 21-24, below, he goes on to explain what he meant here in vs. 20.

21. since, in fact, at one point you heard and so listen to Him, and within Him as well as in union with Him and centered in Him you were and are taught – just as Truth and Reality

continuously exist within Jesus (or: in union with the One, Jesus) –

Furthermore, we see that these people had **“heard and so listen to Him.”** Here I offer two meanings of the verb along with the rendering of the aorist tense as a simple past tense as well as a simple present. This is a “fact” tense, but from the context of vs. 20 we understand Paul to be referring to what they heard and learned in the past. Because of this, they now “listen to” Him. The *Concordant Literal New Testament* (Concordant Publishing Concern, 1983, p 455) renders this clause, “since, surely, Him you hear.” But the main thing to notice is that through the proclaiming of the Good

News these folks were not just hearing the sent-forth representatives, but Christ Himself. The teaching happened “**within Him as well as in union with Him and centered in Him.**” It was also a Jesus-centered instruction. This apocalyptic picture calls back to 2:6, above, and our being seated with Him in the heavens. By abiding (or, dwelling) in the Vine (Jesus; Jn. 15:1 ff) they continuously receive the flow of the Truth and Reality that are within Him. It is within this relationship, and being located in this new sphere of existence, that,

“The Spirit of Truth... will constantly be a Guide and will progressively lead you on the

Path (or: it will continue leading the way for you) **directed toward and proceeding on into all Truth and Reality** (or: into the midst of every truth and genuine reality)”
(Jn. 16:13).

22. **to put off from yourselves** [as clothing or habits] **what accords to the former entangled manner of living** (or: twisted up behavior): **the old humanity** (or: the past, worn-out person) – **the one continuously in process of being corrupted** (spoiled; ruined) **down from and in accord with the passionate desires** (the full-covering, swelling emotions) **of the deceptions** (or: seductive desires) –

Wuest rightly points out that the opening infinitive, "**to put off from yourselves,**" should be connected with "**you were and are taught**" in vs. 21, above. This shows what it is that they were taught to do (ibid p 109).

This is another way of saying what we find in Rom. 12:2a,

“And stop constantly conforming yourselves to (or, as passive: So then, quit being repeatedly molded by, fashioned for or patterned together with) **this age** [with other MSS: and not to be continuously configured to this age, or not to constantly remodel yourself for this age]...”

Now in 1 Cor. 15:22, Paul explains that, “**within Adam** (the first human [vs. 45] ... the one having the qualities and characteristics of a soul, the soulish one [vs. 46]) **all humans keep on** (or: everyone continues) **dying.**” This is the “**process of being corrupted** (spoiled; ruined).” In recalling the Garden of Eden story, we see that the “spoiling” of their situation came by **the deception** wherein the fruit of the death-dealing tree “brought a yearning **desire** to [their] eyes” (Gen. 3:6). So in this verse, Paul’s rhetoric skillfully crafts this description of “**the old humanity**” in terms of humanity’s exile from the Garden (a figure and symbol of unambiguous

access to fellowship with God, i.e., living in the realm of His Spirit) in order to give them a practical admonition concerning the negative results of living **“the way that the nations** (the multitudes; the non-Israelites; the Gentiles; the ethnic or special or pagan groups)” live their lives (vs.17, above). It had been their **“former entangled manner of living** (or: twisted up behavior).” He counsels them to **“put [this] off from [themselves].”** Because of now being indwelt by God’s Spirit, they now have the freedom and ability to do this. And thus, we can,

“[Be] folks at once stripping off from yourselves (undressing

yourselves from; or: go out and away from) **the old humanity** (the old human; = the old Adam), **together with its practices”** (Col. 3:9).

All of these passages show that the Christ-event that brought the Gentiles near and made them part of the One New Humanity (2:15, above) happened before they made all these appropriate changes concerning **the old, decrepit humanity** and the behavior that accords to the new existence.

23. and then to be continuously renewed (or: from time to time, or, progressively made young again) **by** (or: in; with) **the spirit** (or: attitude; breath-

effect) **of your mind** (or: from the mind which is you folks; or by the Spirit which is your [collective] mind),

This verse calls to mind Rom. 12:2b,

“be progressively transformed (transfigured; changed in form and semblance) **by the renewing** (or: in the renewal; for the making-back-up-new again) **of your mind** [with other MSS: from The Mind; of the intellect; pertaining to the faculties of perceiving and understanding; of the mindset, disposition, inner orientation and world view]...”

Take note of the function of the **mind** in both of these verses. There is either an

ontological association between “spirit” and “mind,” here, or it is speaking of our “mental attitude.” Literally, it involves “the breath-effect,” which in Gen. 2:7 gives humans life. But again, this speaks to a process that follows the impartation of Life through the gift of and from the Spirit.

The first parenthetical rendering of the last phrase is offered as the ablative function and would indicate that the **spirit and attitude** that **renews** them comes “from the mind.” And here I rendered the plural, personal pronoun “you” as an appositional function – so we get the phrase “from the mind which is you folks.”

The second parenthetical rendering takes the form of the word **mind** as appositional (“which is”), reads the plural personal pronoun as possessive (“your”), and the dative phrase as instrumental and as referring to God (“by the Spirit which is your [collective] mind”). This reads the Greek as a corporate admonition (each community being “one body”) that recognizes the Spirit as being “the mind of Christ,” as we read in 1 Cor. 2:16b,

“Yet we, ourselves, are continuously holding (or: progressively having) Christ's mind (a mind which is Anointed, and which is Christ)!”

This is the “mind” that **continuously renews** us. This “mind” is a spirit, joined to the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).

24. **and to enter within** (or: clothe yourselves with) **the new humanity** (or: the Person that is new and fresh in kind and quality) – **the one in accord with and corresponding to God** (or: the person at the Divine level) – **being formed** (framed, built, founded and settled from a state of disorder and wildness; created) **within the Way pointed out** (or: in union with fair and equitable dealings with rightwised relationships, justice, righteousness and covenant participation; centered in [His] eschatological deliverance) **and**

reverent dedication (or: benign relationship with nature) **pertaining to the Truth** (or: in intrinsic alignment with reality, which is the Truth).

"This refers to incorporation into Christ himself, the new Adam, the head of a renewed humanity sharing his Spirit. It connotes the attainment of all that man (since Adam means 'man') was intended to be... (Gen. 1:27)." (Grassi, *ibid* p 248)

But, I would add, this is "phase two" of our "incorporation into Christ." We have to be within the camp before we can enter into the tabernacle and come boldly to the throne of grace. The baby

has to be born before it can learn how to walk. We must note that all these admonitions are being given to folks who are already members of the covenant communities. All of this is the needed instruction for walking **the Way pointed out**. The **new humanity** is **being formed** (the "divine passive" – the work of God) in the image that is **in accord with and corresponding to God.**"

Again we can hear an echo of Paul, in Rom. 13:12b and 14a,

“clothe ourselves with the instruments (tools; weapons; implements; [some MSS: works; deeds]) **of Light** (or: The Light)

.... **clothe yourselves with** (or: enter within and put on) **the Lord, Jesus Christ...**”

And as we are instructed in Col. 3:10, “[be] **suddenly clothing yourselves with** (or: entering within) **the new one** (the fresh one which existed only recently), **the one being continuously** (or: repeatedly; habitually; progressively) **renewed** (made back up new again, in kind and character) **into full, accurate, added, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight which is down from and corresponds to the image** (an exactly formed

visible likeness) **of its Creator** (of the One framing and founding it from a state of wildness and disorder).”

Where in vs. 23, above, he speaks of “the mind,” here in Col. 3:10 he speaks of knowledge and insight – realities for which the mind was “created” as a gift to us.

The **new humanity** – “the Person [the last Adam] that is new and fresh in kind and quality” – in all its stages of development, is “**in accord with and corresponding to God.**” This is the fulfillment of Gen. 1:26a, the human that bears God’s image and likeness. It is “the person at the Divine level.” It is

what 3:16, above, calls “**the interior person,**” or, “the humanity within.” 2 Cor. 5:17 terms this, “**a new creation.**” In Gal. 6:15 we see that this is a corporate, humanity-wide situation, for there Paul instructs us that,

“For you see [some MSS add: within Christ Jesus], neither circumcision nor uncircumcision continues being anything, but rather: a new creation.”

This has an ontological effect, as each of us (in our own class, or “order”) becomes alive in Christ (1 Cor. 15:22), but it informs us about the characteristics of the new arrangement (covenant) in which God is dealing with humanity in a

different way than He dealt with us as the first Adam, the first humanity. Christ took all humanity to the grave with Him (2 Cor. 5:14, “**One Person** {or: Man} **died over [the situation of] all mankind** {or: for the sake of all}; **consequently all people died** {or: accordingly, then, all humanity died}”). In the “one new humanity” (2:15, above) that is the Last Adam and the Second Humanity (the resurrected, corporate “new creation”) there are no longer the dividing categories of “male/female,” “slave/freeman” or “Jew/Gentile” (Gal. 3:28). The final embodiment (to which 4:13, above, pointed) is prefigured in the corporate Christ which is presently

the “firstfruit” of all creation – Jas.1:18; Rev. 14:4; 1 Cor. 15:23; Rom. 8:23; 11:16.

From the terms that Paul uses, we can observe that a process is involved: “**being formed** (framed, built, founded and settled from a state of disorder and wildness; created) **within the Way pointed out...**” The “Way pointed out” (the literal meaning of *dikaiosunē*) is Jesus, “the Way, the Truth and the Life.” So we are being “**formed** (etc.)” in Christ. We are being formed in the new covenant, in the new creation. The parenthetical expansion of “Way pointed out” gives the expanded semantic range, based upon usage of the word: “in union

with fair and equitable dealings with rightwised relationships, justice, righteousness and covenant participation; centered in [His] eschatological deliverance.” All of this gives multiple views of God’s reign and sovereign influence (His kingdom) among humans. God’s dealing with humans is “in union with fairness and equity.” His kingdom brings us into “rightwised (turned-in-the-right-direction) relationships (with Him and with other people).” His act of eschatological deliverance (in which humanity is centered) displays His justice and opens all people up to “covenant participation.”

This “forming” also takes place within, “**reverent dedication** (or: benign relationship with nature) **pertaining to the Truth** (or: in intrinsic alignment with reality, which is the Truth).” Here I rendered the word *hosiotēs* (reverent dedication; benign relationship with nature; intrinsic alignment) in three ways that seem to cover its semantic uses. Other translations (e.g., NIV, NASB, and NRSV) have opted for a gloss, such as “holiness,” but there is the word *hagiotēs* that better fits our English word “holiness,” which is the idea of being “set-apart” or devoted to God. The word used here has broader applications which extend beyond what

is commonly thought of as “religious.” Alignment answers to the previous preposition (*kata*) **“in accord with and corresponding to.”** “Intrinsic alignment” calls to the modern concept of DNA, the inbred patterning of the inner humanity, the design which conforms to reality, or, to the Truth. This, of course, harks back to Gen. 1:26, again, and shows that humanity was meant to be in “benign relationship with nature.” Paul’s attitude of his being “a slave of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:1) displays a mindset of “reverent dedication” to our Lord and Master. All of this goes far beyond the usual perceptions of “personal holiness.”

25. Wherefore, upon at once putting the false away (or: being folks having at one point set the Lie off) from yourselves [as clothing or habits], you folks be continuously speaking Truth and Reality, each one with his associate (the one near him; his neighbor), because we are (we continually exist being) members [as of a body] of one another (or: limbs or body parts belonging to one another and having our source in each other).

The word "**Wherefore**" means that what follows is based upon what Paul had just been saying. Grassi sees in this passage from 25 through 32 a "new motivation" which is no longer based upon a law

(doing what is right rather than what is wrong), but rather is founded upon care and respect for others, "and a realization of how our actions can affect them" (ibid p 348).

An important aspect to observe about this section is that Paul addresses corporate contexts and couches his admonitions in the plural, speaking to the entire community. The concept of "one body" continues foremost in Paul's writing, here. We can clearly perceive that we are in this together, and are **members of one another.**

“Putting the false, or the Lie, away from yourselves” can speak of everything that is not the Truth – which

would be everything that is not Christ (*cf* Jn. 14:6). The bold rendering of the aorist participle (**putting away**) gives a snapshot of the life of the believer, indicating any point-in-time summary action when confronted with **the false**. The parenthetical alternative rendering (“being folks having at one point set the Lie off from yourselves”) sets the action in the past, looking back to their point of incorporation into the body of Christ. The false is like the shadow, as in Heb. 10:1a,

“For the Law (= Torah), holding a shadow of (having shade from) the impending good things (virtues; excellent, agreeable or

useful qualities or results) – **not the very image of or the same reproduced likeness from those transactions** (results of executing or performing; effects of practices)...”

The false would also refer to the dualism that syncretism had imported into Judaism from Persian, Egyptian and Greek religions, as well as from other sources in pagan thought, cosmologies, philosophies and religions. This would include the pervasive Roman Imperial Cult. But more than these, it would be an echo of the serpent’s lie to Eve that brought deception (1 Tim. 2:14), and would be inclusive of the human

predicament from which all humanity needed deliverance. In 5:6, below, we are admonished,

“Let no one keep on deceiving (or: seducing) you by empty words (or: messages; reasons; thoughts; ideas)...”

Jesus accessed the Garden of Eden story, in reference to the serpent, and said,

“Whenever he/it may be speaking the lie, he/it is continuing speaking from out of his own things – because he/it is (or: continues existing being) a liar, and its father [note: either the father of the lie, or of the liar]”
(Jn. 8:44c).

Then in 2 Thes. 2:10-11, Paul speaks of,
“**every deception** (delusion;
seduction) **of the injustice**
(wrong; thing that is not the way
pointed out and which is not right)
within the folks continuously or
repeatedly being lost (or: by the
folks progressively destroying
themselves) **in return for which**
(or: in the place of which) **they**
do (or: did) **not take unto**
themselves and welcomingly
receive the love of, and from,
the truth (or: Truth's love; the
Love which is Truth and Reality;
or: an appreciation of and
affection for reality), **into the**

[situation for] them at some point to be suddenly delivered (restored to health and wholeness; rescued; saved; restored to the original state and condition). And so, because of this, God is continuously sending to (or: in) them an in-working (or: operation) of wandering (or: which is the source of being caused to stray; which has the character of error and deception) into the [situation for] them to believe, and to trust, the lie.”

Such things are to be put away from us. This action reprises the idea of vs. 22, above, **“what accords to the former**

entangled manner of living (or: twisted up behavior): **the old humanity** (or: the past, worn-out person).” We read a similar admonition in Col. 3:8,

“But now, you folks as well, at once put all these things away from [you, as of clothes put off and laid away] (or: set off; = renounce or get rid of): inherent fervor

(or: So at this time you yourselves in one stroke set away and get rid of all the [following]: even natural impulse, propensity, internal swelling and teeming desire; or: Yet now,

you people at once lay
aside all intense anger, rage
and wrath), **strong passion**
(rushing of emotions;
outbursts of rage),
worthlessness

(poorness of quality; influence of
the bad; hateful intentions), [**and**]
from out of your mouth:
blasphemy (abusive and injurious
talk; slander) [**and**] **foul-mouthed**
abuse (obscenity; ugly words;
deformed and shameful
language).”

Cf 1 Pet. 2:1.

In contrast to the false and the lie, we
are instructed to “**be continuously**

speaking Truth and Reality.” The Truth is Christ: we are to be speaking as being the body of Christ. For the Imperial Cult, the word of allegiance was, “Caesar is Lord!” The Truth is, “Jesus is Lord!” We should speak the reality of the new creation and the new covenant (or: arrangement). We should speak as being raised up and seated with Christ (2:6, above). In this second, positive admonition, Paul lifts the phrase from Zech. 8:16 (LXX), where the prophet continues,

“Within your gates [the place where the elders met together] you folks must come to a conclusion and decide (or: judge) for truth,

with a result that also brings peace and makes joining-harmony [= shalom]” (JM).

The **associate**, the one that is “near” us, our “neighbor,” does not just refer to someone within the called-out, covenant community. It means whoever is near us – in the “world” at large, as well. This is an inclusive term that now refers to both Israel and the Gentiles (2:11-12, 19, above). Jesus was the first, in Scripture, to expand the sense of "neighbor" beyond the members of the Jewish community. We see this in the parable that was given in response to the question posed by the man versed in the Law, "**And so, who is my neighbor**

(associate; the one close to me)?" (Lu. 10:29). Jesus' answer (Lu. 10:30-35 -- the story about the "good Samaritan") demonstrated that in God's eyes being "a neighbor" pertained to anyone who is near (in proximity) or to whom one encounters. So the phrase above, "**each one with his associate** (the one near him; his neighbor)," applies to everyone living within or passing through each town or city where a covenant community exists. The called-out group is God's living temple within the surrounding society that is to present the image of God and the life of Christ to all these folks. From this realization, we must conclude that the following clause

also applies to these same **associates** (near ones; neighbors): **because we are** (we continually exist being) **members [as of a body] of one another** (or: limbs or body parts belonging to one another and having our source in each other). Even those who have not yet been birthed into Christ or been included in the called-out assemblies, are "neighbors" of the covenant communities, and are thus parts of Christ's body, for He has made **the Two into One New Humanity** -- we are **ALL** "members of each other." Thus, we have a more complete understanding of the inclusive statement by Paul in Rom. 13:10a,

"Love is not habitually working [the] worthless (poor quality; base; bad; evil; harm) for (or: to; with) the near one (the associate; the neighbor)."

The **new humanity** (vs. 24 and 2:15, above) makes all people **"members of one another."** This echoes the metaphor of a "body" in 4:12, 16, above, and 5:30, below. Clearly, the thoughts of relationship and being joined to everyone else are intimated here. Paul enlarged this metaphor in 1 Cor. 12:12-27. A different aspect of relationship and mutual membership is seen in the "family" language of 5:1, below.

26. You folks be habitually aroused by

the internal pulse of life (or: be constantly impulsive in reaction to your natural disposition and character; or: Continue corporately being made indignant or even angry), **yet be not folks continuously missing the target** (making mistakes; sinning; failing; erring; deviating). **Do not let sun be repeatedly setting upon your angry mood** (or: on the provoking exasperation, irritation or embittered anger at the side of you folks),
The first half of this verse reaches back to Ps. 4:4a and is an exact quote of the LXX. The bold rendering acknowledges and affirms exuberance and spirit in the living of this life, then adds the caution

not to let this zest for life and excitement from vitality lead one off the Path of Life.

The semantic range of the first verb is extended in the parenthetical expansion. It can refer to impulsive reactions that may stem from one's "natural disposition and character," or, it can indicate being "indignant or even angry." In none of the applications or situations should we be **continuously missing the target** (as being a bearer of God's Image or abiding in the Vine – Christ), repeatedly "making mistakes, failing, erring, deviating or sinning." If our **internal pulse of life** leads us into an **angry mood** (etc.), we should let His Peace be

the Umpire to settle the matter in our hearts (Col. 3:15) by the close of the day.

For the "indignant or even angry" side of this word's range of uses I emphasized the fact that the verb is plural, speaking to the communities as a whole:

"Continue corporately being made..."

Paul is not speaking of or to individuals, but to bodies of disciples. Their personal "internal pulses of life" are to be tempered by their being members of each other. He is not doing personal counseling here, but is concerned about their behavior as groups. But, of course, the individual listeners can draw personal admonition from what he has

said. We see the same focus in the following verse.

But let us consider the character of **the internal pulse** of the **Life** of the covenant community: it is the pulse of the Life of Christ -- it is Love! This Love should be constantly arousing them! They have a new "natural disposition and character" -- from the mind of Christ, His disposition of Love, His character of goodness, ease and well-being. With this transformed existence, being constantly impulsive can be trusted, for its impulse is toward acceptance of others (love) and blessing people. But even in this new freedom (Gal. 5:1), we must be led by the Spirit

(Rom. 8:14) and not deviate or fail to hit the target by minding things of the flesh. We are thus given further admonitions in vs. 27 that if not heeded could lead to errors and mistakes. From the last sentence of vs. 26, we can see that the group can have an angry mood or even experience embittered anger at their side. But such things should not be carried into their evenings, much less into the next day. His peace and joining must act as our umpire in life's games.

27. neither be folks constantly supplying nor repeatedly giving a place or position (or: so don't go on allowing opportunity, a chance, or a room in which to expand) **for** (or: to; in)

the person who thrusts things through [folks or situations] (or: the slanderer; the adversary; the accuser; the devil; or: that which casts [harm or division] through the midst of folks).

Notice the possession of power and ability that is implied by this verse. By the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit – the Sacred Breath-effect – we are able to deny **a place or position** (or even an opportunity or a chance) **for or to the person who thrusts things through [folks or situations].**” Here I have given a literal rendering of *diabolos*. The parenthetical expansion gives alternate renderings, as well as the impersonal “that which casts [harm or division]

through the midst of folks.” This latter translation suggests a wide range of applications for this admonition. I suggest that the traditional rendering, “the devil,” is misleading (although I included it because of its long association in dualistic cosmologies that stem from pagan beliefs and unsupported exegesis of the apocalyptic imagery in Isa. 14 and Ezk. 28). In 1 Tim. 3:11a we find this word applied to people,

“Women (or: Wives) [of the community], similarly, [should be] serious (dignified with majestic gravity, inspiring awe), **not devils** (or: adversaries; women who thrust things through

folks)...”

The verbs are plural which suggest a corporate setting and, thus, this admonition could be directed to community leadership that has in view the well-being of the community as a whole. Similar community-wide admonitions are seen in Rev. 2:9, 13, 15, 20, etc.

1 Pet. 5:8 gives instruction, on a similar vein, to the covenant communities:

“Be sober (or: clear headed)! Be awake, alert and watch! Your barrier in the Way pointed out (your road hazard; your opponent at court; the one "in your face" opposing your fairness and

equity), **one who casts or thrusts something through the midst of folks** (e.g., like a soldier casting a javelin or thrusting a sword through someone, or a person throwing an issue through the midst of a group, causing division; or: a slanderer), **as a constantly roaring lion, is continuously walking about, incessantly seeking to drink something or someone down** (or: searching to gulp and swallow someone down)” [comment: this path-hazard and road barrier may have been local religions, cultural or political opposition, or a spirit of

contrariness]

We are also informed in Jacob (James) 4:7b,

“So stand in opposition to the [or: your] adversary (or: take a stand [as in battle] against the one trying to thrust you through [with a weapon, or a word]), and he will progressively flee (take flight) away from you!”

Another picture comes from Paul in 2 Tim. 2:25-26 where we find him speaking about,

“constantly educating (training; disciplining; instructing; correcting) those habitually setting themselves in complete

opposition or who offer resistance. May not God at some time give a change of thinking to them (or: Would not God grant in them and supply for them a change of mind), **[directing and leading them] into a full and accurate experiential knowledge of Truth and reality? And then they can and may sober up** (or: would come back to their proper senses) **from out of the adversary's snare** (or: forth from out of the midst of the trap of the person who thrusts something through folks) – **being folks having been [previously]**

captured alive under (or: by) **him, into the will** (intent; design; purpose) **of that one** (or: that person).”

Consider, here, the **REMEDY** for the folks who have “been [previously] captured alive under” the “snare of the adversary”: **education**, training, instruction, and correction, discipline... which would cause them to “sober up” (Were they “being continuously drunk from out of the blood of the set-apart folks and from out of the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” – Rev. 17:6) so that they “would come back to their proper senses.” The **adversaries** were the people “habitually setting themselves in

complete opposition, offering resistance” to the Lordship of Christ and His message of goodness, ease and well-being (His gospel). The folks being opposed and resisted were the representatives of Christ; the opposition was the surrounding culture, society and religions. The snare and the potential entrapment which these offered was “the traditions of the elders,” the fear imposed by the Empire, and family pressures from the honor/shame value system. Such were what Paul and the other representatives of the Messiah encountered. The release (or, deliverance; rescue) from the condition of **capture** came by “God at some time

giving a change of THINKING to them.” This was a similar situation to that which John the immerser encountered with the scribes and Pharisees, and then which Jesus also encountered. The common people of Israel had been ensnared by their religious leaders, and saw themselves as outcasts. They were also captured by the domineering political, social and economic Empire of Rome, and were “drunk” in thinking that they could physically overcome it. Jesus brought and proclaimed a kingdom that could not be seen, which would bring them true deliverance and true peace. Turning, again, to 1 Tim. 3, we find admonition given for the context of the

organization of the called-out community. In vss. 6-7 Paul addresses issues of personal attitudes and the community's reputation before the town or city in which the covenant group is located, and the potential that someone might end up:

“... being inflated with the fumes of conceit, she or he may fall into an effect of the adversary's judgment (the result of sifting, separation and decision made in regard to someone who thrusts or throws something through another; or: a judgment-effect from the adversary). **Yet it is also necessary and binding to**

continuously hold (or: have) a beautiful witness and testimony (= a fine reputation) from those outside, so that s/he would not fall into reproach...”

The adversary here could be the mindset of the old humanity (the so-called Adamic nature that had become estranged from intimate relation with God) – the alienated ego. Or, the adversary could be the non-Christian religious community that was critically examining this new movement. An inflated ego would **“give a place or position [for accusation]”** to those who opposed the followers of Christ so that **“the accuser and slanderer”** could

“thrust [accusations] through the midst of” the covenant community, and cause the Name of Jesus to be blasphemed (*cf* Rom. 2:24; Isa. 52:5; Ezk. 36:21). A defense against these adversaries is described below in 6:11-18.

The most effective way to keep from “giving a place to that which casts [harm or division] through the midst of folks” is given by Jesus in Mat. 5:44,

“Be constantly loving your enemies (urging toward reunion with, and accepting as persons standing on the same ground, those folks hostile to you; [comment: this could have applied to the Romans, as well as to personal

enemies]), and be habitually praying goodness over the people continuously persecuting you (constantly thinking and speaking on behalf of the folks repeatedly pursuing you to have ease and well-being).”

Application of the rendering "a room in which to expand" could be taken both corporately and individually – especially if it is adversarial attitudes that are seeking admittance. J. Preston Eby lends insight to this verse, in reference to the adversarial spirit:

“He exists in the mind of man – he’s *in your mind* if you allow him to be!.... How do you *give*

place to the devil? WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS!” (ibid p 5; emphasis original).

28. Let the person habitually stealing no longer continue stealing, but rather let him or her be normally spent with labor, constantly working (performing; doing the business of) the good (the profitable; the virtuous; quality) by his or her own hands, to the end that he or she can continuously have (or: possess) [something] – [in order] to repeatedly share with the one constantly having a need.

Paul is continuing the trajectory of thought that he began in vs. 25: the putting of the false and the lie away from

oneself. This present advice progresses directly from vs. 27; following that admonition he gives a concrete example of giving no opportunity for the person who wishes to take us down by thrusting accusations through us. It also has practical grounding in Israel's roots (Ex. 20:15; Lev. 19:11; Deut. 5:19, "You will not steal;" or, Isa. 1:23, "Your chiefs are stubborn and partners of thieves..."). Jer. 7:9 puts stealing in company with murder, adultery, swearing falsely, idolatry.

But this exhortation goes beyond ceasing from stealing. The indicated goal is that he or she "**can continuously have, or possess**" -- so this would suggest that the

stealing was not from greed but from need. To be **constantly working, performing or doing business of the good – the profitable, with quality that expresses virtue** – will lead to having more than enough for oneself so that he or she can **repeatedly share** with folks that are **constantly having need**.

This practical encouragement calls to mind the practical, loving life that Jesus expected from His followers (e.g., Mat. 25:35-36). The message there is the same as the message here. Grassi (ibid p 348) observes, “We may note the constant emphasis that Paul places on sharing material goods with the poor (*cf* Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 2:10; 1

Cor. 11:22).”

29. Do not continue allowing every rotten word (or: putrefied idea; bad quality message; unprofitable communication; unfit thought) to be proceeding (or: issuing) out of the mouth of you folks, but rather if anything [is] good (profitable; virtuous; [having] quality), [speak it] toward house-construction (building [up]; edification) which pertains to the need, to the end that it may impart (or: can give) favor to and grace among those listening and hearing.

As applied to everyday communications, the first clause can easily be understood – each reader applying it to his or her

own culture and context. It graphically describes poor form and shameful communication. It is the opposite of speaking words of honor and truth – words that encourage and build up the hearers, as the second half of the verse makes quite clear.

But the adjective **rotten** does not mean vile, wicked, nasty or even uncouth. Literally, it speaks of decaying fish or fruit no longer useful for food. It refers to something that is now “useless, of no value or unfit.” Now with this root idea in mind, Paul could be referring to a message (or, Word) that was once good for food or for building the house (the community). He may be referring to

speaking things from the old, pre-Christ arrangement.

A synonym for **rotten** is the Greek *palaios* and its cognate verb in *palaiōō*.

We find these words in the following texts:

“the old humanity (or: the past, worn-out person)” (4:22, above; *cf* Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9).

“At once completely clean out the old leaven, so that you folks would progressively be a fresh, new lump of dough with uniform mix-effect, just as you are free from ferment.... not in union with old leaven (or: leftover yeast)...” (1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

“In thus to be saying "new [in kind and quality]," He has made the first (or: former) "old," and that [which is] progressively growing old and obsolete (failing of age; ageing into decay), [is] near its disappearing (vanishing away)” (Heb. 8:13).

The context of this quote from Hebrews is seen in Heb. 8:6-7, just before the quote from Jer.,

“a superior (stronger and better) arrangement (covenant; settlement; disposition) which has been instituted (set by custom; legally [= by/as Torah] established) upon superior

(stronger and better) **promises!**
For if that first one was being unblamable (without ground for faultfinding; beyond criticism; satisfying), **a place of a second one would not have continued to be sought** (looked for).”

A word or message used for “building the [new covenant] house” that is taken from the old covenant, applying it as a structure for the new temple (Christ’s body) would be to build with a **rotten word** – a word that no longer applies in the new arrangement. It would be building with “wood” (1 Cor. 3:12) that was once useful – in its time.

We are admonished rather to speak

words and teachings that are **good** (profitable; virtuous; [having] quality), **[with a view] toward house-construction** (building [up]; edification) – words of gold, silver and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:12). The current context and situation should also be kept in mind and “fit” that **which pertains to the need** (mentioned in vs. 28) of the audience. They should be words that are spirit and which impart life (Jn. 6:63) and that bring Christ into the environment and situation:

“the Law was given through Moses, yet grace and truth are birthed (or: joyous favor and reality came to be) through Jesus

Christ [= Messiah Yahshua]” (Jn. 1:17).

So, to **impart** (or: can give) **grace and favor** and to “build [up] the house [of God],” we are encouraged to speak Christ – words that are Spirit and Life. Once again, note the plural address: **the mouth of you folks**. The mouth (singular) of the group may be referring to the one who proclaims the message and represent the community: a teacher or a prophet. Such a mouth speaks the reputation and image of the entire community before the surrounding culture and society. In 1 Cor. 12:14ff Paul referred to the foot, the hand and the eye of the body, with intimation

about the need for the ear. In 1 Cor. 14:23 he begins instruction concerning use of the mouth within the assemblies. Here in Eph. his reference could also be to Israel's wisdom literature (e.g., Prov. 6:17; 10:31; 12:19; etc.) or to the Psalms (e.g., 4:9; 10:7; 12:3; 39:1; 50:19; 57:4; 64:3; 109:2). But of course this applies to all individuals within the communities.

30. Also, don't you folks have the habit of grieving (distressing; giving sorrow or pain to; or: = troubling) **God's set-apart Spirit** (or: the Holy Breath-effect which is God), **within Whom** (or: in union with Which) **you folks were** (or: are) **sealed** (at one point

stamped with a seal; suddenly marked; imprinted; = personally authorized) **into the midst of a Day associated with and arising from the liberation of a releasing-away from slavery or imprisonment** (or: a Day which is emancipation pertaining to a dismissal and a loosing-away into a freeing from bondage).

Based upon the foregoing context, Grassi suggests,

"Injury to one's neighbor means a lack of respect and reverence for the Spirit who dwells in men of faith (2:22)" (ibid p 348).

The called-out, covenant communities are the home of the Holy Breath-effect

from God, which is the mode of God dwelling within His temples. What grieves people grieves God's Spirit (Mat. 25:40; Acts 9:4-5).

In *The Testament of Isaac* (a 1st or 2nd century A.D. apocryphal book written in Greek by a Jewish author in Egypt, translated by W.F. Stinespring) we read in 4:40,

"But you shall take care and be alert that you do not grieve the Spirit of the LORD" (*The OT Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, *ibid* p 908).

Isa. 63:10 may also be echoed in the first clause of this verse:

"Yet they rebelled and grieved His

holy Spirit, [so] that He was turned to [be] their Enemy, and He Himself fought against them" (CVOT).

Actions or attitudes that arise from the “old humanity” are the norm for estranged humans, and even failures in this area are “covered” and cleansed by His atoning Life. So could it also be that the thing that especially **grieves God’s set-apart Spirit** is living as though the Messiah has not come, as if the Holy Spirit has not been given (which **sealed us**) and the new covenant-arrangement in His blood has not been put into effect, bringing into being the new creation – and thus, treating folks as though God

does not reside within them? The Jerusalem leadership “rebelled” against the advent of their Messiah, their Lord and King. Not recognizing the work of the cross would most likely bring the greatest sorrow and pain to the Spirit of the Lord. Bringing the old covenant into the new might just be the “rotten” word that grieves the Spirit of Christ. Also, I suggest that any limiting of the effects and extent of His grace would also bring distress, and trouble the Holy Breath-effect, which is God.

We should not miss the corporate, plural “**you folks**” both here and in the next verse. Next, let us consider the qualifying genitive and ablative phrase

that modifies the word **Day**. The traditional interpretation of the second half of this verse has put this Day off into the future. However, due to the nature of this day as expressed in the above translation, I suggest that this **Day** is speaking of the Christ-Event which involved His death and resurrection. That was the Day that brought “**the liberation of a releasing-away from slavery or imprisonment.**” It was “a Day which is emancipation pertaining to a dismissal and a loosing-away into a freeing from bondage,” as my expanded renderings offer. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (a part of the “Day of the Lord”) demonstrated the

sealing which happened for all humanity, fully birthing the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:44-49), which is “one new humanity” (2:15, above). In 1 Thes. 5:5, 8-9, we are informed that,

“you see, you all are (or: exist being) sons of (= associated with and having the qualities of) Light and sons of (= associated with and having qualities of) Day!.... We, on the other hand, being of Day (belonging to and having characteristics of [the] Day; having [the] Day as our source), can and should continuously be sober (clear-headed), putting on

(or: clothing ourselves with; enveloping ourselves in; entering within) **a breastplate** (or: thorax) **of faith and love** (or: which is and is composed of faith and love; = have trust & love as body armor) **and, as a helmet, an expectation** (or: expectant hope) **of deliverance** (health and wholeness; rescue and salvation; restoration to our original state and condition), **because God Himself did not** (or: does not) **place or set us into anger** (inherent fervor; violent emotion; wrath; or: teeming, passionate desire), **but rather, into an**

encompassing of deliverance
(or: unto establishing a perimeter of safety; into making health and wholeness encircle [us]; into the forming of an encompassing salvation around [us]) **through our Lord, Jesus Christ.**”

Deliverance and emancipation from slavery to sin (etc.), centered in the resurrection from the dead (with Christ) is both the referent and the reason for living as Paul admonishes in this passage.

Another point of translation is the rendering of the preposition *eis* as “**into the midst of,**” which is the central meaning of this word, rather than

translating it “for,” which facilitates an interpretive pointing to the future for this **Day of liberation**. We have been “freed from bondage” by being placed “into Christ,” with the result that we are NOW “in Christ,” as Paul so often affirms.

Before moving on, let us recall that the being **sealed** is an echo of 1:13f, above, which is there clearly stated as being a present situation that was based upon the past Christ-Event. Schnackenburg (ibid p 210) ties this in with **the Spirit’s oneness within the bond of the Peace** in 4:3-5, above. The term “seal/sealed” is used symbolically in Rev. 7 where in vs. 2 John saw an agent/messenger that had “**a seal of the continuously-living**

God." The sealing of the tribes (vss. 5-8) is figurative, for it is not a proper listing of the twelve tribes: the tribe of Dan is missing; Manasses is added, but not Ephraim, which had much greater significance in Israel's history – both of which were the sons of Joseph, who is listed in 7:8. The scene then quickly changes and in vs. 10 we read a very present proclamation:

"The deliverance (Wholeness and health; The salvation) **[is] by our God** (in our God) – **by** (or: in) **the One continuously sitting upon the throne, even** (or: and) **by** (or: in) **the little Lamb!"**

Then in Rev. 14:1 we find the same folks

(144K) that were "sealed" in 7:5-8, and these are symbolically located at the same place that we find ourselves apocalyptically located in Heb. 12:22ff - on Mt. Zion. In 1 Cor. 1:22, we read of God having sealed US:

"He [is] also the One completely (or: instantly, in one point in time) **sealing us** (stamping us with an identity-mark; imprinting us for ownership; or: validating/guaranteeing our genuineness), **even** (or: and) **completely** (instantly, in one point in time) **giving the advance transaction of the agreement** (or: the pledge and down payment

guaranteeing full payment for purchase; or: a dowry) **of the Spirit** (or: which is the spirit; or: having its source and origin in the Breath-effect; or: which belongs and pertains to the spirit; from the Attitude) **within the midst of our hearts."**

31. So let every bitterness, swelling negative emotion (inherent fervor; or: natural propensity, disposition and impulse; or: wrath), **enraged impulse, clamorous outcry, and blasphemy** (slandorous, abusive or light-hindering speech; malignment, vilifying defamation; harm-avermment) **be at once lifted up and removed from you folks,**

together with all worthlessness (that which ought not to be; that which is of bad quality; malice; ugliness; badness; depravity)

This verse encapsulates and summarizes the situation of humans before becoming existentially incorporated into union with Christ. It provides a stark contrast to what Paul just stated about the covenant communities existing “**within God’s set-apart Spirit**” (vs. 30). But because of “**the liberation of a releasing-away from slavery or imprisonment,**” these former behaviors should not exist within the called-out covenant communities – they should “**be at once lifted up and removed from**

you folks, together with all worthlessness.” The verb is a third person singular imperative, but it is in the passive voice. The imperative implies cooperation (So let...), but the passive instructs us that this is a work of God's Spirit among the set-apart folks. The singular number suggests that this is speaking of "every instance" or "every expression" or "every existence" of each of these negative emotions or actions. The plural "**you folks**" indicates that he was speaking community-wide. The new creation groups were unities where what affected one affected all. Every occurrence of any of this list would be **lifted up** from the community and

removed (literally: borne away; carried off) by the ongoing cleansing of His fire and life. We can recall the words in 1 Jn. 1:7,

" Yet if we keep on walking about (= continue living our life) within the midst of and in union with the Light, as He exists (or: is) within the Light, we constantly have common being and existence (or: hold common fellowship, participation and enjoy partnership) with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, keeps continually and repeatedly cleansing us (or: is progressively rendering us pure)

from every sin (or: from all error, failure, deviation, mistake, and from every [successive] shot that is off target [when it occurs])."

Paul's admonition is simply for the communities to yield to the Spirit's work among them. By living their lives within the midst of and in union with the Light, the flow of His life among them (figured by "the blood of Jesus" in John's letter) would do its cleansing work of removing these pollutants from the body. In 5:26, below, we find another metaphor for the same work of Christ,

"to the end that He may set her apart (separate her; consecrate and make her holy), **cleansing**

(purging) [her] by the bath of the **Water [that is] within a result of a flow** (or: in union with a gush-effect; or: in the midst of a spoken word, a declaration, or an utterance)."

Witherington (quoting P.T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans, 1999 p 350) points out that, "The rhetorical effect of this accumulation of terms for anger is powerful, and, together with the summarizing phrase, 'along with all malice,' indicates that anger in all its forms... is to be removed completely from them'" (ibid p 302). Again, we can readily see the practical, social application of this admonition.

But **bitterness** and **swelling negative emotion** were being experienced by Paul and the covenant communities through the resistant Jews, as well as the Judaizers (re: keeping the Law). Paul personally experienced **enraged impulse** (e.g., beating; scourging; being left for dead) **and clamorous outcry** – as well as vilifying defamation – from those who opposed inclusion of the Gentiles, as Gentiles, as a part of “God’s people.” This sort of corporate, social reaction was not to be mirrored back to the Jews – or toward the Empire, for that matter.

The semantic range of **worthlessness** can be summarized by the all-

encompassing phrase, “that which ought not to be.” Anything that is not love, ought not to be. This verse is a rhetorically effective backdrop for highlighting the positive alternatives which follow in the next verses.

32. and keep on becoming kind folks (or: So progressively come to be {or: be birthed to be} useful and obliging ones) **unto one another – people [who are] tenderly compassionate – folks constantly dealing graciously, extending favor among yourselves** (or: forgiving yourselves), **according as God also, within and in union with the Christ, was and is gracious** (or: deals favorably) **to and with** (or: freely

for-gives) **you folks** [other MSS: us]. He now paints the bright colors of **kindness, obliging usefulness, tender compassion, and gracious dealing with folks** as the qualities of God that are to be reflected as His image, into the world in which they live. This is a corporate image: an expression of “**eschatological deliverance into fair and equitable dealing which brings justice and right relationship in the Way pointed out** (being turned in the right direction; right-wisdom; also = covenant inclusion and participation), **peace** (and: harmony; = shalom) **and joy** (or: happiness; rejoicing) **within set-apart Breath-effect,**” i.e., God’s kingdom

reign and influence (Rom. 14:17).

In regard to my expanded rendering, **“folks constantly dealing graciously, extending favor among yourselves (or: forgiving yourselves),”** Witherington comments,

“The present participle here, *charizomenoi*, ‘being gracious,’ suggests that this activity is to be unceasing” (ibid p 302).

We see here an echo of Col. 3:12-13, **“Therefore, as God's chosen, set-apart and beloved ones (or: God's sacred, loved and chosen people; or: as elect... ones from God), clothe yourselves with (or: enter within) bowels (internal**

organs; = the tender parts; seat of deep feelings) **of compassion, kindness** (adaptable usefulness), **humility** (the minding and disposition of things of lowness or of low station), **gentleness** (meekness; mildness), **waiting long before rushing with emotions** (even-temperedness; long-suffering; putting up with people/situations; pushing anger far away), **being folks continuously holding up [things or situations] pertaining to one another** (or: habitually holding yourselves up, belonging to one another; constantly putting up with

one another) **and incessantly giving grace to or doing a favor for** (dealing graciously with and among) **yourselves, if ever anyone may continue having** (or: holding) **a complaint toward someone. Just as the Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh; some MSS: Christ; Aleph* & some Vulgate MSS read: God] **also gave** (or: gives) **grace to and favor for you** (deals graciously in, with and among you folks), **thus also you folks [do the same].”**

If these things are constantly reflected to the masses of mankind, how will they be able to resist the love of God?

Chapter 5

1. **Keep on becoming** (or: Progressively come to be), **then, imitators** (those made exactly alike so as to portray, express and represent by means of imitation) **of God, as beloved** (or: like loveable) **children,**

Here Paul reprises the divine decision of Gen. 1:26. We are admonished to live like who we are: children whose lives reflect the likeness and image of their Father. In so living (as did our Lord, Jesus) people will get to know God; they will observe and perceive what God is like. Paul's foregoing words have just described Him, in the manner in which he admonishes us to keep on

progressively becoming. In 4:31 he described what God is not like; in 4:32 he describes what He is like and how He behaves. Since we are in Christ, and since God's Spirit dwells within us, we have the power and authority – and we live in the environment – that allows us to live according to this call.

We should not miss what Paul presents to us here: the description of God, and us, as Family. Grassi posits a complimentary but contrasting reading here,

“In the Semitic use reflected in the NT, ‘children’ often connotes the imitation of qualities rather than an ontological state; e.g., in the

sermon on the Mount, Christians are to be ‘children of their Father in heaven’ by imitating the Father’s universal love for men (Mt. 5:45-47)” (ibid p 348).

We find an example of this in vs. 6, below, in the term “**the sons of The Disobedience**” which can refer to the disobedience of Adam (thus a reference to humanity; Rom. 5:19), or perhaps to the 1st century context of the Jewish leadership’s disobedience to the message concerning Jesus being their Messiah, or just to disobedient people. On this entire verse, Schnackenburg points us to *The Testament of Benjamin*, “pattern your life after the good and

pious man Joseph” (3:1b, *The OT Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, Henderson Publishers, 1983, J.H. Charlesworth, Ed., H.C. Kee, trans., p 825). I read both views from the text, here, rather than choosing one view over another. I suggest that the Semitic rhetorical use of the term **children** springs from an ontological reality that had been observed. Language usually portrays culture and world view.

2. **and so, keep on walking** (walking around; = progressively living and maintaining your life) **within, and in union with, Love** (acceptance and the urge for union), **according as the Christ also loves** (or: to the same level and

commensurately as the Anointed One loved, accepted and achieved reunion with) **you folks, and also gives** (or: gave) **Himself over** (or: up; alongside) **in our behalf** (over us and our [situation]; [other MSS: you]): **a bearing toward and a bringing to be face to face, and then an offering** (or: sacrifice) **by** (or: in; with; to; for) **God** (or: an approach [present], even a sacrifice by God) **[turning] into a fragrant odor** (sweet smell).

He now reduces all of 4:32 and 5:1 to one word: **Love**. Our behavior (metaphorically termed, **walking**; i.e. “living and maintaining our lives”) is to be centered **within Love**. Our lives are

to be **in union with Love**. Our whole existence is **within the midst of Love**.

Acts 17:28 informs us,

“For you see, within the midst of and in union with Him we continuously live (or, as a subjunctive: could be constantly living), and are constantly moved about and put into motion, and continue existing (experiencing Being).”

Then 1 Jn. 4:16b instructs us,

“God exists continually being Love (God is Love), and the person continuously remaining (dwelling; abiding) within, and in union with, the Love, is

continuously remaining
(dwelling; abiding) **within, and in**
union with, God – and God
constantly dwells (remains;
abides) **within him and in union**
with him.”

And this is why Jesus instructed His
followers,

“The person continuously
remaining (dwelling; abiding)
within the midst of Me – and I
within the midst of and in union
with him – this one is repeatedly
bearing (bringing forth; =
producing) **much fruit.”** (Jn.
15:5b)

Gal. 5:22 describes what this fruit looks

like, and in here in 5:9, below, Paul uses the metaphor of Light to give his listeners another picture of this fruit (i.e., behavior and way of living).

Paul uses the timeless aorist tense with the verbs **loves/loved** and **gives/gave**, so I have rendered these as both simple present tenses (present reality), and simple past tenses (historical fact).

Christ always loves us and always gives Himself over our ongoing situations.

And just as His act of giving Himself over humanity's predicament was **an offering by God TO** us (for as our High Priest, He brought His blood into the heavenly temple [i.e., us] and sprinkled **OUR** hearts – Heb. 9:11-12, 24-26;

10:21-22), we are called to love AS Christ loves us, i.e., giving ourselves to others on their behalf, and over their situations. But this **walking**, and thus this giving, is done by His Spirit living His Life within us,

“for you see, God is the One habitually operating with inward activity, repeatedly working within, constantly causing function and progressively producing effects within, among and in union with you folks – both the [condition] to be habitually willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously

effecting the action, repeatedly operating to cause function and habitually setting at work so as to produce – for the sake of and over the pleasing good form and the thinking of goodness in delightful imagination” (Phil. 2:13).

And since what we do for others we do for Him (Mt. 25:40b), this is, in turn, **an offering to and for God** – yet, one also done in and with Him, as the above vss. from Acts and Phil. indicate.

The idea of a **fragrant odor** calls to mind the burning of incense by the priests, in the temple. So Paul is subtly indicating that we are both priests and

God's temple. Our lives, lived as the body of Christ, give God pleasure. We are **face to face** with Him as we minister grace and favor to others. When we (again, note the plural pronoun: **you folks**; he is speaking to the corporate community, Christ's anointed representative to humanity) are **bearing offerings** to others we are **bringing** them **toward God**, within His corporate, human temple.

3. **But all sexual vice** (cultic prostitution, which involved idolatry; fornication; sexual acts contrary to custom, e.g., Mosaic Law) **and uncleanness** (impurity), **or greed** (desiring or having more than one's due;

gaining and having advantage over others; an insatiable drive to acquire), **let it continuously not even be named among** (or: within) **you folks** – **according as it is constantly appropriate** (proper; conspicuously suitable and befitting) **for set-apart people** (or: holy and sacred folks) -- Once again Paul sets a dark contrast to the picture of light that he has just presented. Witherington remarks:

“The basic pattern of rhetoric when it came to virtues and vices was the praise of famous persons contrasted with the denunciation of the wicked in general.... Here Christ or God in Christ is the

pattern that the audience is called to emulate and imitate... while the pagan lifestyle in various of its dimensions is denounced and renounced” (ibid p 303).

Ralph P. Martin suggests:

“This astringent ethic reflects the need for the church to retain its identity in the 1st century world and by the purity of its life (as *saints*; see on 1:1) to give no countenance to the immoral practices which were the accepted norm of Greco-Roman society...”
(*The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, IVP, 1967, p 1119).

Grassi observes:

“This sharing of the sacrificial life of Christ gives the believer’s life a sacredness that will stand in marked contrast to the practices of certain men” (ibid p 348).

On the term **greed**, Origen said:

“Greed can be taken either straightforwardly, or, as I have established [with regard to 1 Thes. 4:4-6], in the sense of adultery” (Epistle to the Eph., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, NT Vol. VIII, IVP, 1999, p 183; brackets added)

Since the passage referred to by Origen closely reflects this present admonition, it will be helpful to visit 1 Thes. 4:

3. You see, this is the will (intent, purpose) **of God: your state of being set apart from the common use or condition** (or: sacred difference; = covenant living) – **you are to continuously hold yourself from** (be distant from; abstain from) **all of the prostitution** [note: figuratively, the worship of idols or false religions, and a break from covenant].

4. Each one of you [is] to have seen and thus learned how, know and be aware of his own equipment (gear; utensils; instruments; vessel; = means of

making a living), **to progressively acquire** (procure for one's self) **in set-apartness** (or: holiness) **and honor** (value, worth), **5. not in a feeling of excessive desire** (or: in union with an experience of full-rushing passion), **just as also the nations** (ethnic multitudes; non-Israelites) **[do] who, having not perceived, do not know** (aren't aware of; aren't acquainted with) **God.**

6. Thus, no one is to be continuously overstepping and have more (hold advantage) in his brother's affair (result of doing; transaction-effect;

development from a matter; = cheat his fellow believers in business dealings), **because [the] Lord [= Yahweh or Christ] [is] a maintainer of right** (an executor of justice and equity from the Way pointed out) **concerning all these people and things, just as we also told you before and certified with solemn witness throughout. 7. For God did not call us on the basis of uncleanness** (or: does not invite us [to be] on [a path lived in] a soiled condition or a dirty environment), **but rather within the sphere of set-apartness** (or:

sacred difference; = in a manner commensurate to covenant living).

We can see in vss. 4-6, quoted here, that **excessive desire** (vs. 5) and **overstepping and have more** (hold advantage) **in his brother's affair** (vs. 6) could be applied as a reference to adultery, among other things. Long ago, Ambrosiaster noted:

“We treat covetousness as a minor fault when in fact it is a grave matter” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 183).

The clause, “**let it continuously not even be named among** (or: within) **you folks**,” suggests that the covenant communities should be completely free

from the above, or following, vices, and have no such reputation in the surrounding societies. Marius Victorinus had another insight to the verb in this statement:

“The name, the mind and the conscience of the saints demand that the tongue itself should be an agent of holiness” (Epistle to the Eph., *ACCoS*, *ibid* p 183).

Schnackenburg (*ibid* p 218 n 6) cites E. Haupt as interpreting this, “not once the subject of conversation” (p 199f) and E. Gaugler observing, “the danger of sexual gossip is obvious” (p 199).

4. as well as obscenity (ugliness; indecency; indecorum; shamefulness;

baseness), **or even stupid** (moronic; foolish) **speaking** (talking) **or coarse joking** (vulgar talking; insinuation; wittiness; quickness in making repartee; making a good turn), **which things it has not been proper or fitting to have come up – but rather** (in preference), **giving of thanks** (or: conversation marked by grace, gratitude and favor in well-being).

The parenthetical expansions give adequate interpretation of these three terms which open this verse. Paul was affirming to them that these things were **[were] not [being] proper or fitting to have come up** within their communities. Proper behavior is **giving of thanks**, or,

“conversation marked by grace,
gratitude and favor in well-being.”

In Col. 3:8, Paul gave this admonition:

“But now, you folks as well, at once put all these things away from [you, as of clothes put off and laid away] (or: set off; = renounce or get rid of): inherent fervor

(or: So at this time you yourselves in one stroke set away and get rid of all the [following]: even natural impulse, propensity, internal swelling and teeming desire; or: Yet now, you people at once lay

aside all intense anger, rage
and wrath), **strong passion**
(rushing of emotions;
outbursts of rage),
worthlessness

(poorness of quality; influence of
the bad; hateful intentions), [**and**]

from out of your mouth:

blasphemy (abusive and injurious
talk; slander) [**and**] **foul-mouthed**

abuse (obscenity; ugly words;
deformed and shameful

language).”

With the last two categories, here in
Col., it would seem that Marius
Victorinus, above, was right on target.

5. For this you people constantly know

(or: perceive), **habitually recognizing by experience, that every practicer of sexual vice** (or: male prostitute; paramour), **or unclean** (impure [in character]; morally indecent) **person, or greedy one** (person who is covetous: insatiably desiring advantage or more than one's due), **[i.e.,] the person who exists as** (or: that is; or: = which means) **an idolater, is not now holding enjoyment of an inheritance** (does not currently continue having use of an allotted gift from someone who has died) **within the Christ's and God's reign or sphere of sovereign activity** (or: in union with the kingdom of the Anointed One [= the Messiah], as well

as of God; or: centered in the royal influence from the Christ, and from God; [p46: within the reign of God]).

First of all, take note that the vices mentioned here are the same ones that are listed in vs. 3, above. But the second half of the verse adds an explanation re: **an idolater**. The question arises, is this latter just a category that is added to the former three, or, as my rendering adds the explanatory, [i.e.], does this addition give definition to what Paul was meaning by these three categories – both here and in vs. 3? Scholars differ on the text, since some MSS read: ‘o estin, while others read: ‘oV estin. My bold rendering follows Nestle-Aland’s text,

but my bracketed addition makes it read like MSS A, D and the majority of the later MSS. Schnackenburg is one who feels that 'oV is the better reading. The parenthetical renderings, "that is," or, "= which means," would indicate that the term "**an idolater**" is defining, theologically or religiously, the spiritual significance of the terms, **practicer of sexual vice, unclean person and greedy one**. Prostitution and adultery were traditional Israelite metaphors for idolatry, or turning to false gods. Another reading of the text could be, "a person who is insatiably desiring advantage or more than one's due, who is an idolater." The textual question of

whether it is a personal pronoun or a relative pronoun will lead into different interpretations of what Paul is saying. The dependent clause that presents the results for such behavior, or lifestyle, also has various interpretations. Many assume that **“holding enjoyment of an inheritance within the Christ’s and God’s reign”** determines their ultimate end. This assumption should be investigated.

Is being “in God’s or Christ’s kingdom/reign (etc.)” equivalent to “being saved”? Does entering His reign mean “going to heaven,” as some veins of tradition teach? In Mat. 21:43 Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders in

Jerusalem,

“Because of this, I am now saying to you men that God's reign (or: the kingdom of God; the influence and activity of God's sovereignty) will be progressively lifted up away from you folks, and it (or: she) will proceed being given to an ethnic multitude (or: nation; people group) consistently producing its (or: her) fruit!”

God's reign was, then, something that they presently had, but would soon lose. In Lu. 12:32 Jesus told His disciples, **“Stop fearing (or: Do not continue being wary), little flock,**

because it delights the Father
(or: because the Father thought it
good, and thus, approved) **to give**
the rule (reign; kingship;
kingdom; sovereign influence and
activities) **to you folks”**

Here we should take note of the term *basileias* which in these verses I have rendered: reign, rule, kingship, kingdom, sphere of sovereign influence and activities. This semantic range of meanings signifies a position or place of leadership that was to be taken away from the leaders and representatives of Israel and was to be given to Christ's apprentices, who would become His body – those who would dispense the

Good News of the new age and the new unified humanity (in God's economy and purposes), and would establish the covenant communities of this new creation of life in Christ through His Holy Spirit. They would grow in number and become "the Jerusalem which is above" (Gal. 4:26) that would birth children that would be children of the Promise. In other words, God's reign happens in people – here on earth, for,

“Consider! God's tent (the Tabernacle of God) [is] with mankind (the humans), 'and He will continue living in a tent (dwell in a Tabernacle) with them, and they will continue

being (will constantly exist being)
**His people, and God Himself will
continue being with them** [some
MSS add: their God]” (Rev.
21:3).

This means that God’s home is here,
among people. This is all about here and
now. In Rom. 14:17 Paul instructs us
that,

“God's kingdom (or: the reign-
and-dominion which is God; the
expression, influence and activity
of God’s sovereignty) **is not** (or:
does not exist being) **solid food
and drink, but rather,
eschatological deliverance into
fair and equitable dealing which**

brings justice and right relationship in the Way pointed out (being turned in the right direction; rightwisdom; also = covenant inclusion and participation), **peace** (and: harmony; = shalom) **and joy** (or: happiness; rejoicing) **within set-apart Breath-effect** (or: in union with and amidst a dedicated spirit and a sacred attitude; or: in [the] Holy Spirit).”

God’s kingdom is a way of life and a sphere of being. And further, Jesus informed his followers:

“You see – now consider this, and understand – God's reign

(kingdom; royal rule; sovereign influence and activity) **continually exists inside you folks** (or: is on the inside of you people; or: = within your community)” (Lu. 17:21).

So what should we conclude from Paul’s use of the word *basileias* here in vs. 5? The verb “**now holding**,” or “currently continue having,” speaks to the present condition, situation and behavior of those that would be described by the terms in the first clause of this verse. They describe folks that have not yet been existentially born into the body of Christ – they are not presently “having use of an allotted gift.” But this does not

preclude future existential transformation when their class, group or order – or their season – comes and they are resurrected into the Life of Christ (*cf* 1 Cor. 15:22-23). So those of whom Paul speaks here in vs. 5 would be in the same position as the Sanhedrin, priests, scribes, elders or any others that were the representatives of God's kingdom before the coming of the Messiah: they would be in need of deliverance. Until this comes about, they are not now holding an allotted (inherited) position in God's present sovereign activities or influences in the earth. They await birth into the kingdom – and birth is always the act of the

Parent, not of the one that is born.

Deliverance is an act of God, not an act of the person in need.

The term “**enjoyment of an inheritance,**” or, “an allotted gift,” was the traditional means by which children received an allotted gift from their parents (in a patrilineal society, from the father) as a place to live, and as a means to live. In vs. 1, above, Paul’s listeners are called beloved children, so here he picks up the family metaphor once more in this element that reaches back to Abram asking Yahweh for a son to be his heir (Gen. 15:1-6). In 1:13-14, above, he spoke of,

“the set-apart Breath-effect of

The Promise (or: with the holy attitude of assurance; in the sacred essence from the promise; or: for the Holy Spirit which is the Promise) – **Which is continuously a pledge and guarantee of our inheritance** (or: Who remains being an earnest deposit, a security and the first installment of our portion which was acquired by lot) – **[leading] unto a release into freedom** (liberation from slavery or imprisonment) **from that which was made to surround [us/you]** (or: of the encircling acquisition; or: which is that which has been constructed

as a perimeter around [us])...”

In 1 Pet. 1:3-4 we read of,

“the One bringing us to birth again.... into the midst of an incorruptible (unspoilable; imperishable; unruinable; undecayable), **unstained** (undefiled), **and unfading** (or: unwithering) **inheritance** (or: enjoyment of and participation in an allotted portion as a possession).... **within the midst of [the, or our] atmospheres** (or: in union with heavens; = in realms of spirit).”

So, in these metaphors, the inheritance comes to one who is a child that has

been born into a family. And as with His reign, so with the inheritance: it is within and among us. It is an enjoyment of His Spirit. As with Abraham's heir, we are God's heirs **down from, corresponding to and in the sphere of Promise** (Gal. 3:29b), through **our mother**, the Jerusalem which is above – the free woman – **in the sphere of the Spirit** (Gal. 4:26, 29-31). And as Paul said in Rom. 8:17a,

“Now since children (or: Yet if ones born by natural descent), **also heirs** (possessors and enjoyers of an allotted inheritance; those who hold sway over the allotted portion): **on the one**

hand, God's heirs, on the other, Christ's joint-heirs..."

Until one is a child (literally: a born one), one is not at this time enjoying an allotment in God's reign – and even then, not a full enjoyment until s/he has matured (Gal. 4:1 ff).

We find statements parallel to this verse in Gal. 5:19-21 where we find Paul going into more detail and expanding the list. It will be instructive to consider these verses, so I will quote them, along with my comments from my publication, *John, Judah, Paul & ?* (Harper Brown Publishers, 2013 p 295-6):

19. Now the works (actions; deeds) of the flesh [religion] (or:

= whose source and origin are the estranged human nature; or: pertaining to the flesh [system, or, nature]; or: = whose results and realm are the self in slavery to a system) **[are] seen and made apparent in clear light, which are, and continue being, the works of a prostitute (or: [the] Prostitute): uncleanness (or: waste or worthless material, as of decayed flesh; a never-pruned tree; material that has not been sifted), excess (immoderation; outrageous behavior),**
“Now a casual reading of this and the following two verses would

seem to appear as Paul pointing us to personal morality ('List of virtues and vices were a standard rhetorical device in the ancient world...' – Harvey, *ibid.* p 615), but I suggest that this is not the case. Each category, listed here in 19 and 20, is a corporate issue that the prophets laid as a charge against Israel in regard to their religious prostitution with the idolatries of their pagan neighbors. On the first item, recall Isa. 1:21, 'How has the faithful city [i.e., Jerusalem] become a prostitute?' On the second, *akatharsia*, Barclay points out

that it ‘can be used for the pus of an unclean wound, for a tree that has never been pruned, for material which has never been sifted’ (ibid. p 47). This was not just about a moral issue. Also, see Ezk. 34:18 and Matt. 23:27. These were all corporate pronouncements. As to excessive behavior, see the religious behavior that Jesus addresses in Matt. 23:14-23.

“I suggest that Paul is demonstrating the rhetorical skill of ‘the double-meaning.’ Taken as literal vices, they are indeed works of the estranged human

nature. But as you see, the prophets used this same technique, associating the physical vice with the spiritual – the second being the main point.

20. **idolatry** (being a servant to or worshiping external forms or appearances, phantoms of the mind, unsubstantial or reflected images, or conveyed impressions) **sorcery** (employment of drugs and enchantments; magic rites; witchcraft), **hostilities** (enmities; alienations), **strife** (contentious disposition), **jealousies** (or: zealous emotions), **stirring emotions** (rushing passions;

furries), **factions**, **standings-apart** (divisions), **sects** (religious denominations; parties with a particular opinion; the making of choices from preferences),
“All of the items listed in this verse can apply to religious groups, on a spiritual level. The meanings of **idolatry** in the parenthetical expansion are easily and often seen in religious settings even today. Francis Frangipane has said that the basic form of **witchcraft** is the attempt, or the practice, of controlling others by any spirit [or attitude] that is not God. **Hostilities** were seen in the

attitudes and actions of the scribes and Pharisees toward Jesus – as well as between the various sects of first century Judaism. **Strife** and **factions** (divisions) were seen in the Corinthian groups, as we see in 1 Cor. Paul, as Saul, had demonstrated ‘zealous emotions’ against the Christians. The Jews killed Jesus out of **jealousy** (*cf* John 11:47-48; 12:19). As to **stirring emotions**, consider the Jews who had vowed to kill Paul (Acts 23:12). The term **sect** was seen in the Judaism of Jesus' day, and throughout the history of Christianity.

21. envies, murders, intoxications (times of being drunk), **festal processions** (or: excessive feastings), **and things like to these [whether religious, or personal], which things I continue predicting** (saying beforehand; or: = giving warning) **to you folks, just as I said before, that those habitually practicing** (or: performing) **such [religious, or personal] things will not inherit** (receive and enjoy a distributed allotment of) **God's reign** (kingdom; sovereign influence and activities).

“Envy is often a corporate

attitude and emotion. John addressed the attitude of hate, and equated it to **murder** (1 John 3:15). The "**intoxications and festal processions**" were issues involving feasts in idol temples (*cf* Ben Witherington III, *ibid*, where he addresses this issue in his commentary on 1 Cor.).

“We should keep in mind the present tense in the verb ‘**habitually practicing** (repeatedly performing).’ This indicates a way of life for the group (‘**those**’ – plural). All such things are antitheses of the Love that fulfills the Law (14, above) and are the

opposite of ‘walking about (living) in the spirit and Breath-effect’ (15) of the Promise. Living in things of the old creation (the flesh) precludes living in the enjoyment of the allotted inheritance – which is the new (the spirit). The term ‘**inherit** (etc.)’ is simply another metaphor in Paul's rhetorical arsenal. God's reign – His sovereign influence and activities – is a living relationship that is shared by the covenant community. The foregoing ‘laundry list,’ above, represents behaviors that damage and break relationships. They

divert the attention away from Christ (the opposite of 2 Cor. 3:18) among people (as well as within individuals) and blind the group from seeing the manifestations of His sovereign activities within and among others. Such activities make it impossible for them to be participating (enjoying the allotment) in God's kingdom. His reign is happening now – this is not referring to some future time.”

6. Let no one keep on deceiving (or: seducing) you folks by empty words (or: messages; reasons; thoughts; ideas), for because of these things, God's

inherent fervor (natural impulse and disposition; intrinsic teeming desire and swelling passion; or: anger; indignation)

is continuously coming upon [note: *cf* John 3:36] **the sons of The**

Disobedience (the incomppliance; or: = folks having the quality of not being convinced or being disobedient and stubborn).

As suggested above, **the sons of The Disobedience** can refer to the human race, and thus the Greco-Roman culture of the 1st century, and on through time to all those alive today who are not at this time “enjoyers of the allotment” of Christ and the Spirit. John spoke of this category in Jn. 3:36b,

“the person now continuing being unpersuaded by the Son (or: presently being constantly incomppliant, disobedient or disbelieving to the Son; being repeatedly stubborn toward the Son) will not be catching sight of (seeing; observing; perceiving) [this] life. To the contrary, God’s personal emotion and inherent fervor

(teeming passion and swelling desire; mental bent and natural impulse; propensity and disposition; or: anger, wrath and indignation) is

continuously remaining (is now habitually dwelling and abiding) **upon him.**”

This phrase can also refer to those of Paul's day who were “incompliant” to the message of Jesus as Lord, and Messiah. The parenthetical paraphrase describes all who have not yet been existentially dragged into Christ (Jn. 6:44; 14:32). Paul's admonition is primarily to the community as a corporate group (**you folks**), that as being Christ's body in each town it should not come under any negative influence from the surrounding culture -- be that religious or secular. Of course the same advice can and should be

employed by individuals within the covenant bodies.

The present tense of the verb **coming** tells us this is not speaking of some future time or event. As Jn. 3:36b explains, this is an ongoing, present reality: the human predicament. The **deceiving** is an echo from Gen. 3:1 ff (*cf* 1 Tim.2:14, where Paul uses this same word). Jacob (James) gave a pertinent insight in 1:26,

“Now if someone habitually supposes [himself] (or: thinks [himself]; presumes; or: constantly appears or seems) to be religious (occupied with rituals and ceremonies), while not habitually

guiding his tongue with a bridle, but rather is repeatedly deceiving his heart, the religion (ritual; observance of a religious system) of this person is useless (futile; empty).”

The **empty words** could refer to such as referred to in 1 Cor. 1:17b,

“not in cleverness of word (within [the] wisdom of a message or an idea; not in skillfulness of rhetoric) – in order that the cross of the Christ (the Anointed One's execution-stake) cannot (or: would not) be made empty or void of content and purpose [by rhetoric],”

or, to Paul's quote of Isa. 29:14 in 1 Cor. 1:19,

“I will undo (untie and loose away; destroy) **the wisdom and cleverness of the wise ones, and I will set aside** (or: displace; invalidate) **the intelligence** (comprehension; understanding) **of the intellectual** (intelligent; comprehending) **people.”**

Verse 6a, here, calls to mind the situation described in Rom. 8:20,

“You see, the creation (or: that which was formed, framed and founded) **was placed, arranged and aligned under subjection in the empty purposelessness** (or:

subordinated to vanity and by
futility; made supportive to
fruitless nonsense: in
worthlessness, for nothingness),
not voluntarily or willingly (from
out of [its] being), **but rather
because of** (through; on account
of; for the sake of) **the one** (or:
the One) **placing [it] under and
arranging [it] in subjection** (or:
in supportive alignment) – **based
upon an expectation** (or:
expectant hope),”

and Col. 2:8 gives a similar echo,
expanding the idea:

**“Keep watching out for and
beware that someone will not be**

the one progressively (or: repeatedly) **carrying you off captive** (after stripping you of arms and seizing your goods, proceed in kidnapping you as booty or a prey) **through the philosophy and empty seduction** (or: a deceitful trick having no content) **being handed down from and being in line with the tradition of the people** (or: corresponding to the thing handed along from humans), **down from** (or: in line with and corresponding to) **the elementary principles** (or: rudimentary teachings and fundamental

assumptions) **of the organized System** (the world of culture, religion, government, secular society or economy), **and not down from Christ** (or: in accord with the sphere of, and in line with, Christ; corresponding to an Anointing).”

Most likely paramount in Paul’s thoughts concerning the “empty messages, thoughts, ideas or reasons” were the religious influences of Judaism, early Jewish Gnosticism, or Hellenistic philosophies and religion. Without Christ in the message, thought or idea, all words are empty.

“God's inherent fervor, natural impulse

and disposition, intrinsic teeming desire and swelling passion” are fueled by His Love for and acceptance of the aggregate of mankind – the whole world (Jn. 3:16).

7. Stop, therefore, becoming (or: Therefore you folks are not to continuously come to be) **their joint partakers** (their joint members or partners; ones sharing together with them),

The folks that he is warning them about are **the sons of The Disobedience**. This would be their former associates and colleagues – members of the religion to which they once belonged, or folks of particular societies, trade unions or just

town folks. But the admonition is not to cut off association or relationship with these folks, but not to be **their joint partakers, members or partners**. Put another way, don't "share together with" their "**deceiving** (or: seducing) **you folks by empty words** (or: messages; reasons; thoughts; ideas)" (vs. 6).

This would mean "stop being disobedient or unconvinced" concerning the message of the Good News which proclaims Jesus as Lord and His presence among the called out communities (*cf* Rev. 2:1). It would mean ceasing from the cultic markers and rituals of their former religions and living from out of the new creation of the

one new humanity (2:15, above). It would mean living their lives as “**and joint sharers** (partakers; participants) **of The Promise**” (3:6, above). In 2 Cor. 6:14a, Paul instructs them,

“Do not of yourself continue (or: Stop) **becoming yoked differently** (or: unevenly yoked; yoked with ones of a different sort) **with folks without faith** (or: by those without trust; to unbelievers; with disloyal people) ...”

The term yoke, in this quote, refers to any joint-venture or joint-association or joint-purpose. This could apply to political, sociological, economic,

religious or ethnic programs. If perchance the Jews of Judea were endeavoring to raise financial or physical support of a rebellion against the Empire, Paul would advise against such an association or membership.

All such joint-relationships would hinder the communities in being led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

8. for you folks were once existing being darkness (dimness; obscurity; gloom; shadiness), **yet** (or: but) **now [you are] light, within and in union with [the] Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh].

We should first of all observe that he uses the verb of “**being**” in this first clause, and I have supplied the ellipsis

of the same in the second half of this contrasting parallelism. It is the rhetorical contrast of “then... now.” The new has come, as he said in 2 Cor. 5:17, “[**there is**] a **new creation** (or: [it is] a framing and founding of a different kind; [he or she is] an act of creation having a fresh character and a new quality): **the original things** (the beginning [situations]; the archaic and primitive [arrangements]) **passed by** (or: went to the side). **Consider! New things have come into existence.**”

This is a new existence into which they have been born as children (vs. 1,

above). Jesus combined the idea of light and the metaphor of “a city” in Mat. 5:14,

“You folks, yourselves, exist being (are) the light of the ordered System (the world of culture, religion, politics, government and secular society; = the human sociological realm). A city located up on a mountain (or: situated on top of a mountain range) continues unable to be hidden or concealed.”

David H. Stern observes, “The Essenes and other Jewish pietists used this term to denote God’s elect” (*The Jewish NT Commentary*, Jewish NT Publications,

1992 p 591). Schnackenburg points to the Qumran texts, the “War Scroll” (1 QM), and the “Rule of the Community” (1 QS), where we find the terms, “the sons of light and the sons of darkness” (ibid p 223).

The Gospel of John has the most frequent use of this concept, e.g.,

“the life was continuing being, and began progressively existing as, the Light of mankind, and the Light is constantly shining in the dim and shadowed places, and keeps on progressively giving light within the gloomy darkness where there is no light” (Jn. 1:4-5).

“It was (or: He was, and continued being) **the True and Genuine Light which** (or: Who) **is continuously** (repeatedly; progressively) **enlightening** (giving light to) **every person** (or: human) **continuously** (repeatedly; progressively; constantly; one after another) **coming into the world** (or: the ordered system of culture, religion, economics and government; or: the universe)

(or: It was the real Light, progressively coming into the world {organized system}, which is progressively enlightening

{or: shedding light on}
every human)”

(Jn. 1:9).

“While you continue having the Light, progressively trust and believe into the Light, to the end that you folks can yourselves come to be (or: would yourselves be birthed) sons of Light” (Jn. 12:36).

Another witness for this verse and vs. 9, below, is found in 1 John 1:

5. And this is the message (or: And it is this message) which we have heard – and still hear – from Him, and we are continually bringing back tidings

(or: announcing again) **to and among you people that God continuously exists being (or: is) Light, and within Him darkness and obscurity do not exist – not even one (or: and so, there is absolutely no dimness or shadiness in Him).**

6. If we should up and say that we are continuously having common being (or: constantly enjoying fellowship, participation and partnership) with Him and yet may be habitually walking round about (= living our lives) within the Darkness and the dim realm of shadows [note: a figure

of ignorance, or the obscure previous way of seeing reality; the existence before the Breath-effect vibrated over us], **we are constantly lying** (speaking falsely) **and are not in the habit of doing the truth** (or: are not constructing, practicing or producing reality).

7. Yet if we keep on walking about (= continue living our life) **within the midst of and in union with the Light, as He exists** (or: is) **within the Light, we constantly have common being and existence** (or: hold common fellowship, participation and

enjoy partnership) **with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, keeps continually and repeatedly cleansing us** (or: is progressively rendering us pure) **from every sin** (or: from all error, failure, deviation, mistake, and from every [successive] shot that is off target [when it occurs]).

Since God exists being Light, it follows that His children will be the same. Paul also affirmed this in 1 Thes. 5:5,

“for you see, you all are (or: exist being) **sons of** (= associated with and having the qualities of) **Light and sons of** (= associated with and having qualities of) **Day!**

We are not (or: do not exist) of night, nor of darkness (or: we do not belong to or have the characteristics of night, nor to or of dim obscurity from shadows and gloom)."

All of this metaphorical talk about light and the Day has an eschatological implication: that the Day of the Lord has come, bringing the Light (figure of being able to see, and thus indicating understanding and experiential knowledge) that is the Messiah. He brought the end of the night of darkness (the age of the Law; Christ, the incarnated Logos, shined first into "the darkness" of Judaism -- Jn. 1:5, 11 --

and then, through His emissaries, into the darkness of paganism among the Gentiles).

9. Be constantly walking about (= Habitually conduct yourselves) **as children of Light** (born ones from light) – **for the fruit of the Light** [other MSS: **Spirit**] [is] **in union with** (or: [exists] within the midst of and is centered in) **all Goodness** (virtue; beneficence; kindness), **Justice** (fair and equitable dealing in rightwised relationships which accord with the Way pointed out; eschatological deliverance in covenant participation) **and Truth** (or: Reality) – Since this is who we are, this is the kind of life we should lead. He is directing us

to simply live out of who we now are, not like the way we used to be. This verse calls to mind Micah 5:8,

“He has told you, O son of earth (humanity) what is good; What, then, is Yahweh seeking or requiring from you but to do justice (or: right judgment), to love and delight in loving kindness, and to meekly (or: humbly) walk with your God?”

We also read of Hezekiah in 2 Chron. 31:20 that, “he did that which was good and right and faithful, before Yahweh his God.” So Paul is speaking out of Israel’s tradition, in this advice. Schnackenburg renders the clause in 1 QS 1:5,

“Faithfulness, righteousness and doing what is just” (ibid p 224).

As in Gal. 5:22, the word **fruit** is singular, but it has multiple qualities.

Similarly, Phil. 1:11 speaks of,

“being people having been filled full with [the] Fruit of fair and equitable dealings which bring right relationship within the Way pointed out (or: = from covenant inclusion): the one [that is] through Jesus Christ [that is] leading into God's glory (good reputation and manifestation of that which calls forth admiration) and praise (approval and commendation)

(or: being those filled full of fruit of the eschatological deliverance of a rightwised nature through Jesus Christ, which proceeds into glory and praise that belongs to and pertains to God; or: ... through Jesus Christ, with a view to inhabiting the qualities and characteristics of God's reputation and praise).”

The Fruit is from the being and work of God in Christ. Due to the indwelling of His Spirit, this fruit manifests itself in various forms – within the **children of Light**. Fruit is produced from the Tree

(of Life) or the Vine (Jn. 15:1ff) – in other words, through union with Christ, **the Light**.

The purpose for living this way is to produce, "**all Goodness** (virtue; beneficence; kindness), **Justice** (fair and equitable dealing in rightwised relationships which accord with the Way pointed out; eschatological deliverance in covenant participation) **and Truth** (or: Reality)" -- and this comes from union with the Light. Likewise, this **fruit** [exists] within the midst of and is centered in **all Goodness**, Kindness, Fairness (etc.) and Reality. So we can conclude that Christ produces this fruit and Christ embodies/inhabits (and is

manifested in) this fruit.

10. **repeatedly testing so as to prove and approve** (or: continuously showing proof of) **what is** (or: continually exists being) **fully pleasing and compatible** (happily acceptable; well pleasing; good pleasure) **to** (or: for; in; with) **the Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh].

This is a continuation of the previous admonition and gives added aspects of "habitually conduct [themselves]." The ultimate purpose of our way of life is to live in such a way that is **pleasing to and compatible with the Lord**. All of Paul's admonitions have this goal in mind. And what he advises tells us what is "happily acceptable" for Christ and Yahweh.

The idea of **repeatedly testing** situations or behaviors in this life means that new situations and different behaviors are continually encountered. Everything should be **fully pleasing** (etc.) "in the Lord." We can simply ask, Is it Christ? or, Is it Love? If it is these, then it is **approved**.

Martin comments here,

“This ‘intention to please God in all things’ (as William Law phrased it in his *Serious Call*) is a Pauline ethical rubric often found: *cf* Rom. 12:2 (the will of God which is well-pleasing to him); 14:18; 2 Cor. 5:9; Col. 3:20; 1 Thes. 4:1” (ibid p 1119).

We find Paul admonishing in 1 Cor. 11:28,

“So let a person habitually examine, test and evaluate himself (or: regularly approve and accept himself [i.e., his attitude and behavior in the occasion]), and in this manner let him be habitually eating from out of the loaf of bread and drinking from out of the cup.

Then in 1 Cor. 11:31-32 he adds,

“Yet if we were (or: had been) in the habit of thoroughly evaluating, sifting throughout and passing discerning judgment on ourselves, we would not have

been being sifted, separated, evaluated and judged. Yet, being folks habitually being sifted, separated, evaluated and judged by, and under, the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh], we are being continuously child-trained, educated and disciplined [by the Lord or His agent], to the end that we should not at any point be correspondingly evaluated or commensurately decided about (separated-down or condemned; or: = have sentence passed on us) together, and in company with, the organized and controlling System (the world of culture,

religion, economy and government).”

Another aspect of the verb in this clause is “continuously showing proof of.” The next phase of testing, then proving and approving is to show this proof to those outside the community by means of the life that is lived with a focus on being **fully pleasing to, and compatible with** the Lord – and here Paul could have in mind either Christ or Yahweh.

11. And do not continually participate together (involve yourselves in joint communion or community; or: Stop having fellowship together) **in unfruitful acts** (works; deeds; performances) **of the Darkness** (dimness in the shadows;

gloom and obscurity; [comment: = the ignorance; = the lack of light; may refer to past religious acts]), **but rather even be continually questioning and cross-examining to expose** (unmasking and making facts known), **refute and reprove to bring conviction** (= bring light to them),

In vs. 8, above, Paul's listeners were referred to as formerly being "darkness." So it would seem that Paul is referring to a specific class of people, called "the sons of the Disobedience" in vs. 7 above, who produce these **unfruitful acts**. These folks would have been, then, either those still existing in the human predicament of estrangement

from God – and who have not yet come into the Light – or those who refused the Light (Christ), to whom John referred in Jn. 3:19-21.

“Now this continues being the (or: So there continues being the same) **process of the sifting, the separating and the deciding** (the evaluating; the judging), **because the Light has come** (or: has gone) **into the world** (the aggregate of humanity; the ordered system and arrangement of religion, culture and government; or: the system of control and regulation), **and yet the humans love the darkness** (or: the men [=

the leadership] love the dimness of obscurity and gloom; or: mankind loved the shadow-realm) **rather than the Light, for their works** (deeds; actions) **were continuing to be bad ones** (unsound ones; wicked ones; laborious ones; toilsome ones that created bad news; wrongful ones), **for everyone [who is] habitually practicing** (or: performing) **worthless things** (base, mean, common, careless, cheap, slight, paltry, sorry, vile things or refuse) **is continuously hating** (regarding with ill-will; radically detaching from) **the light, and is not coming**

(or: going) **to the light** (or: the Light), **so that his works** (deeds; actions) **may not be tested and put to the proof** (and thus, exposed and perhaps reproved). **Yet the one habitually doing the truth** (constantly constructing the real; repeatedly making the genuine) **is constantly coming** (or: going; moving) **toward the light** (or: the Light), **so that his works** (deeds; actions) **may be set in clear light and manifested**, because they exist being ones **having been worked and accomplished** (or: performed as deeds) **within God** (or: that it is

within God [that they are] ones having been acted out).”

In this same Gospel, John (speaking of the Light, or Christ) said,

“It (or: He) came into Its (or: His) own things (possessions, or people), and Its own (or: His own) people did not receive It (or: Him) and take It (or: Him) to their side” (Jn. 1:11).

And in Jn. 1:5 he revealed,

“And the Light is constantly shining in the dim and shadowed places, and keeps on progressively giving light within the gloomy darkness where there is no light (or: within the

midst of the obscurity of The
Darkness where there is no light
of The Day; or: = in the ignorant
condition or system). **And yet the
darkness does not grasp or
receive it on the same level**

(or: Furthermore, the
Darkness did not take it
down, so as to overcome it
or put it out; or: = the
ignorant condition or system
would have none of it, nor
receive it down into itself
[in order to perceive it];
But that darkness does not
correspondingly accept It
nor commensurately take It

in hand so as to follow the pattern or be in line with Its bidding).”

Here, John was speaking of the Jewish leadership that could not grasp or receive Jesus as their Messiah, the Light that had come into **the Darkness**. With this in mind, Paul may have been making a subtle reminder for the Jews of Asia Minor not to return to the works of the Law within which they had been involved prior to the coming of the Light.

But although the **Darkness** had reference to people, the admonition for non-participation was in reference to their **unfruitful acts**, not to the people

themselves – else the second half of the verse would have no meaning.

If “**continually questioning and cross-examining to expose** (unmasking and making facts known), **refute**” is applied to situations within the covenant community, a positive view of this admonition can be seen. It is a mechanism for adjusting behavior within the group. The unfruitful performances might refer to sabbath-keeping, purity codes, etc., that were of the old arrangement. Or, it might refer to attending banquets that were held in idol temples, as Paul addressed at Corinth. The idea of “making facts known” – and refuting contrary ideas about such

behavior – are the basic themes of this exhortation.

12. for you see, it is obscene (base; ugly; indecent; shameful) **to habitually even be speaking of the things [which] secretly** (or: in a hidden manner) **may be coming into existence** (be occurring; be being birthed) **by them.**

This verse, and the two following verses, should be taken together with 11b, above, with vss. 15 and 16 summing up the thoughts of the context in this immediate passage. The word **obscene** (or: base; ugly; indecent; shameful) together with the word **secretly** has led interpreters to assign Paul's inference to sexual or immoral

acts – and it could have, on the first level, been his intent. However, with the reference in vs. 14 to “**the sleeper awakening**” and arising **from out of the midst of the dead ones**, the context can be read as speaking about the entire life in Christ as contrasted to the life before having been born into the new reality. The broadly-applied phrase, “**habitually walking about**,” in vs. 15 would seem to bear this out. Reference to **the Season**, in vs. 16, would also be applied to their entire life, as opposed to some specific (and here, unnamed) “fruitless practices.” In an honor/shame society (into which Paul wrote this letter), involvement in “unfruitful acts”

(vs. 11, above) could have been considered **obscene**, base, ugly and shameful for,

“those once being enlightened, besides tasting (= experiencing) the heavenly gift (or: the granted bounty from the One [holding sway] upon the atmosphere) and after being born (or: coming to be) common-holders (partners; sharing possessors; joint-participants; associates; partaking members) of set-apart spirit (or: of a holy Breath-effect; or: of [the] Holy Spirit), and then tasting (= experiencing) a beautiful gush-effect of God (or:

an ideal result of the flow from God; or: God's fine speech; an excellent declaration pertaining to God; a profitable thing spoken, which is God) – **besides abilities and powers of an impending age [to be] then falling by the side...**” (Heb. 6:4-6a).

This is shameful because, “[**they are**] **continuously suspending back up** (or: hanging on a pole; crucifying) **again in, with, to, for and by themselves the Son of God, and [are] constantly exposing [Him] to public shame/disgrace**” (Heb. 6:6b). Or, e.g., as Paul put it for them in Gal. 2:21b,
“For if rightwising deliverance

into justice, equity and freedom from guilt with right relationships within the Way pointed out (= transforming-inclusion into the new covenant) [is] through Law (= by legalism or religious works), then as a consequence Christ died as a mere gratuity (= for nothing; to no purpose).”

If in fact Paul’s concern was that the folks in Asia Minor might secretly be talking about falling back to Law-keeping, he is letting them know that it is ugly **“to habitually even be speaking of [these] things”** which “may be being birthed by them.” Verses 17-18 also tend

toward this application of this passage.

13. **Now everything** (or: the whole), **while being continuously exposed to show fact, being refuted and/or reprovved unto conviction, is by the Light** (or: the light) **being continuously manifested** (clearly displayed, made apparent and shown for what it is), Paul now turns from speaking of the Darkness to discussing **the light** (in general terms) – or, perhaps, **the Light**, for as we see in the quote of the next verse, it is **the Christ** that is spoken of as **shining**. It is **the Light** (the Logos, the Word, that was the Life – Jn. 1:3-4) that **“is continually shining in the Darkness”** (Jn. 1:5). The Light which

was (and is) the Messiah exposed the Jewish situation in Palestine in the 1st century. It revealed the facts of the condition of Israel's leadership, as well as its injustice toward the common people (Mat. 23:4). He refuted the exclusion of the poor and outcast from the kingdom, and shined the light on the new reality that the kingdom (reign, etc.) now belonged to them (Lu. 6:20b; *cf* Mat. 5:3).

Jesus taught the purpose for the Light in Mk. 4:

21. And He went on to say to them, "The Lamp is not normally (or: progressively) coming so that it can (or: may;

should) be placed (or: set) under the basket for measuring grain (a peck measure) or under the bed (or: couch), is it? [Is it] not so that it can (or: may; should) be placed (or: set) upon the lampstand?

22. "Just so, there is not anything hidden except for the purpose that it should be set in clear light and manifested. Neither did it come to be hidden away except for the end that it should (or: could) come into a lighted condition (or: into a visible place where it is clearly seen and manifest).

The Light (Christ), through the coming of the Spirit, was placed upon the lampstands (Acts 2:3), which in turn became the called-out, covenant communities (Rev. 1:20).

The called-out, covenant communities were now “the light of the world” (Mat. 5:14). Their purpose was to reprove **the Darkness** of the former religions and former ways of life, and bring **conviction** to the peoples of the world, concerning the Christ, the new arrangement, and who they were in the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:47). Paul is reminding them of their purpose.

14. **for you see, all that is continuously being manifested** (clearly displayed,

made apparent and is progressively shown for what it is) **is, and continually exists being, light. Wherefore He is now** (or: it keeps on) **saying,**

"Let the sleeper (the person continuously down and being fast asleep) be waking up, continue rousing, and then stand up (arise) from out of the midst of the dead ones, and the Christ will continue shining upon you (progressively enlightening you)!"

In the first clause of this verse (normally put as the last part of vs. 13), we see that everywhere the Light shines, and thus “manifests” that on which it shines, “**all**” is now **light**. This is an amazing

statement (Witherington says, “Vs. 13 is puzzling.” – ibid p 310). As John instructs us,

“And the life was continuing being, and began progressively existing as, the Light of mankind (or: Furthermore, the Light progressively came to be the life known as "humanity," and was for human beings; or: Then the life was existing being the light from the humans)” (Jn. 1:4b).

Because of the coming of the Light, **“He is now saying, Let the sleeper be waking up...”** It is a call to all who have either fallen asleep, or to those who have not yet had their existential

awakening and still continue “dead in offenses and failure” (*cf* 2:1, 5, above). But since there is no expressed subject to the verb “saying,” most translations render the subject, “it.” This makes the quote seem to be a reference to something that was previously written, or was an early tradition. Scholars give various theories on this latter reading, many suggesting that the quote was a part of an early Christian hymn. Some suggest that it draws on Isa. 60:1, or perhaps Isa. 26:19; others suggest that its source is an apocryphal writing. Schnackenburg notes that Clement of Alexandria added to this quote: “the Lord, the sun of the Resurrection who was born before the

Morning Star, who has given life through his own rays” (ibid p 228). Here Conzelmann thinks that, “the material parallels suggest a Gnostic milieu,” and says, “The ideas and language suggest Alexandrian Judaism.... if we assume that the original was *kurios* [Lord] rather than *christos* [Christ]” (*TDNT*, Vol. IX, p 348, and n 315).

But rendering the subject as "He" solves the perceived problem by reading the text as saying that the Spirit (through Paul) is now saying to people, “Arise from among the dead ones, for Christ has arisen and will shine His Light upon you and give you life!” This verse calls to mind Jesus calling into the tomb for

Lazarus to arise and come out (Lu. 11:40-44), after having told the folks that they would "see God's glory" (vs. 40). Both the figures of sleep and death are metaphors for folks who are unaware or unconscious of an existing situation. In like manner, light is a figure for knowledge, perception and conscious awareness. The promise that **the Christ will continue shining upon us**, and thus be progressively enlightening us, is indeed an encouragement filled with hope and expectation. The picture of **the sleeper waking up and then standing up from out of the midst of the dead ones** is a clear portrayal of a resurrection. The promise of Christ

shining upon them echoes vs. 9, above, and describes how people become "**children of Light.**" Observe the durative aspect of the future tense: **will continue shining.** Also consider it as a progressive: **will continue progressively enlightening.**" We do nothing to make the Light shine. It just shines on us and enlightens us. As with Lazarus, our waking and rousing is a response to the resurrecting power of His Word to us. We cannot respond until He resurrects us. We read in Ps. 119:130a, "The entrance of Your Words give light..."

15. **Therefore** (or: So then,) **be continuously observing exactly** (or: accurately), **brothers** (= fellow

believers; members of the Family), **how you habitually walk about** [or, with other MSS: Be continually observing, then, how accurately you are conducting yourselves]: **not as unwise folks, but rather as wise ones,**

I appreciate the CVOT rendering of Ps. 119:130b, "making the simple proficient." The LXX uses the word "infants" for the Heb. reading of "the simple." His light, from His words, inserts His wisdom into us so that we can conduct ourselves **as wise ones.**

This admonition is a call to contemplation – to being present, being awake (vs. 14, above) and being alert. Richard Rohr cites a summary sentence

from the teachings of Jean-Pierre de Caussade: “If we have abandoned ourselves to God, there is only one rule for us: the duty of the present moment.” Richard goes on to say, “I am convinced that the purest form of spirituality is the ability to accept the ‘sacrament of the present moment’ and to find God in what is right in front of me” (“Presence,” Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation, Saturday, 12-13-14). This is an example of “**continuously observing exactly** (or: accurately) **how you habitually walk about**” – i.e., how they are actually living.

It is a call to live a life that is centered in Wisdom (i.e., in Christ). We are

instructed in 1 Cor. 1:24,

“and yet [it is] Christ: God's power and ability, as well as God's wisdom

(or: and so [we see the] Anointed One – a power from, and which is, God, as well as understanding insight and skillful cleverness from, and which is, God), **to, for,**

in, with and among those [who are] the called (or: invited) people!”

And in 1 Cor. 1:30a,

“Now you folks are, and continuously exist being, forth

from out of the midst of Him – within and in union with Christ Jesus, Who came to be (or: is birthed) wisdom in and among us (or: to us; for us), from God...”

To live apart from Christ as our center is to live **as unwise folks**. He restates this idea in vs. 17, below, as: **constantly understanding what [is] the will of the Lord**. This verse also points back to vs. 10, above. The **unwise folks** can refer to non-Christian Jews, as well as to those yet living as pagans, among who these folks live. Mat. 25:1-13 speaks of wise and foolish young women who were actively awaiting the coming of the bridegroom (figure of the Messiah). The

foolish ones were not morally bad, they just lacked God's wisdom and missed out on the celebration of the arrival of the Messiah (a banquet was the Jewish image for the arrival of the Messiah).

Wise ones would be those who had received the gift of **“a spirit (or: breath-effect; attitude) of wisdom”** (1:17, above) from God, **in accord with His grace** (1:7b, above),

“which He caused to superabound around [and] unto us (or: which He makes to be more than enough unto us; which He excessively supplied and then lavishes into the midst of us) **within the midst of, in union with**

and centered in all wisdom (or: in every wise thing) **and thoughtful prudence** (gut-intelligence; mindful purpose; considered understanding)” (1:8, above).

And in 3:9-10, above, Paul speaks about his job being that of **illuminating all people concerning the execution of the detailed plan concerning God’s greatly diversified wisdom.**

Before moving on, let us observe the corporate language in this section, as well as the repetition of the forms of the verbs being in the imperative voice. This begs the question: Are the imperatives in this section to be

interpreted as describing the life in Christ as a life of “works”? Are Paul’s imperatives a new law? Or, if his words are spirit and life, are they an impartation of the power of the Spirit and inspiration that enables his listeners to live in these imperatives? I suggest that this latter is the case. Paul is a choir director, calling forth a symphony in the image of Christ. He is a shepherd, leading Christ’s sheep. Elsewhere he has said, **“Progressively come to be imitators of me, correspondingly as I, myself, also [am] of Christ and from [the] Anointing”** (1 Cor. 11:1). The Words of the Spirit speak to the Spirit that inhabits the listeners.

The wisdom traditions in Israel's history pointed to the Messiah, as did the Law, but of themselves were powerless to bring the Promise and to inaugurate the new creation where folks live "in Christ."

16. making it a habit [to be] intensively buying-out for yourselves (as at a market, exhausting the supply; redeeming; reclaiming) the season (fitting situation; opportunity; fertile moment), because the days (= present times) are of a bad quality (or: a gush of misery; unsound; harmful; or: in a sorry plight; or: toilsome).

We can hear in this and the previous admonition, an echo of Col. 4:5-6,

which adds to our understanding of these verses, here and above,

“Be habitually walking about within wisdom (= living your lives in union with Wisdom): toward those outside (or: to outsiders; = those not a part of the called-out community), being ones constantly buying for yourselves – as from out of the market place – the fitting situation (or: redeeming the season within yourselves; purchasing the fertile moment for yourselves; or: = making the best use of the opportunity in the public concourse), [with] your

word (your conversation; your message) – **at all times within grace** (or: = always favorable) – **being one having been prepared and fitted by salt** (or: seasoned in salt; or: = one being interesting and not insipid), **[and for you] to have seen, and thus be aware, how it continues binding for you folks to be habitually answering each person with discernment** (or: making a decided reply to or separating [issues] away in order to respond with a decision for each individual).”

The metaphor of purchasing something at the local market speaks of making **the**

season and the opportunity, which Christ has made available by His presence in their lives, a possession of the communities. They were to take the “fertile moment” within their surrounding society and implant the Seed of Christ within their circle of influence. The darkness of the non-Christian world that surrounded them was the “fitting situation” into which to shine the Light. It would be “making the best use of the opportunity in the public concourse.” The thought of **the days being of a bad quality and a gush of misery**, etc., simply described the plight of mankind in being without union with Christ. It is a metaphor of **The Darkness** spoken of in

5:8 and 11, above.

Paul, using a synonym for “bad quality,” instructed folks about worthless situations in Rom. 12:21,

“Do not be habitually conquered under (or: Stop being overcome by) **the worthless** (the bad of quality; the ugly and unsound; the evil), **but to the contrary, be constantly conquering** (overcoming; victorious over) **the worthless** (the unsound, the bad and the ugly; the evil) [**by being**] **in union with The Good One** (or: [a participant] within what is profitable; or: in the midst of virtue)..”

Jesus had given instruction to His followers in Mat. 5:

39. "Yet I, Myself, am now telling you folks not to at any point actively set yourself against, or take a counteractive or aggressive stand in opposition to, the bad situation

(or: = participate in armed resistance against the miserable condition; = mirror the painful, insulting or laborious situation; or: = 'render evil for evil' in opposition to the evil or wicked person; = rebel or be part of an insurrection; =

stand off an enemy)....

45. “....**He is repeatedly making His sun to rise back up again upon bad** (evil; wicked; worthless) **folks as well as [upon] good** (virtuous) **folks, and He is habitually sending rain upon fair and equitable people** (those in right relationship; those within the Way pointed out; just ones; rightwised ones) **as well as [upon] unfair and inequitable people** (those not in right relationship; those not in the Way pointed out; unjust folks).”

And in Jn. 17:15, Jesus prayed to the Father, regarding His followers,

“I am not now making a request to the end that You should pick them up and carry (or: remove; take) them out of the System (world system; ordered arrangement of culture, religion and government; secular society), but rather that You should observe, guard, protect, maintain, care for and keep them out of the worthless or bad situation, the sorry plight, the effect of the knavish and good-for-nothing person, the oppressive toil and the base or evil influence.”

Jesus knew that the present situations of

the world were as He described them, and that they would continue to be so. And in the passage we are studying, Paul simply affirms that this is the case. In 6:13, below, he points his listeners to the protection which God is, using the metaphor of a soldier's full gear (panoply), **“to the end that you would have power and be able to withstand and resist** (to stand opposite, over against as facing an opponent; or: stand in [other folks'] place, instead of [them]) **within the harmful and misery-gushed day** (or: the day of bad conditions).” So they are encouraged to make the present **season** – in which Christ had invaded those misery-gushed days – a

“fitting situation” for God’s kingdom coming into those worthless days, while displaying His image to humanity. This would be “reclaiming the season” for the advancement of His reign within peoples’ hearts. They were to be the Light in their dark world.

17. On account of this, stop becoming (or: Do not continually come to be) **foolish ones** (folks not having common sense; people without reflection or intelligence; imprudent ones; thoughtless and inattentive folks), **but rather, be constantly understanding** (sending your perceptions together to comprehend) **what [is] the will** (result of the resolve; determination of what shall be done;

design; effect of the purpose) **of the Lord** (= Christ or Yahweh; [other MSS: God; Christ]).

So in order to “exhaust the supply” of the opportunities that they encounter within those misery-gushed days, they must **stop becoming foolish ones**, or “folks not having common sense.” They must be “people that HAVE reflection and intelligence” in order to **be constantly understanding** (sending [their] perceptions together to comprehend) **what [is] the will** (result of the resolve; determination of what shall be done; design; effect of the purpose) **of the Lord.**” They should set their intention on being thoughtful,

prudent and attentive to the Spirit of God, so that they will be enabled to do the things that they see their Father doing (Jn. 5:19; 14:10b, 12; Rom. 8:14).

The final dependent clause concerning **the will of the Lord**, calls to mind the prayer that Jesus taught His apprentices: “... **Your sovereign influence come, Your will be done, on earth, just as it is in heaven...**” (Mat. 6:10). Furthermore, an echo of Rom. 12:2 can be heard in this verse:

“Stop constantly conforming yourselves to (or, as passive: So then, quit being repeatedly molded by, fashioned for or patterned together with) **this age** [with other

MSS: and not to be continuously configured to this age, or not to constantly remodel yourself for this age], **but on the contrary, be progressively transformed** (transfigured; changed in form and semblance) **by the renewing** (or: in the renewal; for the making-back-up-new again) **of your mind** [with other MSS: from The Mind; of the intellect; pertaining to the faculties of perceiving and understanding; of the mindset, disposition, inner orientation and world view] **into the [situation and condition for] you folks to be habitually examining in order**

to be testing and, after scrutiny, distinguishing and approving what [is] God's will (design; purpose; resolve; intent): the good and well-pleasing, even perfect (finished, complete and destined)!”

These two verses (16 and 17) come together, being joined by "**On account of this..**," and we can also find rest and assurance in what Paul told the folks in Phil. 2:13,

“for you see, God is the One habitually operating with inward activity, repeatedly working within, constantly causing function and progressively

producing effects within, among and in union with you folks – both the [condition] to be habitually willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action, repeatedly operating to cause function and habitually setting at work so as to produce – for the sake of and over the pleasing good form and the thinking of goodness in delightful imagination.”

And Paul was constantly sending thoughts to the folks at Colossae, “**to the end that you may (or: would) be filled full with the**

entire contents of the accurate, full, experiential, intimate knowledge and insight of His will (His design, purpose, plan and intention; or: so that you may know and experience all that He wants you to know and experience) **within the sphere of all wisdom and spiritual understanding** (comprehension; a junction of that which is sent together; discernment; being able to make the pieces fit together)” (Col. 1:9b; *Cf* 1:9, above).

When Paul wrote 1 Thes., in 4:3 he told them,

“You see, this is the will (intent,

purpose) of **God: your state of being set apart from the common use or condition** (or: sacred difference; = covenant living)...”

Then in that same letter, he added this thought in 5:18,

“Within the midst of everything, be continuously giving thanks (or: In union with all people, be habitually expressing the goodness of grace and the well-being from favor), **for this is God's intent** (will, purpose) **unto you in Christ Jesus.**”

So the folks in Asia Minor most likely would have heard the traditions

regarding **the will and intent of the Lord**, and the letters from Paul were being passed around, so this admonition may have been well understood.

18. **And stop being made drunk** (or: Do not be continuously made intoxicated) **by wine, within which exists the disposition of one having no hope of safety** (unsavingness; dissipation and ill health; desperation), **but rather be continuously or repeatedly filled full in spirit** (within [the] Spirit; within the midst of [the] Breath-effect; in the sphere of attitude; in union with [the] Breath),

This exhortation is set in a contrast, or in the form of an antithesis. A negative

imperative, which includes the description of the result of the negative behavior, is followed by the preference of a positive imperative.

The question before us is whether or not Paul is speaking literally about drinking physical wine to excess and becoming **drunk**. Is this a gross picture of “dissipation and ill health” that he is painting as the backdrop for holding before them, “the spiritual life”? Or, is he speaking to the excesses in life, whether they be political, economic or religious? The terms “wine” and “being drunk” were used figuratively in Rev. 17:2, concerning the judgment of the Great Prostitute,

“with whom the kings of the Land (or: earth) commit (or: committed) prostitution... [that] are (or: were) made drunk from out of the wine of her prostitution.”

In Isa. 1:21, prostitution was a symbol for idolatry, and there the phrase “faithful city” referred to Jerusalem (Zion) which had committed figurative prostitution by turning to injustice in dealing with people.

The phrase, **“the disposition of one having no hope of safety (unsavingness),”** may give us a key to unlock Paul’s metaphors here. The Greek noun is *a-sotia*, and is a

derivative of the verb *sozō*: “to save, deliver, etc.” It describes an “un-saved” condition, or the disposition of such a person. In the natural life it spoke of debauchery and the dissipation which led to ill-health. Such behavior would not reflect the image of Christ, the Savior, and thus would characterize someone who did not have the hope of safety that God’s deliverance had brought to people. Drunkenness in any form (literal or figurative) was the opposite of the Christ-life, which is the state of being awake, alert and present to the moment: a transformed life that is in union with the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:17) – the Creator of the Universe! – as

the second half of this verse holds forth. So what did this intoxication look like, at least in our author's mind? It would have at least been the opposite of being **filled full in spirit**, and, **with [the] Spirit**. Since the giving of the Spirit (Acts 2) marked the existential beginning of the new age and the new creation and the new humanity, the opposite of this new existence in Christ would be either the pagan lifestyle, or life under the Law, as opposed to being "under grace" – as Rom. 6:14 affirms,

“...for you folks are not under Law (or: do not exist being subject to [Torah] or custom), **but rather under Grace** (or: the Act

which produced happiness, which was granted as a favor).”

Drunkenness is listed as one of the “works of the flesh” in Gal. 5:19-21.

These are contrasted with “the fruit of the Spirit” in Gal. 5:22-23. In Gal. 5:16-17 we are informed that,

“So I continue saying, be habitually walking about (= living your life) in spirit (or: by [the] Spirit; with a Breath-effect), and you should under no circumstance (or: would by no means) bring to fruition (carry to its goal; end up with; bring to maturity) the full rushing passion (the over-desire; craving)

originating in flesh

(= pertaining to the estranged human nature, or the self which has been dominated by a system of culture or religion; or: corresponding to flesh-[righteousness]; belonging to [a religious system] of flesh-works).

For the flesh [system or nature] is constantly rushing passionately down upon (or: against) the spirit (or: Breath-effect), and the spirit (or: Breath-effect) down on (or: against) the flesh [nature, or, system of

religion], for these things are constantly lying in opposition to each other (lying set to displace each other), so that – whatever you may habitually be intending (wanting; willing; purposing) – these things you repeatedly can not be doing.”

In Rom. 8, Paul made a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit (or: spirit):

8. Now the folks continuously existing in the midst of (or: So people being in union with, or centered in,) flesh (= the alienated human condition; or: = the religious system involving flesh sacrifices, Torah boundary-

markers/customs) **have no power and are not able at any point to please God** (or: to fit or adapt to God; or: to be content with God; or: to be acceptable in God).

9. Yet you folks are not constantly existing within the midst of flesh (or: you are not in union with nor centered on [the alienated human condition, or Torah-keeping with flesh sacrifices]), **but rather within spirit, in union with Breath-effect and centered on [His] attitude, since indeed God's Spirit** (or: if so be that [the] Breath-effect which is God; or: if

as is the fact that an attitude which corresponds to God) is **continuously housing Itself** (making His abode; residing; dwelling; by idiom: cohabiting; living together as husband and wife) **within and among you folks. Yet if anyone is not continuously having, or not habitually and progressively holding, Christ's Spirit and [the Messiah's] Attitude** (or: So if a certain person is not regularly possessing a Breath-effect which is Anointed), **this one is not habitually existing from Him as his Source** (or: is not now having

His character or qualities; or:
presently is not His).

I again quote from *Just Paul: Comments on Romans* (ibid p 138), on vs. 9, here:

“With this first clause, we have plain evidence that we have been reading Paul correctly – he is not talking about physical flesh, but is speaking metaphorically. He is assuring his listeners that they are neither under the Law in the old covenant, nor are they living under the dominance of the fallen, alienated nature of the first Adam. **Rather** than those aspects of the old creation, they were (and we are) **constantly existing within**

the spirit (a term representing the new arrangement of grace that came with the sending of God's Spirit to humanity to indwell them), and are **in union with Breath-effect** (God's activities on the earth), and are **centered on His attitude**.

“And why is this the case for us? The answer: "**Since indeed God's Spirit – the Breath-effect which is God** – and the attitude which corresponds to God, **is continuously housing Itself within and among [us]**." What a statement. Pause and let the reality and the implications of this sink

deep into our hearts and minds. We are His temple (1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21) and He is continuously **making His abode in and residing with us!** “Yet there are those who are still not existentially **having or holding Christ's Spirit or the Messiah's Attitude** – they are still in the outer darkness; they have not yet heard the message; they have not yet been given eyes to see, or ears to hear, or faith to believe. Their particular order and rank (1 Cor. 15:23) has not yet arrived; they have not yet been birthed into His kingdom. They

have not yet been awakened to receive His Life. Their present existence is still in the first Adam; they yet cling to the Mosaic covenant (e.g., 11:23, below; 2 Cor. 3:11:16). Such a person is **not habitually existing from Him as his Source** (or: is not now having His character or qualities; or: presently is not His).”

Paul made reference to **the Darkness** (*cf* vs. 8a, above) and **drunkenness** in Rom. 13:12-13,

“The night advances, and the day has approached and is presently near. We should put, then, the acts of the Darkness

(works from the realm of the shadows; actions that belong to dimness and obscurity) **away from ourselves** (or: take off and put away the deeds pertaining to darkness; = ignorance; that which was before the light arrived), **and clothe ourselves with the instruments** (tools; weapons; implements; [some MSS: works; deeds]) **of Light** (or: The Light). **As within [the] Day, we should** (may; can) **walk about** (= live our lives) **respectably** (reputably; decently; with good form; mannerly; pleasing to look upon; presentably) – **not in festive**

processions (or: orgies; revelries; excessive feasting; carousing) **and collective drunkenness** (intoxications)...”

I suggest that he has the same themes in mind here in Eph. 5:18.

Witherington sees a similarity to this in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (an older Jewish contemporary of Paul) and points us to the following passage in Philo's *De Ebriatate*:

"But whatever soul is filled with grace is at once in a state of exultation, and delight, and dancing; for it becomes full of triumph, so that it would appear to many of the uninitiated to be

intoxicated, and agitated, and to be beside itself..." comments, "The Spirit is both the means and the substance of the filling..." (149, translated by C. D. Yonge, www.deeperstudy.com)

"For in the case of those who are under the influence of divine inspiration, not only is the soul accustomed to be excited, and as it were to become frenzied, but also the body is accustomed to become reddish and of a fiery complexion, the joy which is internally diffused and which is exulting, secretly spreading its affections even to the exterior

parts, by which many foolish people are deceived, and have fancied that sober persons were intoxicated." (ibid, 147)

"And yet indeed those sober people are in a manner intoxicated, having drunk deep of all good things [and] having received pledges from perfect virtue..." (ibid, 148; brackets mine)

"The Spirit is both the means and the substance of the filling..." (Witherington, ibid p 312). As Schnackenburg notes, "The Spirit is seen in an active, dynamic role..." (ibid p 237), and thus we should take note of the present tense of the verb

in the second clause, “**be continuously or repeatedly filled full in spirit** (within [the] Spirit; within the midst of [the] Breath-effect; in the sphere of attitude; in union with [the] Breath).” This describes our ongoing, dynamic and intimate relationship with God – for being **filled full in spirit** can be speaking of our own spirit, but it is joined to the Lord, as noted above. Furthermore, the realm within which we live is the eschatological deliverance (rightwised existence), peace and joy that is “**within set-apart Breath-effect** (or: in union with and amidst a dedicated spirit and a sacred attitude; or: in [the] Holy Spirit)” – Rom. 14:17. So the second rendering

of the final phrase, above, “within [the] Spirit,” or the third option, “within the midst [*cf* Acts 17:28] of [the] Breath-effect,” or the last one, “in union with [the] Breath,” all speak of intimate oneness with God, the fulfillment of Rom. 11:36, “**into the midst of Him.**” Because the term “spirit” can also speak of a person’s attitude, I included for contemplation the rendering “in the sphere of attitude,” for this aspect of being greatly affects a person’s behavior. If our “attitude” is one of Love, then it will be the Attitude of God.

19. **continuously speaking** (making vocal utterances) **among** (or: = to each other; or: to; within) **yourselves in, with**

or by psalms and hymns (or: songs of praise; festive songs) **and spiritual odes** (songs; chants), **continually singing and playing stringed instruments** (making music; psalming; sharply touching or plucking [the strings or chords]) **in** (or: by; with; or: for) **your hearts to** (or: for; by; with: in) **the Lord** [= Christ, or, Yahweh],

I owe to Witherington (ibid p 312) the idea of adding a paraphrase of "**among yourselves**" in such a way as to suggest that this phrase could potentially mean "to each other," rather than only "to God." He seems to feel that this is the correct meaning of *heautois* in this context and so gives this rendering in his

text. However, this is unnecessarily limiting the meaning of Paul's words. "**Among yourselves**" makes good (and practically speaking, normal) sense of the text. The individual applications of the dative functions of "to, or within, yourselves" also fit the context.

Schnackenburg (ibid p 233) points out that the three present participles in vss. 19 and 20 (**speaking, singing/playing instruments and giving thanks**) describe a picture of what **being continuously or repeatedly filled full in spirit** (vs. 18b) looks like. This verse and the next definitely continue the thought of vs. 18b. This verse also shows the place of music both within

groups and with/for oneself. The dative rendering, “for your hearts,” reveals that this is a healthy practice. In, with or by the heart speaks to the sphere of this music, and the rendering, “to the Lord,” shows the location of the Lord: in our hearts. “For the Lord” gives another purpose; with or by the Lord speaks to His participation in this activity of being filled full in spirit. The locative rendering, “in the Lord,” tells us that the location is “in Christ,” or “in God.” The themes of our hearts and the Lord describe a picture of our unity and union with the One in Whom we are moved, and live and exist (Acts. 17:28).

We find a similar passage to 18b-19,

here, in Col. 3:16,

"Let Christ's Word (or: the Logos, which is the Christ; the Idea which is the Anointing; or: the message of and from the Christ [other MSS: of God; of {the} Lord]) **be continuously making its home within you folks** (or: progressively indwelling – centered in and in union with you) **richly, within the midst of and in union with all wisdom, habitually teaching [it] and placing [it] in the minds of yourselves by psalms, in hymns, by spiritual songs and odes, within grace and amidst favor constantly singing**

within your hearts to, for and with God

(or: habitually singing in, by and to God [other MSS: to {the} Lord], in union with the grace resident within your hearts {= the core of your being})."

The comparison of these two passages reveals that the place of being filled in Spirit (Breath-effect) in the one corresponds to the indwelling of Christ's Word, wisdom, and mind in the other. I love it that we can "sing with God" – within our hearts.

20. constantly giving thanks

(expressing gratitude; or: speaking of the

well-being that is in grace and favor) **to God, even [the] Father** [p46 & others: to the Father, even God] **at all times** (or: always; = on all occasions) **concerning all things** (or: for everything; or: over all mankind), **within the midst of and in union with the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ** [= the Messiah],

Verses 15-20, above, find a parallel in Col. 3:12-17, which comes from a slightly different perspective.

Corresponding to the participle, here, in Col. 3:15 it reads:

“And progressively come to be thankful people (or: continue becoming folks expressing gratitude for the goodness, ease

and well-being that comes in grace; be habitually graceful folks).”

These present participles speak of a habitual lifestyle and constant activity, but Paul makes it explicit in the phrase, “**at all times**,” and makes clear the extent and inclusion of this practice by the phrase, “**concerning all things** (or: for everything),” or rendering all as a masculine, “over all mankind.” The phrase “**giving thanks**” can also be rendered from the elements of the word (*eu + charis + the verbal element, – tountes*): “speaking of the well-being that is in grace and favor.” Our thankfulness is a response to His grace.

We are to recognize that:

1) God is the source of this grace and favor

2) God is our Father

3) our gratitude for this grace arises from our being **within the mist of, and in union with, the Name**

4) the Name in which we are now centered and in which we experience this union is the Name of our Lord: Jesus the Messiah.

In Acts 2:38, on the Day of Pentecost,

“Then at once let each one of you folks be immersed

(baptized) **within the Name** (= in union with the identity, the

character, the authority, the essence) **of Jesus Christ** (or: of [the] Anointed Jesus; which is Jesus [the Messiah]) – **into the midst of a release and sending away, a divorce and an abandonment, a cancellation and a forgiveness: of your failures, your mistakes, your times of missing the target, your errors, your deviations and your sins – and then you will proceed receiving and continue taking in hand the free gift (the gratuity) of the Set-apart Breath-effect** (or: which is the Holy Spirit; or: which has its source in and the

character of the Sacred Attitude).”

This was one of the first revelations of what this Name meant. Folks were **“immersed within the Name,”** and entered “in union with the identity, the character, the authority and the essence” which is “Jesus the Messiah.” This is the “goodness of the grace and favor” for which we are enjoined to be **“constantly giving thanks.”**

To the lame man, Peter said,

“Within, and in union with, the Name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, start walking, and then keep on walking about (around)!” (Acts 3:6).

Then Peter gave the explanation for this

healing, in Acts 3:16,

“Consequently, by the faith from (or: in the trust which has its source in; with the loyalty and reliability of) His Name, His Name at once made this person firm, solid and stable – whom you now continue watching and gazing at, and have seen so thus know – and the faith, trust, loyalty and faithfulness that [is] through and by means of Him both gave and gives to him the entire allotment of whole and complete soundness... in front of you all!”

Later, Peter proclaimed,

“And thus, the rescue and deliverance – the restoration to health and wholeness, the safety and salvation, and the return to our original state and condition – is in absolutely no other person! For neither is there a different name under the [dome of the] sky (or: heaven) that has been given, and now exists as a gift, among mankind (or: in the midst of humanity) within which it continues binding and necessary for us to be saved (restored to health and wholeness; delivered and kept safe; returned to our original state and condition)!”

(Acts 4:12).

So here in Eph., Paul is following suit with an established understanding of the significance of the Name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. In Jn. 1:12-13 we read of the significance of His Name in relation to a new sense of being God's children,

“Yet, as many as receive It (or: took Him) – to the ones habitually trusting and believing into Its Name (or: His Name) – It gives (or: He gave) to them (or: for them; in them) authority ([the] right; or: privilege from out of the midst of Being) to be birthed (or: to become) God's children (born ones), who are

born (or: were given birth) not out of bloods (or: [flows] of blood), neither forth from the will of flesh (or: from the intent of a flesh [ceremony]), nor yet out of the will (purpose; intent) of an adult male, but to the contrary, from out of the midst of God.”

We see the sense of the authority of His Name in Lu. 10:17

“Now the seventy [other MSS: seventy-two] returned with joy, one after another saying, "O Lord, even the demons (Hellenistic concept and term: = animistic influences) are continually being subjected to us

(or: set under and arranged below for us) **within and in union with Your Name!**”

This corresponds to what we see in Acts 3:6, above.

Rounding these thoughts out, we have in Col. 3:17a,

“And everything – whatsoever you may be habitually doing, in word or in action (within a thought or message, or within a work or deed) – **[do] everything** (all; all things) **within and in union with [the] Name of [the] Lord, Jesus** [other MSS: of Jesus Christ; others: of {the} Lord, Jesus Christ]...”

21. while continually setting and arranging yourselves under (placing yourselves in humble alignment; subordinating yourselves; being submissive) **so as to support one another, in respect for Christ**

(or: in union with the reverence which is an Anointing; within Christ's fear; in reverence pertaining to, and the source of which is [the] Anointed One [other MSS: God]).

The first thing to notice about this verse is that it is the end of the sentence that begins with vs. 18. There are no verbs in vss. 19-21, only dependent participles – each of which is dependent upon the

verb in 18: "**be continuously or repeatedly filled full.**" These are general admonitions which apply to everyone and are the result of being filled "**in spirit,**" or, "within the midst of [the] Breath-effect" and "in union with [God's] Breath."

This verse is an echo of 4:2, above, and calls to mind Gal. 5:13b, "**through the Love be continuously slaving for one another,**" as well as 1 Cor. 16:16,

"you folks can also be progressively aligned with humility to (or: habitually arranged under to give support for and among, and to be attached to) **such folks** (persons of that kind),

and for everyone habitually working together (or: with all those constantly co-operating) **and exhaustively laboring** (toiling)."

The attitude and disposition appropriate to assuming this posture and supportive position is seen in Phil. 2:3b,

"in humility (or: by an attitude of being in a low station; in humbleness of disposition and way of thinking) **constantly considering one another** (or: each other) **[as] those habitually holding [a position] above yourselves** (or: [as] being superior in regard to yourselves)."

There is a guiding motivation to follow

Paul's admonition that can be seen in the final phrase: **in respect for Christ**. Such a life, and such behavior, can be witnessed in the life and work of Jesus.

We read in Phil. 2:7,

"He empties Himself (or: removed the contents of Himself; made Himself empty), **receiving** (or: taking; accepting) **a slave's form** (external shape; outward mold), **coming to be** (or: birthing Himself) **within an effect of humanity's** (mankind's; people's) **likeness."**

And at the last supper, He washed the feet of His disciples, then said,

"If I Myself, then, the Lord and the Teacher, wash your feet, you

men also are constantly indebted (obliged; continuously owe it) to be habitually washing one another's feet." (John 13:14)

The parenthetical expansions of the phrase **in respect for Christ** show other potential renderings of the genitive case, as well as the semantic range of the word *phobos* (fear; etc.), and by rendering *christou* "an Anointing," and in apposition, we see that this reverent respect (fear) is an anointing, and then rendering the phrase as an ablative, we observe that it comes from "[the] Anointed One." Rendered as a possessive, "Christ's fear (reverence)" is seen as describing His relationship to

His Father. In Prov. 14 we find instruction on the tradition of "fear" in relationship to God:

26. In the fear (or: reverence) of Yahweh [is] a stronghold of trust, and it shall become a refuge for His sons.

27. The fear (or: reverence) of Yahweh is a fountain of life, to keep one away from the traps of death. (CVOT)

And in Ps. 25:14 we read,

"[The] Lord (= Yahweh) [is] a strength-effect of the people habitually respecting and reverencing (or: fearing) Him."
(LXX; JM)

And Ps. 34:7,

"An agent (messenger) of, from
and which is [the] Lord (= Yahweh) will continue encamping
in a circle round about the people
habitually respecting and
reverencing (or: fearing) Him, and
will repeatedly rescue them."

(LXX; JM)

In this tradition, "fear of Yahweh" was seen as a benefit – something to value. We see in 1 Cor. 14 Paul's instruction concerning group dynamics when the community is assembled for a meeting. One example is given in vs.29,

**"Now let two or three prophets
be speaking, one after another,**

and let the other folks continue thoroughly sifting and sorting so as to fully evaluate and reach a decision."

The implication is that the audience critiques what has been spoken by the prophets – in order to reach a decision to which the prophets should in some way be responsible. The audience has submitted to the prophets by listening to them and taking their words seriously enough to sift and sort them in a manner that would lead them to a conclusion about what the prophet said. But for this to be at all effective, there apparently follows a discussion among the members of the audience, and then there is a

response given by the audience to the prophet. So we see reciprocal discourse between speaker and audience.

Then in vss. 30-31 of that same chapter we also see another example of mutual subordination within the corporate context,

"Yet if it may (or: should) be unveiled (revealed; disclosed) to another being seated, let the first hush, and keep silent, for you all continue able (constantly have power) to be repeatedly prophesying, one by one, to the end that everyone (all) can be learning, and everyone (all) can be called alongside to receive

relief, aid, comfort and encouragement (may receive the benefits of the Paraclete)."

This verse can be seen as being transitional between what has been said before and what follows below. It should be seen as qualifying vss. 22-33 and instructing our understanding concerning how we are to read these verses. Schnackenburg (ibid p 321) and Witherington (ibid p 313) set vs. 21 as beginning the next rhetorical section that continues on through 6:9, rather than seeing it as concluding the previous section. The bracketed reading of vs. 22, below, which follows Aleph, A and other MSS, would argue for interpreting

vs. 21 with this previous section because of the verb that is present in those MSS: a present, passive imperative.

Both Paul and Peter took the stance of **“setting and arranging yourselves under** (placing yourselves in humble alignment; subordinating yourselves; being submissive)” beyond the covenant communities and into the areas of politics and government, as can be seen in Rom. 13:1, 5; Tit. 3:1 and 1 Pet. 2:13. But a continual witness to the world can best be seen from the everyday lives that are lived both within the communities, and in interactions with the non-believing cultures that surround these

communities. So in the next section Paul points out examples of how the Christ-life can be displayed to the world.

22. **Wives** (or: Women) [**are**] **to** (or: with; for) **their own husbands** (or: adult males), **as to** (or: with; for; in; by) **the Lord** (or: the Owner; or: = Christ, or, Yahweh)

[note: this reading follows *p46*, B, Clement, Origen, other church fathers & other MSS, and is the reading in Westcott and Hort, Panin, Nestle-Aland, Tasker, and is bracketed by Griesbach; however, the following reading is also in Clement, Origen, other church fathers and MSS, as well

as in Aleph and A: Let the wives be by habit humbly aligned and placed subordinate so as to be supportive to their own husbands, in the same way as to (or: in; by; for; with) the Lord],

This verse must be seen in the light of what has just preceded which set the tone for this verse and the rest of the chapter. You will notice that the bold rendering, which follows the texts given in the note, has no verb. The usual practice is to insert a copulative (in this case, [**are**]) to facilitate our English language. With this reading, wives (or: women – the Greek word means either or both) are to have the same

relationship with their husbands as they do to the Lord. Paul is introducing a new kind of relationship within the context of the family structure (which is the basic unit of society). We will see in the following verses how he shows that this new pattern of relating is a reflection of the called-out covenant community's pattern of relating to Jesus Christ, the Head of His body, as in vs. 23 and vs. 32, below. For this reason, I lean toward the bold reading. Witherington shares: “[W]hatever ‘submission’ means in vs. 21, it also means in vs. 22, by which I mean, it is not a gender-specific activity” (ibid p 317; brackets added). He goes on to state,

“That Paul in what follows will only deal with a representative sampling of relationships in regard to what submission looks like is clear enough. For example, he does not deal with any relationships outside the household structure (e.g., the submission of soldiers to officers or citizens to rulers), and even within the household he does not discuss, e.g., relationships in the extended family, such as the widowed mother of the family head to her son. In other words, the household code is not meant to be comprehensive in scope...”

(ibid p 318 n 174).

In this same passage, through a quote he points us to 1 Pet. 5:5a as a parallel example,

“Likewise (or: In like manner), you younger people be humbly placed, arranged and aligned by and with (or: subjected for support to and among) older folks. Yet all of you folks (or: everyone) tie on yourselves, as an outer garment (or: like a slave's apron), the humble attitude (the lowliness of thinking) to, with, for and among one another [other MSS add: continuously being ones that are

humbly aligned to give support].”

Witherington quotes A.T. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, WBC 42; Waco: Word, 1990 p 366) on this verse in 1 Pet. 5: “The latter admonition was not meant to cancel out the former. Rather, the writer holds that there is a general sense in which elders are to serve... in a submissive attitude...” and then adds that, “throwing the Spirit [vs. 18b, above] and Christ [vs. 21] as exemplars into the mix changes the very nature and character of such hierarchical relationships” (ibid p 318; brackets added). He also references E. Best (*Ephesians*, Clark, 1998 p 518) as being “right to note that since vs. 21 is

dependent on vs. 18 what is suggested is not that mutual submission is a natural thing but rather that it is something that can and does happen when someone is filled with the Spirit and so led by God in his or her behavior” (ibid p 319).

Another perspective of the wife’s place in the home is seen in 1 Tim. 5:14,

“I am wanting and intending, therefore, younger women to be marrying: to be bearing children; to continuously rule and manage a household; to be by habit giving not even one starting point (base of operation; opportunity; incentive; inducement) favoring verbal

abuse (slander; reviling) **to the person occupying an opposing position** (or: in the one lying in opposition; for the opposer or the opposing counterpart).”

The word rendered “rule and manage a household” is *oiko-* (house/household) and *despoteō* (to rule; to be master or despot; to have absolute ownership). This is the only place where the verb is used in the NT. The noun *oikodespotēs* is only used in the Gospels, and is normally rendered “master of the house” or “householder.” So in 1 Tim., Paul is advocating a big shift in the place of the woman in the home.

The bracketed rendering gives a

different message, since it is giving an imperative to wives (or, to women) – not making a statement about them which makes their relationship to the husbands or men the same **as** their relationships **to the Lord**, as does the first, bold reading. A corresponding reading in Col. 3:18 reads:

“Wives, be habitually aligned to humbly support (or, as a middle: place and arrange yourselves in order, under) **[your] husbands** (or: Women, continue subjecting yourselves to the adult males [note: this was culturally appropriate at that time]), **in the same way as there has**

progressively come again to be a connection in [the] Lord (or: since there has been an arrival back in union with [our] Master and Owner).”

We can see a connection of aligned subjection and support “in the Lord” in 1 Cor. 15:28, where it is seen functioning in the relationship between the Son and the Father. As we can observe in the life of Jesus, submitting to the will of the Father is a basic Kingdom principle.

23. because a husband exists being a head of (or: is a source with reference to) the wife as also (or: even as) the Christ [is] Head (or: Source) of the called-out community (the ecclesia; the

summoned-out assembly); **He Himself is** (continually exists being) [**the**] **Savior** (Deliverer; Rescuer; Restorer to health and wholeness) **of the Body.**

The first clause expresses the traditional marital relationship between a husband and a wife in the patrilineal structure of the Greco-Roman world in the 1st century AD. Because of the embedded kinship systems, the inheritance came through the males and belonged to the males. Thus, the husband was the source of the wife's livelihood. He occupied the household position of being the "head" of the family and extended household members (including servants) just as a patriarch was the "head" of a

particular lineage, or tribe. So Paul, rather than laying out a “Christian house code,” is using the familiar social organization as an illustration of Christ Jesus in His relationship to His **called-out community**. He is the **Head**, and as 4:15b, above, tells us, “**we can grow up** (enlarge; increase) **into Him – the ALL which is the Head: Christ** (or: [and] we would in love make all things grow up into Him Who is the head and source: [the] Anointed One)!”

There is a kind of parallelism in the construction of this verse that reverses the order of vs. 22 and puts first the **husband**, in the first pair, then **Christ**, in the second pair, then **[the] Savior** in the

third pair. As the husband fills the role of being **the head** in the first paring, he becomes the picture and image of **the Christ**, who is **[the] Savior**. On the other side of these three equations we have **the wife** who is a rhetorical symbol for **the called-out community**, which the third pair defines as **[the] Body**. Paul speaks corporately of the body in Rom. 8:23b,

“we ourselves also continually sigh and groan within (in the center of) ourselves, continuously accepting and with our hands taking away from out of a placing in the condition of a son (or: [the] deposit of the Son; a

setting in place which is the Son; a constituting as a son; a placing in the Son): **the process of the release of our body from slavery**

(or: [and] the loosing from destruction pertaining to the [corporate] body, which is us; or: = the unbinding and release of the body [of Adam; of humanity], which belongs to us).”

Paul uses this analogy only here and in 1 Cor. 11:3ff. Jesus said to His followers in Lu. 22:25-26,

“So He said to them, ‘The kings of the nations and ethnic multitudes are habitually acting

as their lords and owners, and those exercising authority over them... Yet you men [are] not [to be] thus (or: [are] not [to behave] in this way), but to the contrary, let the greater among you come to be like (or: as) the younger; and the one normally leading like (or: as) the person normally giving attending service.’”

From this He suggests that to be the “head” means to be “the head servant.” This turns the conventional reading on its head, and means that Paul is shattering the patriarchal model, and is following the tradition of Jesus’

teaching.

Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 11:3 states:

“Now I continue intending (willing; wanting; purposing) **you folks to be aware, from having seen and thus knowing, that the Christ is** (or: exists being) **the Source** (or: Head) **of every adult male** (or: the Anointing is the head of every husband); **in turn the adult male [was] a source of woman** (or: the husband [is] a head of a wife); **and yet God [is the] Source of the Christ** (or: [is] Head of the Anointed One!)”

A few verses later, Paul references Gen. 1:28 and 2:26 in vs. 7 of this same

chapter:

“So a husband (or: an adult male), **on the one hand, is continually obligated not to be covering [his] Source** (or: veiling down the head) – **[he] being inherently** (or: constantly being under the rule and headship of) **God's image** (resemblance; likeness; portrait) **and glory** (reputation; splendor; manifestation which calls forth praise). **On the other hand, the wife** (or: woman) **is, and continuously exists being, a husband's** (or: an adult male's) **glory** (reputation; splendor;

manifestation which calls forth praise).”

Our social behavior and relationships have as their purpose God’s glory, and as their goal, humanity’s bearing God’s image and likeness. It’s all about Him, and our being in union with Him, and our functioning as His temple.

Witherington sees another aspect of Paul as here, “trying to model household relationships on the servant-like and self-sacrificial relationship of Christ to his church.... the [household] code is a bold and positive attempt to modify the existing structure” (ibid p 321; brackets added). On the sociological level, I applaud his reading. But further on (p

322) he affirms that, “this discourse is still about exposing the deeds of darkness and being light to those around who might be watching” – which is to say that Paul is not creating a “Christian household code.”

24. But, just as the called-out covenant community (summoned-forth assembly) **continuously humbly aligns and places itself under for** (or, as a passive: is normally subjected in support to) **the Christ, thus also the wives to** (or: for; with) **the husbands, in everything** (or: within all; among all mankind).

Here he places the wife-husband relationship as being parallel to the

relationship between the community and Christ – elevating the former into the same sphere as the latter. This is a picture of the community bearing the image of God, as having God as its Head/Source. The verb in this verse is either middle or passive, so I have offered both renderings. The middle (bold) rendering put power and ability in the community and the wives to take the described action – based upon the freedom that has come in the Christ (Gal. 5:1). The passive rendering acknowledges the supportive role of relationships that God has created within Christ, and then vs. 25, below, puts an active admonition upon the new role of

the husbands – something heretofore unheard of in patrilineal societies.

With **the called-out covenant community** being the model, in this verse, Witherington (ibid p 329 n 221) again quotes Lincoln (*Ephesians* p 272),
“The Church’s subordination, then, means looking to its head for his beneficial rule, living by his norms, experiencing his presence and love, receiving from him gifts that will enable growth to maturity, and responding to him in gratitude and awe.”

The last phrase, “**in everything,**” describes the inclusiveness of this relationship. It is a relationship of

support in all things. It is to be demonstrated “among all mankind.” It is an existential display of humanity’s proper relationship to God.

25. O husbands, be constantly loving, and urging to unity with, [your] wives (or: Men, continue loving and unambiguously accepting the women), **accordingly and correspondingly as the Christ also loved** (or: to the degree that, and commensurately as, the Anointed One loves and unambiguously accepts) **the called-out community, and gave Himself up** (or: commits and gives Himself over) **in behalf of** (for the sake of; over [the situation of]) **her**,
Witherington (ibid p 327 n 208) quotes

Lincoln (*Ephesians* p 373): “So in this writer’s vision of Christian marriage what is called for from wives is complete subordination to complete love.” The only "complete love" is God in Christ -- the very love to which Paul points in the last half of this verse. The picture for the entire community, which of course includes each individual, is the **love of Christ** who **gave Himself up** for humanity. Family relationships are the ideal way to reflect this image of God to the world.

Since this life of **constantly loving wives** and women is to **correspond to Christ’s love**, let us keep in mind what Jesus said about love,

“No one continues holding (or: having) greater love than this: that someone should place (set; lay; lay down) his soul (or: soul-life; inner being; self; person) over [the situation or circumstances of] (or: on behalf of) his friends. You folks are (exist continuously being) My friends” (Jn. 15:13-14a).

So as Christ loved, so are the husband to love the wives and the men to accept the women: and to lay down their lives (souls; persons) for them. This is total reciprocity between the husbands and the wives; between men and women. Both give their all to and for the other.

This is God's reign among humans. The family unit has become mutually cruciform. The image of God is now displayed before the world.

The first clause is an echo of Col. 3:19a, but here Paul's admonitions to husbands and the men in the community are to correspond to Christ's love for the entire community: it is to be a self-giving love. Just as Christ is the Safe-Keeper (Savior) of the Body, so should the husband keep the wife safe, and the men bring deliverance to the women.

Witherington makes an astute observation here:

“In Col. [3:19b] the husband is told to not be embittered with his

spouse, but here that exhortation is replaced by the analogy of Christ and the church.... [T]he trajectory and contextualizing of the argument are as important as the details of what Paul says. What we see here is an attempt to provide a significant equalizing of relationships within Christian marriage, altering the usual character and direction of a patriarchal marriage situation... in a direction of a more egalitarian approach to the marital situation” (ibid p 313-14; brackets added).

He references H. Hoehner (*Ephesians*,

Baker, 2002 p 748) stating that he “rightly adds that this exhortation [in vs. 25] does not really have a precedent in the OT or in the household codes of the Greco-Roman era” (ibid p 329; brackets added).

Paul seems to be using what has been termed a “household code” as an analogy for the expected behavior in a called-out, covenant community. We see the application of this in the second half of this verse, and in 26-27 below (which continues from 25b, with Christ still being the Actor in this ongoing sentence), we see the ongoing work of Christ on His body, His bride.

26. to the end that He may set her

apart (separate her; consecrate and make her holy), **cleansing** (purging) **[her] by the bath of the Water [that is] within a result of a flow** (or: in union with a gush-effect; or: in the midst of a spoken word, a declaration, or an utterance),

Grassi suggests that the metaphor of **the bath** may come from the tradition of a "ceremonial bath of the bride before marriage." (ibid p 349) But we read in Titus 3:5,

"... **He delivered us** (or: He saves, rescues and restores us to the wholeness and health of our original condition) **through a bath of, and from, a birth-back-**

up-again (or: [the] bathing of a regeneration; note: can = a ritual immersion pool of rebirth) **and a making back-up-new** (of a different kind and quality) **again from a set-apart Breath-effect** (or: of a renewal and renovation whose source is [the] Holy Spirit; or: a set-apart spirit's creating or birthing [us] back-up-new-again; a renewal which is a holy spirit)."

In the imagery of the Day of Atonement in Heb. 10:19-21, the author gives this assurance in the admonition of vs. 22,

“we can be continuously and

progressively approaching with a true heart in union with full-assurance from the completed act of faithfulness (or: centered within [the] full-carrying from [His] loyalty and fidelity), **the hearts having been sprinkled from a misery-gushed consciousness of what is evil or unserviceable** (or: a joint-knowledge full of labor; a conscience in a bad condition), **and then the body having been bathed in and by clean water.”**

It is Christ's **love** (vs. 25) that instigates the **cleansing** here, and it is a corporate work (*cf* Witherington, *ibid* p 330). The

final phrase of this verse uses the noun *rhēma* which literally means **a result of a flow**, referring to the flow of the Spirit within the “spoken word, declaration or utterance.” It comes upon and into folks in union with “a gush-effect” (another literal rendering) from God. The spoken word of the Good News is “Spirit and Life” (Jn. 6:63). The **bath of the Water** is a symbolic reference to Rom. 6:3-4 where Paul informs us that we were “**immersed** (or: were at one point soaked or baptized) **into Christ Jesus...** [and] **are immersed** (or: were then baptized) **into His death** [and] **buried together** (entombed together with funeral rites) **in Him** (or: by Him; with

Him), **through the immersion** (baptism) **into the death.**” This is what **set her apart** (separated her; consecrated and made her holy) and **cleansed** her. In Jn. 15:3, Jesus told His students,

“You folks, yourselves, are already cleared (cleansed) and pruned ones through and because of the word (Logos; message; thought; idea) which I have spoken to you (in you; for you; among you).”

27. so that He Himself could place beside Himself (or: should present to and make to stand alongside in and with Himself) an inwardly-glorious and honorable (or: held in honor and high

esteem; in-glorious-array; or: inwardly-reputable; centered-in-glory) **called-out community** – [which] is continuously **having neither spot** (or: stain), **nor wrinkle, nor any of such things, but to the contrary** – to the end that she would continuously exist being **set-apart** (holy; different from the ‘ordinary and profane’) **and flawless** (unblemished; or: unblamable).

"The quality and condition of being rightwised (turned in the right direction of righted relationships, fairness, justice and honorable dealings of the Way pointed out) is one of the main reasons for loving our wives: and this causes each of us to set her apart so as to make

her 'stand alongside Him, with Him and in Him' as she stands beside us" (Dan Kaplan, paraphrased).

The subject of the first clause, “**He Himself**” is an emphatic construction with the reflexive pronoun “**Himself**” in the dative case. This bold rendering is an instrumental reading which emphasizes that fact that the action is done “by Him.” This pronoun can also be rendered as an indirect object, “to Himself,” or as a locative, “In Himself,” or as an associative, “with Himself,” as the parenthetical expansions offer. Each of these renderings presents a valid reading of the dative case and should receive serious consideration.

The first reading follows the same sense of the action in vs. 26, “**He may set her apart,**” and so I gave the emphatic instrumental reading as the first, bold choice in vs. 27. However, because the verb can have the meaning of “presenting” someone to someone, the second rendering, “present to” is also viable. The locative reading “in Himself” follows Paul’s teaching of the called-out groups being “in Christ,” so this reading has good currency for Christ “making the **inwardly-glorious and honorable called-out community** to stand IN Him.” The associate reading “with Him” follows this same reasoning. The verb is the aorist tense (which gives

the fact, or presents a “snapshot” of the action as a whole) of the verb *histēmi* (to place; to make to stand) that is prefixed with the preposition *para* (beside; alongside). Thus the two renderings on offer that reflect these basic ideas. Secondary uses of this verb give the ideas of “presenting,” as noted above, or of “placing at someone’s disposal.” The first two readings follow the picture given in Rom. 12:1,

“Consequently, brothers, I am repeatedly calling you folks alongside to advise, exhort, implore and encourage you, through God's compassions to stand your bodies alongside (or:

to set or place your bodies
beside) **[the] Well-pleasing, Set-
apart** (Holy; Different-from-the-
usual), **Living Sacrifice by God**
(or: in God; for God; to God; with
God), **[this being] your sacred
service which pertains to
thought, reason and
communication** (or: your
reasoned and rational service; the
logical and Word-based service
from you folks; or: = temple
service),”

that gives the action (made by the called-
out folks) a present-day setting. This
present-life context seems as the best
reading for this passage in Eph. that is

speaking to the immediate situations of the 1st century recipients of Paul's sermon. The reading "present to," although linguistically viable, has given rise to an erroneous interpretation of this verse as speaking to some obscure future "end of time" scenario. Here Schnackenburg states, "... the 'wedding' of Christ and the Church does not lie in the future. We can not accept the interpretation... that it refers to the Parousia which is never mentioned in Eph." (ibid p 251). But since we see that vs. 28 speaks of ongoing action in the analogy of the husband-wife example, it seems reasonable to conclude that vs. 27 is also speaking to the work of Christ

right here in this life. Whether this work is viewed as having already been done through the work of the death and resurrection of the Messiah, or is a work that He is doing through His Spirit within the communities, is a matter of debate, but since the verbs in both vs. 26 and vs. 27 are in the subjunctive, I suggest that the latter option is the correct understanding of these two verses.

We observe that Paul and his associates are instruments of Christ placing folks at His side, and at their sides, in Col. 1:27b-28,

“...the riches of the glory of this Secret (or: the wealth which has

its source in this sacred mystery's
manifestation which calls forth
praise) **within the multitudes**
(among the nations; in the
Gentiles; IN UNION WITH the
swarms of ethnic groups), **which**
is (or: exists being) **Christ within**
you folks, the expectation of and
from the glory

(or: which is [the] Anointed
in union with you people:
the [realized] hope of the
manifestation which called
forth praise; or: which is
[the] Anointing [and the
Messiah] within the midst
of you folks – the

expectation which is the
glory),

Whom [other MSS: Which] **we ourselves habitually proclaim down the line** (or: announce in accord with the pattern), **constantly putting [Him] into the minds of every person** (or: human) **and repeatedly teaching every person** (or: human), **within the sphere of all wisdom, to the intent that we may place every person** (or: human) **finished** (mature; perfect with respect to purpose; complete; as having reached the goal of destiny) **by [our] side, within and in union**

with Christ.”

The adjective rendered “**inwardly-glorious and honorable**” is the preposition *en* (in, within) prefixed to the adjective form of the word *doxos*, a cognate of the noun *doxa* (glory, reputation, a manifestation which calls forth praise and honor). I have conflated the concepts of these words to indicate that it is an inward glory (Christ) that yields an honorable character, which in turn brings about a reputation of honor in which the communities will be held in high esteem. Since the communities are “in Christ,” they are thus “centered in His glory” and will bear the image of His glory. And since this is His glory

and reputation that is emanating from the midst of the groups, the outside world will see no spot or wrinkle. As the apocalyptic imagery of Rev. 3:4-5; 4:4; and 7:14 presents their picture, these folks will be seen as “dressed in white.” In Rev. 19:8 it is explained that,

“Then it was (or: is) granted (or: given) to her to the end that she may clothe herself with bright and clean fine cotton (or: she may cast bright, pure, fine linen around her) – for the fine cotton (or: linen) represents the effects of right relationship and equity in the life of the Way pointed out

(or: the results of being rightwised; the actualizations of justice; consequences of justice rendered from being turned in the right direction; the effects of having been eschatologically delivered and placed in the Path pointed out; or: the just awards) **of the set-apart folks** (pertaining to the saints; from the sacred people).”

The figures of “spot or wrinkle” are references to her clothing, and call to mind Paul’s symbolic admonition in

Rom. 13:14a,

“you folks must clothe yourselves with (or: enter within and put on) the Lord, Jesus Christ.”

And there is Gal. 3:27,

“You see, as many of you folks as were immersed into Christ, at once clothed yourselves with Christ (or: were plunged into so as to be enveloped by then saturated and permeated with Anointing – or, the Anointed One – instantly entered within and put on [the] Anointing)!”

Then we get another picture of this same situation in Col. 3:9-10

“[Be] folks at once stripping off from yourselves (undressing yourselves from; or: go out and away from) the old humanity (the old human; = the old Adam), together with its practices, and then [be] suddenly clothing yourselves with (or: entering within) the new one (the fresh one which existed only recently), the one being continuously (or: repeatedly; habitually; progressively) renewed (made back up new again, in kind and character) into full, accurate, added, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight which is

down from and corresponds to the image (an exactly formed visible likeness) **of its Creator** (of the One framing and founding it from a state of wildness and disorder).”

Practical applications of this admonition follow in Col. 3:12-13,

“Therefore, as God's chosen, set-apart and beloved ones (or: God's sacred, loved and chosen people; or: as elect... ones from God), **clothe yourselves with** (or: enter within) **bowels** (internal organs; = the tender parts; seat of deep feelings) **of compassion, kindness** (adaptable usefulness),

humility (the minding and disposition of things of lowness or of low station), **gentleness** (meekness; mildness), **waiting long before rushing with emotions** (even-temperedness; long-suffering; putting up with people/situations; pushing anger far away), **being folks continuously holding up [things or situations] pertaining to one another** (or: habitually holding yourselves up, belonging to one another; constantly putting up with one another) **and incessantly giving grace to or doing a favor for** (dealing graciously with and

among) **yourselves, if ever anyone may continue having (or: holding) a complaint toward someone...**”

This picture ends with the communities existing “**being set-apart** (holy; different from the ‘ordinary and profane’),” which is accomplished “**by the bath of the Water [that is] within a result of a flow** (or: in union with a gush-effect; or: in the midst of a spoken word, a declaration, or an utterance)” — which was the goal set forth in vs. 26a, above. The result, because the result is Christ, is “**flawless** (unblemished; or: unblamable).” Cf 1:4, above.

28. **Thus** (or: In like manner; In this

way) the husbands also are continuously indebted (thus: obligated) to constantly love and accept their wives as their own bodies (= persons). The one constantly loving his own wife continues loving and accepting himself,

Verses 25b-27 have been speaking of Christ's work on and care of the called-out communities. Paul's subject has not changed here, for we see the corporate theme taken up again in vs. 30, below. So we should interpret vss. 28-29 and vs. 31, as speaking metaphorically about the covenant groups, as he plainly states in vs. 32. Although the spirit will affect the flesh and lift it to a higher plain of

living, Paul's central point concerns the relationship and obligation between Christ and **His body** (vs. 30). The natural should indeed follow the spiritual, but we should read Paul's intent as pointing out (through the natural analogy) that Christ **constantly loves and accept His wife** (the anointed communities) **as His own body** – and thus **continues loving and accepting Himself** in loving her. This is the effect of His complete union, solidarity and identity with His communities (as firstfruits of humanity), as we saw in Mat. 25:40b. We see that pattern of this in Israel's history, as described in Ezk. 16:8-14. We observe the final

development of His purpose in 1 Cor. 6:17, “**the person continually joining himself** (or: being habitually glued in intimate union; in himself being continuously welded) **to** (or: in; with) **the Lord exists being one spirit** (or: one Breath-effect)” – where the topic of discussion was also about male/female relationships.

Schnackenburg (ibid p 252) points us to Lev.19:18, “You will love your associate as yourself: I am Yahweh,” as possible grounds for the second sentence in this verse. If this was in Paul’s mind, then the wife has been elevated to the position of a husband’s associate, or neighbor, and this calls to mind Gal.

3:28,

“Within [Him; us], there is not (there does not exist) Jew nor Greek (or: Hellenist); within, there is not (does not exist) slave nor freeman; within, there is not (does not exist) ‘male and female’; for you folks all exist being one within Christ Jesus (or: are all one person in union with an Anointing from Jesus).”

29. for you see, no one ever yet (at any time) hated (or: hates) his own flesh (= his body and interior self) but rather continually intensively nourishes (feeds and supports) and warms (cherishes; comforts) it, according as

also the Christ [does] the called-out community,

So Paul continues the natural analogy here, but we see that it leads – once again – to the relationship between **Christ and the called-out community.** In fact Jesus spoke of the Father’s care and nourishment of even “the birds of the sky,” pointing out how He “**constantly feeds and nourishes them.**” Then He relates this care to those hearing Him, “**Are you folks not exceedingly carrying through more, so as to be of more consequence, than they (= Are you not worth much more than they are)?**” (Mat. 6:26).

The topic of “nourishing” recalls the

instructions that Jesus gave to Peter in regard to the care of His lambs and sheep (Jn. 21:15-17). Peter passed on this instruction to others when he told them, **“you folks shepherd** (i.e., lead to pasture, feed, tend, protect, care for) **God's little flock [that is] among you folks, constantly watching over [them]... readily rushing toward it with passion”** (1 Pet. 5:2). The verb that is used, above, is an intensified form which is only used here and in 6:4, below. The simple form of the verb, used in Mat. 6:26, above, is also found in Mat. 25:37 in the context of Christ's “brothers,” as well as in Rev. 12:6, 14. Beyond “feeding and supporting,” this

word can mean to “rear, educate, bring up and prepare for adulthood” (e.g., Lu. 4:16).

The phrase, “**his own flesh,**” can obviously speak to a person’s immediate and extended family. The term “**warm; cherish; comfort**” could apply both to a spouse and to children. The idea of “family” calls to mind Acts. 17:28-29; we are God’s family.

30. **because we are** (we exist continuously being) **members of His Body** [other MSS add: from out of His flesh and from out of His bones; *cf* Gen.2:23].

This is an abbreviated echo of 4:15-16, above, and as there speaks corporately –

note the plural, “**we.**” This is another key to understanding Paul’s argument in this passage; the husband-wife roles are primarily used as an analogy which speaks of the headship/lordship of Christ over the covenant communities, and which implies the intimacy of this organic and existential relationship. It is this understanding which will, in time, begin to transform the physical relationships within Christian households. As we think, so we become. This verse gives the reason (i.e., the purpose conjunction, **because**) for the “**continually intensively nourishes** (feeds and supports) **and warms** (cherishes; comforts)” of the **flesh**, in the

previous verse. Schnackenburg point out that, “The metaphor of the body provides the opportunity of interchanging body, flesh or members” (ibid p 253). As Paul said in 4:25b, above, “**we are** (we continually exist being) **members [as of a body] of one another** (or: limbs or body parts belonging to one another and having our source in each other).” And in 1 Cor. 6:15 he said, “**Have you folks not seen so as to know that your** [other MSS: our] **bodies are** (exist being) **members** (body parts) **of Christ?**” He re-affirms this conception of the called-out communities in Rom. 12, 4-5,

“For you see, just as (or: according to what is

encompassed) **in one body we continuously have** (constantly hold and possess) **many members, yet all the members do not have the same mode of acting** (do not constantly hold the same function), **thus we, the many, are and continue to exist being one body within Christ** (in union with [the] Anointed), **yet individually** (or: the situation being in accord with one), **members of one another** (or: but still, [being] on one level, [are] members whose source is, and who belong to, each other).”

Cf 1 Cor. 12:12-27 for a more detailed

presentation of Paul's thoughts on the corporate communities. Schnackenburg makes another cogent point:

“By using ‘we’ he reminds the readers that they themselves participate in this care [as stated in vs. 29, above]” (ibid p 253; brackets added).

Paul left the specifics of the “nourishing” and “warming/comforting” unstated, so his hearers could apply his meaning in many different contexts. The additions of the later MSS (which are not considered as original by most textual critics and scholars) would reach back to Gen. 2:23, which culminates the story of the creation of Eve, to

potentially complete Paul's point here and serve as a segue to the quote in the next verse.

31. **Answering this** (or: In the place facing this [situation or reality]),

"a man will continue leaving behind his father and mother, and he will be progressively glued (welded) to his wife, and the two will continue being [made] into one flesh (= one physical unit as though being one body)." [Gen. 2:4]

In Gen. 1:26 the decision was made by God to create humanity "according to Our likeness." We are not just to bear His image, but to be like Him. So what

He said in Gen. 2:4 is what He is like. And we find He has come to live with us and to be **progressively glued** to us. He became incarnated in Jesus, taking on our flesh and being “one of us.” Now, via His indwelling Spirit, He has become incarnated once again, in the Second Humanity – the *eschatos* Adam – and lives as our Head and Source. By using this quote, Paul has made it clear that his reference to “**his own flesh,**” in vs. 29, is a reference to one’s spouse, via the metaphor of one’s body (**His Body** in vs. 30).

32. **This secret** (or: mystery) **is great** (= important), **but I am speaking unto** (or: into; with a view to) **Christ, even** (or:

and; as well as) **unto** (or: into; with a view to) **the called-out community** (or: the called-out person; or: the summoned-forth covenant assembly).

Paul is saying that this verse in Genesis which he just quoted has had a "hidden meaning, only now understood" (Grassi, *ibid* p 349). *Cf* Col. 1:27-28, cited above. Paul has used the term **secret** elsewhere. We saw it in 1:9, 3:3, 4, 9, above, and find it in 6:19, below, where he relates the term to “**the good news** (or: which is the message of goodness, ease and well-being).” In 1 Tim. 3:16 we have the word “great” again used with this word:

“**and so confessedly** (admittedly;

with common consent and sameness of speech) **great is the SECRET** (or: mystery) **of the reverence** (the standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the healthful devotion and virtuous conduct of ease, in true relation to God):

which is made visible (manifested) **within flesh** (= a physical body), **is rightwised** (set in equity and right relationship in the Way pointed out; also = is placed in covenant) **in spirit** (in union with Breath-effect),

is seen by agents (or:
messengers),
is heralded (preached)
within multitudes (among
nations and ethnic groups),
is trusted and believed
within [the] world (an
ordered system; secular
culture),
is received back in good
opinion and reputation.

(or: Who [some MSS read: God;
others: He] was brought to clear
light within flesh (= the natural
realm); was shown righteous and
just (= set in covenant) within
spirit and attitude;

was seen by agents; was proclaimed among Gentiles {non-Jews}; was believed within [the] world of society, religion, and government; was taken back up again, within glory – a manifestation which calls forth praise!).”

The term **secret**, in Paul’s usage, normally involves Christ. Jesus used this term in reference to the reign, activities and sovereign influence (or: kingdom) of the heavens (Mat. 13:11). It was the coming of the Messiah that shed light on all of the OT writings. So, seeing the

man of Gen. 2:4 as symbolically referring to the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), Christ (also, as Paul terms it, the Second Human), who left the realm of His Father (Moses and the old covenant arrangement) and mother (the physical Jerusalem – Gal. 4:24) to be married to His wife, fits nicely into Paul's presentation of the new creation. *Cf* Rom. 7:1-4. This whole passage has been about Christ and His Body – **the called-out community**.

G. Bornkamm comments, “The [secret] is thus the allegorical meaning of the OT saying, its mysteriously concealed prophecy of the relation of Christ to the [called-out].... Eph. 5:32 is valid

because the eschatological mystery of Christ and the Church is mysteriously pre-figured in Gen. 2:24” (*TDNT*, IV, p 823; brackets added).

The preposition that I have rendered “**unto**, into and with a view to” presents first the direction of his speaking (unto and into Christ and the communities), and then the goal of the entire passage (with a view to Christ and the communities). I have offered three renderings of the conjunction: “**even**” (which implies Christ’s identity with the called-out folks), “and” (which would go best with the reading of the preposition as “with a view to”), and “as well as” (meaning that he was

speaking with reference to the Head as well as to the Body).

33. Moreover, you men also, individually, each one thus (in this way) **be continually loving** (or: accepting) **his own wife** (or: woman) **as** (or: as she were) **himself, and so the result will be that the wife would continually have deep respect for** (or: may habitually stand in reverential awe of; can normally be fearing with a healthy respect for) **the husband** (or: adult man).

That Paul has been speaking corporately, up to this point, is seen by his move now to address the men with the terms, “**individually, each one,**” and “**his own.**” The spiritual/corporate directly

affects the physical/individual, bringing it into resurrected alignment. The purpose/result clause that ends the verse now speaks to the wife portraying the corresponding glory that represents the **deep respect** that is due to Christ from the community – a reprise of 24b, above, as the first clause presents a reprise of 28b. Both the woman and the man, being one, now radiate the glory of Christ.

Chapter 6

1. You children make it a habit to humbly listen and pay attention to, and thus submissively obey, your parents (begetters; those who birthed you into existence) in union with the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh], for this is the Way pointed out (is fair, right and just).

2."Be continuously honoring (holding in respect; valuing; reverencing; treating as precious and with dignity) your father and mother,"

which very one is a foremost implanted goal (impartation of the finished product within; inward directive) within an act of promising

(or: in [the] promise; or: = that embodies assurance),

3."to the end that it may come to be well and easy for (or: to; in; with) you and you will continue existing a long time upon the land (or: earth)." [Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16]

Not only were wives and women addressed directly, above, but now also children, showing that they have an important role in the life of the covenant community. "Even the children, who are full members of the congregation, should let their behavior be determined by the will of the Lord.... In Hellenism, by contrast, only the masculine, free, adult

person was addressed” (Schnackenburg, *ibid* p 261). It is significant that he bases this admonition on quotes from the Law, which in Gal. 4:1-7 is depicted as applying to the period of figurative childhood (prior to being placed as a son, a mature one). But they are to keep in mind their being “**in union with the Lord**” as they learn to bring this listening, attentive obedience into the sphere of life in the new covenant. We see Jesus following **the Way pointed out** in His life of obedience to the Father (not My will, but Yours be done). The way of **honor** was basic to an honor/shame society. It was the approved way of life, so it would

naturally begin with children. It is instructive to ponder the parenthetical expansion of the term: hold in respect; value; reverence; treat as precious and with dignity. Even though the covenant communities had been set free (Gal. 5:1), personal behavior was to exemplify honor. Honor is the starting point for love. And love fulfills every law. Paul roots all of his teachings in the Law of the old covenant. But that Law was the seed that had to fall into the ground and die in order for it to reach its ordained purpose: the "plant" (or: Vine) which lives above ground, in the heavens/atmospheres -- the goal which yields the fruit of the Spirit. Children

need rules (house/family laws) until they reach maturity. Then they live by that which was implanted within them. The DNA of the seed is in the plant, but the plant does not look like or live like the seed. Even the roots are a separate outgrowth from the seed, and the seed is consumed by the plant, and normally seen no more. What Paul points to in his quote of Ex. 20:12 calls to mind his admonitions in Rom. 13:

6. For you see, because of this you folks continually fulfill the obligation by paying tribute-taxes brought on by a foreign ruler – for they are God's public servants (officials; officers), men

constantly attending to (staying by and persisting at) **this very thing** [i.e., duties].

7. **Render** (give away in answer to a claim; pay) **the debts** (the duties; what is owed) **to everyone: to the tax [collector], the tax; to the [one collecting] civil support tax, the civil government tax; to [whom] fear** (or: reverence) **[is due], fear** (or: reverence); **to the one [due] honor and value, honor and value.**

8. **You folks are not to be continual debtors** (or: do not be in the habit of owing even one

thing) to anyone, except to be constantly loving one another, for the person continually loving the different one (or: the other person) has made full the Law (has fulfilled law [or: = Torah] and custom)

(or: You see, the one constantly loving has fulfilled the other, different law).

9. You see, the [Law, or Torah, says or prophecies],

"You will not continue committing adultery,"

"You will not continue committing murder,"

"You will not continue

stealing,"

"You will not continue to over-desire (crave; covet; lust)," [Ex. 20:13-14; Deut. 5:17-18]

and if any different implanted goal (impartation of the finished product within; inward directive), it continues being brought to a head, summed up and united again in this word, namely,

"You will continue loving your near one (participate with uniting and unambiguous acceptance with your close one, associate, or neighbor) as

yourself." [Lev. 19:18]

10. Love is not habitually working [the] worthless (poor quality; base; bad; evil; harm) **for** (or: to; with) **the near one** (the associate; the neighbor). **Love [is], then, that which fills up Law's full measure** (the entire contents of law and custom; [the] Law's [= Torah's] fulfillment).

Here in this Romans context, Paul begins with social obligations to the Empire, and then to others within the Empire and the cultural context within which these folks lived. His teachings were to be a life that is lived-out within the midst of the surrounding culture. Note in vs. 7b

the admonition to "honor and value."
Adults were called to honor everyone. 1
Pet. 2:17 says, "**Value everyone** (Honor
all)!" In Rom. 13:8b Paul moves to the
next phase, beyond the basics of normal
human society: be constantly loving one
another, for this has fulfilled law and
custom. In vs. 9 he states the obvious:
things which were basic to most all
cultures of the Empire. Then he includes
"any different implanted goal
(impartation of the finished product
within; inward directive)" which covers
the whole of what parents, societies or
God may inwardly direct into people.
And all of these are summed up in love,
which was the core DNA of the Law

given through Moses, and which "fills up Law's full measure." The new arrangement and the new "law" is simply love, which includes honoring folks -- which was already a basic element of Hellenistic and Roman culture.

Next he quotes Deut. 5:16. This is the practical outcome of lives lived in love which demonstrate honor towards others. The old Law has been consumed by and ingested into the new law of Love. We no longer live by rules, but by the Christ-life of the heart (Rom. 8:2).

4. And so you fathers (= parents): do not continually bring along inherent fervor to (or: irritate; exasperate to anger; bring impulse alongside) your

children, but rather be continually nourishing them within child-training discipline and education, and then the placing (or: setting) of the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh] in the mind (or: as well as the Master's mind-set; or: and the Owner's admonition; or: and instruction about the Lord).

Instruction for how fathers are to behave, and not to behave, is revealing when we keep in mind that the goal of humanity is to bear the image of God and to imitate His likeness. It follows that our Father will **not continually bring along inherent fervor to** (or: irritate; exasperate to anger; bring impulse alongside) His children, but **rather**, He

will be continually nourishing them within child-training discipline and education, and then [be] the placing (or: setting) **the Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh] **in their minds** (or: as well as the Master's mind-set; or: and the Owner's admonition; or: and instruction about the Lord).

Witherington appropriately quotes Lincoln (*Ephesians*, *ibid* p 406) that Paul's instruction here,

“rules out excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation

and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child's needs and sensibilities" (ibid p 338).

Paul, including himself and presumably all the covenant communities, informed those in Corinth,

“Yet, being folks habitually being sifted, separated, evaluated and judged by, and under, the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh], we are being continuously child-trained, educated and disciplined [by the Lord or His agent]...” (1 Cor. 11:32a).

So child-training discipline and education is for everyone, and this is

affirmed in Heb. 12:5-11, where in vs. 8 we read,

“But if you are without education, discipline and training, of which all have become partakers (common participants; partners), accordingly you are really illegitimates (= rabbinic term *mamzer*: child of a prohibited marriage [Lev. 18], or of uncertain fatherhood) and not sons.”

5. Slaves: you folks be continually paying attention, listening humbly to and obeying [your] owners (masters) – those [being such] in respect to the flesh (= this human condition and natural

realm) – **with fear** (or: respect, reverence, = earnestness) **and trembling** (= concerned focus), **joined with singleness** (simplicity; uncompoundedness; = pureness of substance) **of your heart** (= with the core of your being willing one thing [comment: which is Kierkegaard's "the Good"]), **as though to** (or: as if for; as being in, and with) **the Christ,**

We see Gal. 4:1, reflected in the first clause of this verse, as being parallel to the instruction given to children, in vs. 1, above. I owe the rendering of **trembling** as being “concerned focus” to the insights of Ann Nyland (*The Source New Testament*, Smith and Stirling

Publishing, 2004). We see this familiar double expression applied to the general community in Phil. 2:12-13,

“Consequently, my loved ones, according as at all times (or: as always) you folks submissively listened, paid attention and humbly obeyed, not as only in my presence, but further, now (at this moment) much more in my absence – in company with fear and trembling (or: = earnestness and concern) – be habitually working commensurately with the deliverance (or: be constantly producing on the level and sphere

of the wholeness and well-being which are the outcome of the rescue and salvation) **of, or pertaining to, yourselves, for you see, God is the One habitually operating with inward activity, repeatedly working within, constantly causing function and progressively producing effects within, among and in union with you folks – both the [condition] to be habitually willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action, repeatedly operating to cause function and**

habitually setting at work so as to produce – for the sake of and over the pleasing good form and the thinking of goodness in delightful imagination.”

Then, in interaction among community members, Paul uses this same expression with regard to the group at Corinth receiving Titus:

“his innermost feelings and compassions (internal organs; intestines) are progressing more abundantly into you folks, while progressively calling back to mind the submissive hearing and humble obedience of you all – as with fear and trembling (or:

respect and attentive concern) **you received him**” (2 Cor. 7:15).

In 1 Cor. 2:3, Paul refers to his own previous behavior among them,

“So I, myself, came to be with and toward you, and faced you folks, in lack of strength (or: in union with weakness), **and in fear – even in much trembling and agitation of mind** (or: very nervous; shaking with reverence and respect; or: = with earnestness and much concern).”

In the paraphrase of **singleness of heart**, given in the parenthetical expansion, we are pointed to the idea of the heart being “the core of our being,” and with the

idea of singleness being “purenness of substance,” the basic concept of Soren Kierkegaard’s book, *Purity of Heart*, comes to mind – Purity of heart is to will one thing: the Good (by which he means, God). It also calls to mind that Jesus said in Lu. 16:13,

“No domestic (household servant) continues able to habitually perform as a slave for (or: to) two owners (masters; lords); you see, he will either proceed treating the one with less preference and disfavor (with ill will; with disapproval and detachment; with hate) and will continue loving the other

(the different one), **or, he will continue holding himself instead to** (= uphold, be attentive to, stay loyal to and support) **[things] pertaining to one and then proceed despising** (hold a down-oriented opinion and frame of mind toward) **the other** (the different one). **You folks continue unable to keep on performing as a slave for** (or: to) **God and also to** (or: for) **mammon** (= wealth, money, or, the god of riches).”

The last phrase, “**as though to** (or: as if for; as being in, and with) **the Christ,**” brings to their minds the fact that both they and their masters are “in Christ,” as

well as the teaching of Jesus in Mat. 25:40, that service to another is service to Christ. The option of this dative phrase, “as being in the Christ,” reveals that the slave is to view his owner as “being in Christ.” He is also to view his work as being “for the Christ,” and to keep in mind Christ’s solidarity with humanity – that he is performing his duties “with the Christ.”

6. not in accord with eye-service (or: in line with slavery to the eyes [of folks watching]; or: = doing it only when being watched) **as folks desiring to please men, but rather as slaves of Christ, constantly doing** (performing; producing) **the will and intent of God –**

from out of [the] soul (= with the whole inner being: mind, will, emotion, life-force; or: = spontaneously) –

The parenthetical expansion gives the sense of “**eye-service,**” and the modifying clause “**as folks desiring to please men**” completes the picture. It describes actions that are not pure or genuine, but have an ulterior or deceitful motive. Rather than coming from “singleness of heart,” they come from duplicity.

Instead, attentive obedience should be done with a view to serving Christ. They should be **constantly doing, performing or producing the will and intent of God.** The last phrase “**from out of [the]**

soul” is parallel to “with singleness of heart,” above. It should come from pure, inner motivation that aims at pleasing God, rather than humans (Acts 5:29). This phrase also echoes Jesus’ quote in Mat. 22:

**37. So He affirms to him,
" You will continue loving [the] Lord [= Yahweh], your God, in union with your whole heart – and within the midst of the core of your being, and in union with your whole soul – and within the midst of your entire soul-life, and in union with your whole intellectual capacity – and within the midst of your whole**

**thinking process and
comprehension.'** [Deut. 6:5]

All of our actions should stem from our love for God, and should involve our whole being. The **will and intent of God** should occupy our “whole inner being: our mind, will, emotions and life-force.” This is what he means by “**as slaves of Christ.**” The present tense of the participle, “doing, performing, producing,” indicates that it is to be a constant, or habitual, way of life.

7. with a good disposition and intention (well-mindedness; a good will and attitude; or: enthusiasm), **habitually serving** (or: being; working) **as a slave, as for** (or: to; in; with) **the Lord** [=

Yahweh or Christ], **and not for** (or: to) **people** (humans; mankind),

The term **good disposition and intention** (*eunoia*) is from the noun *nous* (mind) prefixed with *eu-* (goodness, ease and well-being). When a person has had a change of mind (*meta-noia*) – a change in thinking that has come from the indwelling Spirit of God – s/he can now have a good disposition, good will, a good attitude and enthusiasm from the “well-mindedness” of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). This person can “slave” for the Lord while enjoying His goodness, ease and well-being. Once again Paul stresses the point that we should live with the realization that God is in folks,

and is in solidarity with them, so what we do to them we do to Him (Mat. 25:40, again). We are members of Christ's body, so we operate as Him, loving and serving mankind.

Saying it differently, in Phil. 2:5, Paul states about (or: exhorts) folks,

“this way of thinking (this attitude and disposition) **is continuously within and among you folks** (or, as an imperative: So let this minding be habitually within you folks) – **which [is] also within Christ Jesus....”**

And then continues, in vs. 7,

“...He empties Himself (or: removed the contents of Himself;

made Himself empty), **receiving** (or: taking; accepting) **a slave's form** (external shape; outward mold)...”

Witherington observes that, “It is important to note that Paul makes children, as well as wives and slaves, as responsible for the good ordering of the household as he does the head of the household” (ibid p 337) – a radical departure from the norm of that time and culture. He cites (ibid n 266) an insightful statement by M. Barth, (*Ephesians*, Doubleday, 1974 p 757),
“When Paul places major emphasis on the contributions of the ‘weaker’ members, in actuality

he takes a revolutionary step. *They* above all shall and will be the carriers of responsibility, changes and progress!" (emphasis original).

This verse echoes the same idea found in Col. 3:23,

"Everything – whatever you folks may be habitually doing – be constantly working (doing business; practicing a trade; earning a living) **from out of soul** (from the whole being: intellect, emotions, will), **as to** (for; in) **the Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ] **and not for people** (to mankind)."

They were being called to live as if they

were the Lord's slaves, doing His bidding, "observing, keeping in view and guarding [His] implanted goals, impartations and inward directives" (Jn. 14:15).

8. having seen and thus knowing (perceiving; being aware; recognizing) **that each person, if she or he may do some good thing** (produce some excellence and quality; [other MSS: that whatsoever virtuous act each one would perform]), **this [good thing]** (or [for] this) **she, or he, will continue fetching and conveying to, for and in herself or himself – as a recompense: a kindly keeping, provisioning, attending and preserving of herself or himself – from**

beside the Lord [= from Christ's or Yahweh's presence]: whether [this person be] slave or free.

This encouragement and motivation may be an outgrowth of Jesus' teaching in Mat. 6:3-4,

“So during your customary making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand become aware of what your right hand continues doing, so that your gift of mercy can continue existing within the hidden [realm; place] (or: may be in hiding), and then your Father – the One continuously looking within the hidden [realm; place] (or: observing

amidst the concealed) – **will
continue giving back to you!**”

Notice that the “**serving or being or
working as a slave**” (vs. 7) is
interpreted here as “**do some good thing
(produce some excellence and quality).**”

This describes the “slave of Jesus
Christ” (Rom. 1:1) in the new creation.

This “slaving” is simply “loving.”

Loving always produces fruit, just as
does “faith” – as we read in

Jacob/James 2:14-17, 20, 26,

**“What is the advantage (the
furtherance; the increase), my
brothers (= fellow believers; =
family) if a certain person may
keep on claiming to continuously**

have faith (or: may be now saying [that he is] habitually having trust, loyalty and conviction), **yet he may not normally have works** (or: keep on possessing actions and deeds)? **Is the faith** (trust; loyalty; conviction) **not continuing able** (constantly having power) **to deliver** (rescue; save; make whole and heal; restore) **him? Now if a brother or a sister may continuously subsist** (or: should begin now in a position under [circumstances]) **as naked ones** (= without sufficient clothing), **and may constantly be deserted**

(or: wanting) of daily food, yet a certain person out from among you folks may be saying to them, ‘Be now humbly departing in peace (or: Continue leading [your life] under [these circumstances] in union with harmony), be continuously warming yourselves and be habitually fed and fully satisfy yourselves,’ but you would not give to them the body's necessities – what is the advantage or resulting benefit? Thus also [is] the faith (the trust, conviction and loyalty): if it should not continue to have

works (include actions; possess deeds; have employment), **by itself it exists being dead** (or: is lifeless; = is a corpse) **in correspondence to its own nature** (in the sphere of itself).... **are you willing to experientially and intimately know and receive insight, O empty person, that the faith, trust and loyalty, apart from the works and actions, exists being inactive** (continues unproductive; [p74 reads: empty; without contents; other MSS: is dead])?.... **You see, just as the body apart from a breath-effect** (or: spirit) **is lifeless (dead), thus**

also the faith and trust apart from actions and works [i.e., the living it out] is (exists being) lifeless (dead).”

Jacob (aka, James) has traditionally been misinterpreted and misapplied as though he were speaking of “salvation by works” versus “salvation by faith.” But he is, in fact, speaking of the same topic as Paul is in our present study: life in the called-out, covenant community. He was speaking to folks that were already believers: folks that should be, **“habitually serving (or: being; working) as a slave, as for (or: to; in; with) the Lord,”** (vs. 7).

This life in Christ is a call to be active

“in Christ,” as Paul asserts in 2:10,
above,

“we are (continually exist being) the effect of what He did (or: His creation; the thing He has constructed; the result of His work; His achievement; His opus; the effect of His Deed): people being founded from a state of disorder and wildness (being framed, built, settled and created; being changed from chaos to order), within and in union with Christ Jesus; [founded and built] upon good works (virtuous actions; excellent deeds) which God made ready (prepared; or:

prepares) beforehand, to the end that we may, could, should and would walk about (= live our lives) centered within and in union with them.”

As to “a recompense: a kindly keeping, provisioning, attending and preserving of herself or himself,” we read in Lu. 6:35,

“be continuously loving your enemies (the ones hostile to you), and be constantly doing good, and also be habitually lending while expecting [to get] nothing back. Then your wage and reward will proceed being much, and you folks will continue being

sons (= have the character and qualities) of the Most High. You see, He Himself continuously exists being benevolent, usefully kind and profitable upon the ungracious, unthankful and ungrateful, as well as the useless, unprofitable, pernicious and wicked folks.”

Jesus told His followers, in Mat. 10:42, **“whoever should give only a cup of cold water to drink to one of these little ones, into [the place of regard and function] that pertains to the reputation and vocation of a disciple, assuredly, I now say to you, he can by no**

means lose his wage or reward.”

We have noted, above, Jesus' words to His sheep, in Mat. 25, and the context (vss. 35-36) in which they were “doing good things.” Jesus gave one expression of the **recompense** to the sheep, in 25:34, “**come into possession of the inheritance of, and enjoy the allotment of,** [the period of, place of, or realm of] **the reign** (or: kingdom; influence and activity of sovereignty).” Here, in 1:13b-14a, above, Paul puts it this way:

“the set-apart Breath-effect of The Promise (or: with the holy attitude of assurance; in the sacred essence from the promise; or: for

the Holy Spirit which is the Promise) – **Which is continuously a pledge and guarantee of our inheritance** (or: Who remains being an earnest deposit, a security and the first installment of our portion which was acquired by lot) – **[leading] unto a release into freedom** (liberation from slavery or imprisonment) **from that which was made to surround [us/you]** (or: of the encircling acquisition; or: which is that which has been constructed as a perimeter around [us]).”

In consideration of the expanded renderings of the verb and noun,

“produce some excellence and quality,” we can see that what Paul is saying can have endless applications, so as to encompass our entire existence here. A life of excellence and quality is a life of love and union with everyone and everything – it is an existence in the realization that God is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

A word about the phrase, “**from beside the Lord,**” considered in the sense of location: we are beside Him (2:6, above; Rom. 12:1). And this means that He, Himself, is present with us, as the paraphrase shows: "from Christ's or Yahweh's presence." It is His presence and being at His side that is the Source

of all **recompense**.

The last phrase, “**whether slave or free**” pictures the reality of the new existence described in 2:15 (“one new humanity”), above, where these cultural categories have been placed on a par, resulting in Paul’s admonitions applying equally to both of these literal stratifications. This also calls to mind Paul’s words describing this new creation “in Christ” where “**there is not** (does not exist) **slave nor freeman**” (Gal. 3:28). The reign and rule of God has invaded human social structures by changing people so that they are able to see beyond society and live above (symbolically stated “**within the things**

situated upon [thus, above] the heavens” in 2:6, above) the existing culture.

9. And now for the owners (lords; masters): be practicing (continually doing) the same toward them, constantly being lax (loosening up) in the threatening, knowing (having seen; being aware) also that their Owner (Lord; Master) – as well as yours – is continuously existing within [the] atmospheres (or: heavens), and partiality through respect or acceptance of faces (= persons) does not exist alongside of Him.

This exhortation once again portrays a level playing field: both owners and

slaves have the same **Owner**, and thus should be **practicing** (continually doing) **the same toward [the slaves]** as the slaves were instructed to do (i.e., **some good thing**, etc.). It also points out that on the spiritual level (and, on an ontological level), that the owners of slaves are, in turn, God's slaves.

Examples of appropriate behavior for the owners would be “**constantly being lax**,” or “loosening up” in “**the threatening**.” So are we to assume that “threatening” was a normal practice for owners? Apparently so – and in the Greco-Roman world they had full control to bring about those threats. Now the most important statement in this

verse is that affirmation that God is **continuously existing within [the] atmospheres**. The “atmospheres (heavens – plural)” is where we live, and as pointed out in the comments on 8b, above, where He lives. So here, **alongside of Him**, in His reign and rule in His kingdom, **“partiality through respect or acceptance of faces (= persons) does not exist.”** He sees and treats owners and slaves alike, for as Jesus told His apprentices concerning the functions within His kingdom,

“The kings of the nations and ethnic multitudes are habitually acting as their lords and owners, and those exercising authority

over them are normally being called 'benefactors.' Yet you men [are] not [to be] thus (or: [are] not [to behave] in this way), but to the contrary, let the greater among you come to be like (or: as) the younger; and the one normally leading like (or: as) the person normally giving attending service” (Lu. 22:25-26).

There is to be a corresponding behavior of equality – in the kingdom life of the community – between slaves (vs. 8) and masters (here, vs. 9). They each have a common Lord-Owner-Master. He treats both of these social groups in the same

way: with the common acceptance of unambiguous Love, for both groups are members of the one Body.

Witherington puts it this way,

“The slave’s service is ultimately to the Lord, and the master’s supervision is to be done with full cognizance that he is accountable to the Lord for what he says and does.... the master’s actions cease to be those of one who has absolute authority over another human being” (ibid p 339).

For the called-out communities, all social stratifications have been elevated:

“within the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens

(or: in union with the full, perfected heavenlies; or, although neuter: among those comprising the complete and perfected heavenlies; among the ones [residing] upon the atmospheres; in union with the celestials; among the folks [residing] upon the atmospheres) **within and in union with Christ Jesus**” (2:6, above).

“Therefore, before the Lord *and* before one another, parents and children, masters and slaves occupy the same position: all must obey (6:1, 4-7, 9). In

this they are equals..." (Barth, *ibid* p 756; cited in Witherington, *ibid* p 339-40; emphasis original). Witherington adds that Paul is "rewriting the nature of the institutions" (*ibid* n 280).

Chrysostom observed, regarding slavery, "God's law does not recognize these social distinctions.... This was not the original human condition.... We have insulted nature by this system" (Homily on Ephesians, 22.6.9, *ACCoS*, VIII, p 206).

It should be noted that within this section, from vs. 1 through vs. 9, all of these familial and social categories are related to the Scripture and to Christ as

the Lord and Owner of each group that is addressed.

As Witherington points out (ibid p 343), the above categories within households are but a representative sample. There are many other relationships that could have been addressed, but these sets demonstrate how love and supportive deference to one another should be the central mode of community life. Paul now begins a new section of general admonitions to the communities which are couched in military metaphors – which lead to prayer and watchfulness. We should not read Paul literally in vss. 11-17, below, in any of the figurative terms used. In the following,

Witherington points to Paul's recapitulation and amplification.

10. **Of the remainder** (or: Concerning the rest; Finally), **be constantly empowering yourselves within** (or: finding or engendering ability within yourselves), **centered in and in union with [the] Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh] – **even within, and in union with, the force** (or: strength) **of His might** (or: the mightiness of His strength and forcefulness):

The two prepositional phrases that point to the **Lord** and **the force of His might** explain the source of **empowerment** and **ability**. Both phrases turn on the preposition *en*, which I have rendered:

centered in, within and in union with.

We are “able” and have “inner power” by being joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), and from having been placed “in Christ,” as Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:30,

“Now you folks are, and continuously exist being, forth from out of the midst of Him – within and in union with Christ Jesus, Who came to be (or: is birthed) wisdom in and among us (or: to us; for us), from God: both a rightwising, eschatological deliverance into righted, covenantal existence in fair relationships of equity in the Way pointed out (or: likewise a

just Act from God) **and a being set-apart to be different, even a redemptive liberation.”**

Jesus spoke of this intimate relationship and sphere of ontological existence in John 15:4, explaining through the metaphor of a branch needing to be joined to and abide in Him, the Vine, in order to have the inner power and ability to bear His fruit,

“You folks remain (dwell; abide; stay) within and in union with Me – and I, Myself, [will remain] within and in union with you. Correspondingly as the tender branch is not being consistently able (having continuing power) to

repeatedly bear fruit from itself unless it should continually remain (stay; dwell) within (in union with; on) the grapevine, in the same way, neither [can] you folks, unless you may constantly remain (stay; dwell) within (in union with; centered in) Me.”

Another picture of ability received from an intimate relationship with the Spirit can be seen in 2 Cor. 3:18,

“But we all, ourselves – having a face that has been uncovered and remains unveiled [note: as with Moses, before the Lord, Ex. 34:34] – being folks who by a mirror are continuously

observing, as ourselves, the Lord's [= Yahweh's or Christ's] glory (or: being those who progressively reflect – from ourselves as by a mirror – the glory of [our] Owner), are presently being continuously and progressively transformed into the very same image, from glory into glory – in accord with and exactly as – from [the] Lord's Breath-effect (or: from [the] Spirit and Attitude of [the] Lord [= Christ or Yahweh]).”

Paul was speaking of the sexual union of a man and a woman in 1 Cor. 6:15-16 when in vs. 17 he suddenly elevates the

illustration to set in contrast the individual and corporate relationship between humans and the Lord,

“Now the person continually joining himself (or: being habitually glued in intimate union; in himself being continuously welded) to (or: in; with) the Lord exists being one spirit (or: one Breath-effect).”

We find the phrase “in Christ” 76 times in the NT. Paul explains the magnitude and extent of this new reality in 2 Cor. 5:17,

“Consequently, since someone [is] within Christ (or: So that if anyone [is] in union with [the]

Anointed One; or: And as since a Certain One [was] in Christ), **[there is] a new creation** (or: [it is] a framing and founding of a different kind; [he or she is] an act of creation having a fresh character and a new quality): **the original things** (the beginning [situations]; the archaic and primitive [arrangements]) **passed by** (or: went to the side).

Consider! New things have come into existence (have been birthed; or: It has become new things; or: He has been birthed and now exists being ones of a different kind, character and

quality).” Cf Rev. 21:5

Another illustration of how we are to empower ourselves through union with the Lord is found in Rom. 8:23b,

“we ourselves also continually sigh and groan within (in the center of) ourselves, continuously accepting and with our hands taking away from out of a placing in the condition of a son (or: [the] deposit of the Son; a setting in place which is the Son; a constituting as a son; a placing in the Son)...”

And in Heb. 9:28b where we read of,

“those (or: by those; to those; for those) habitually receiving (or:

progressively taking) **from out of the midst of Him, [progressing] into a deliverance** (or: [leading] into a rescue; with a view to health and wholeness; into the midst of salvation).”

We are instructed in 1 Cor. 1:7b of a present, existential reality:

“being ones habitually receiving and taking away into your hands from out of our Lord's [= Yahweh's, or Christ's] unveiling: Jesus Christ

(or: from the midst of the uncovering and revelation of our Lord, Jesus [the] Anointed; or: forth from the

disclosure from our Lord,
which is Jesus Anointed),”

And then, in Phil. 3:20-21,

“You see, our citizenship (result of living in a free city; or: commonwealth-effects; political realm) **continues inherently existing** (or: continues humbly ruling; continuously subsists; repeatedly has its under-beginning) **resident within the midst of [the] atmospheres** (or: heavens), **from out of where** (or: which place) **we also continuously receive and take away in our hands from out of a Deliverer** (a Savior; One

restoring us to the health and wholeness of our original state and condition): **[the] Lord** (or: a Master), **Jesus Christ, Who will continue actively transfiguring** (progressively refashioning and remodeling; continuously changing the form of) **our body from the low condition and status** (or: the body of our humiliation; or: the body which is us, pertaining to this lowliness) **[which is] joint-formed in, by and with the body of His glory** (or with other MSS: into the [situation] for it to be brought into existence conformed to, and having the same form

together with, His body, from that which calls forth praise and has the character of His good reputation]), **down from** (or: in accord with; in the sphere of; along the lines of; to the level of; following the pattern of; stepping along with; commensurate with; as directed by) **the inward operation** (energy; in-working) **of the [conditions or situation for Him to be continuously able** (or: with power) **also to humbly align The Whole to and in Himself** (or: to subject and subordinate all things for Himself; to arrange everything under so as to have full

control and to support [it] by and with Himself).”

While this passage in Phil. has traditionally been placed in the future, notice that it begins by speaking of our “citizenship – the result of living in a free city.” Compare this to Gal. 4:26 where Paul speaks of Jerusalem (a city) being our “mother,” and Heb. 12:22ff where it states that we have come to this city and are now there (the perfect tense). We see that the location of our citizenship “continues inherently existing (or: humbly ruling) resident within the midst of [the] atmospheres,” i.e., the same place of which we discussed in 6:9, above, and where we are now

seated with Christ (2:6, above).

Consider next that Jesus Christ “will continue (the durative future tense) actively transfiguring our body (corporate, or, individual/spiritual – *cf* 2 Cor. 5:1 that speaks of our presently having this body/house, ‘resident within and in union with the atmospheres’).”

Observe the phrase “joint-formed in, by and with the body of His glory” – which echoes the union described in 1 Cor. 6:17, cited above. And then see how this is an “inward operation” of His power and ability to “humbly align The Whole to and IN Himself (etc.).” This passage in Phil. is speaking to the same situation (here and now; ongoing) as those

alluded to in the rest of the textual witnesses cited above.

Paul put this all in perspective in Gal. 5:5-6,

“For you see, in union with [the] Spirit (or: by [the] Breath-effect; with [the] Spirit; or: in spirit) – forth from out of faithfulness (or: [the] trust-faith-loyalty) – we, ourselves, continuously (or: progressively) receive by taking away, as with our hands, from out of [the] expectation which belongs to, comes from and which is [the] rightwising, eschatological deliverance within the Way pointed out (or:

forth from the midst of [the] expected hope, which is the state of being liberated, pointed in the right direction, and included as a participant in the new covenant), **for within Christ Jesus** (or: for you see, in union with [the] Anointed Jesus) **neither circumcision continues having strength, for competence or effectiveness, to be availing** (or: be of service for) **anything, nor [does] uncircumcision, but rather, [it is the] faithfulness** (or: trust; faith; loyalty): **of itself continuously working effectively** (operating; being inwardly active

and productive) **through Love** (" [God's] acceptance of the object of love without restriction, in spite of the estranged, profanized and demonized state of the object; the whole being's drive and movement toward reunion with another, to overcome existential separation; an ecstatic manifestation of the Spiritual Presence" – Paul Tillich, *ibid.*, on *agape*; brackets mine; *cf* John 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:4-8).”

This all speaks to our present existence. The last, complex phrase, “**within, and in union with, the force** (or: strength) **of His might** (or: the mightiness of His

strength and forcefulness),” uses synonyms, for emphasis. This is Asiatic rhetoric. Paul is highlighting God’s ability and that He is the source of the power into which they are to enter, and clothe themselves, as he indicates in the following verses. Paul may also have had in mind Josh. 1:9,

"Have I not instructed you? Be steadfast and be resolute. Do not be terrified and do not be dismayed, for Yahweh your Elohim is with you wherever you go." (CVOT)

11. you folks must at some point, for yourselves, enter within (or: clothe yourselves with) the full suit of armor

and implements of war (panoply; the complete equipment for men-at-arms) **which is God** (or: which comes from and belongs to God), **in order for you to be continuously able and powerful to stand** (or: to make a stand) **facing toward the crafty methods** (stratagems; schemes; intrigues) **of the adversary**

(or: = which throw folks into dualism with divided thinking and perceptions; or: from the person that throws something through the midst and casts division; or: which is the person who thrusts things through folks; or: from the slanderer who accuses and deceives; or: that have the quality

of [what is commonly called] the "devil"),

This verse is a continuation of the previous one, and answers to the colon that ends the previous statement. He tells them here how to **empower themselves within, and in union with, the force (or: strength) of His might** (or: the mightiness of His strength and forcefulness), and this is to **“at some point, for yourselves, enter within (or: clothe yourselves with) the full suit of armor and implements of war.”** The verb is a plural imperative aorist in the middle voice. The voice indicates that they are to act on, or for, themselves. This is in fact no different than Jesus

telling His followers to abide in Him. These folks in 1st century Asia Minor were already believers, as were Jesus' first disciples when He gave instructions to them. So Paul is addressing another step, or place, on their journey in the Way. At some point they need to "clothe themselves" with God. I make this statement based upon a reading of the genitive form of the word **God** as in apposition to what immediately precedes it. The **full suit of armor** (etc., the equipment of a heavily armored foot-soldier) is revealed, by this function of the genitive, to be that "**which is God.**" The individual elements which comprise this "panoply" are listed in vss. 13-17,

below. As we will see there, all of these are attributes, traits, virtues, qualities and manifestations of God and are gifts of and from His Spirit. In Rom. 13:12b Paul admonished them to,

“clothe ourselves with the instruments (tools; weapons; implements; [some MSS: works; deeds]) **of Light** (or: The Light).”

Then in Rom. 13:14 he further explains this as,

“clothe yourselves with (or: enter within and put on) **the Lord, Jesus Christ.**”

And in Gal. 3:27 he spoke to those who had already, **“clothed [them]selves with Christ.**”

In 2 Cor. 6:6-7 Paul gave examples of how he and his associates had lived in ways that demonstrated what he is metaphorically laying out in this present passage:

"[We have served and dispensed] with pureness (or: centered in [a life of] purity); **in personally experienced knowledge; with forbearing patience** (in taking a long time before becoming emotional or rushing with passion); **with useful kindness; in a set-apart** (holy) **spirit** (or: within the midst of [the] Holy Spirit; within a hallowed breath-effect; in a set-apart

attitude); **centered in, and with, uncritical love** (or: love that is free from the influence of separating for evaluation; love that is not based on making distinctions, fault-finding or judging) **with and in a message of Truth** (or: centered in a thought, idea and Word of Reality); **within God's power and ability; through means of the tools and instruments** (or: **WEAPONS**; utensils; implements) **of and from the liberated, rightwised behavior and relationships with the fairness and equity of the Way**

pointed out in new covenant participation – on the right hand and on the left."

Then we are instructed in 2 Cor. 10:

3. For though habitually walking about and ordering our behavior within [the] flesh (= in a physical body; or: = in the human condition), **we are not waging warfare** (or: performing military service) **in correspondence and accord to flesh** (= on the level of estranged or enslaved humanity, or in line with human condition; or: = in the sphere of old covenant Jewish reasonings),

4. for you see, the tools and

weapons of our military service and warfare [are] not fleshly (= do not pertain to our human condition; [“are not the weapons of the Domination System” – Walter Wink]), **but rather, [are] powerful ones and capable ones in God** (or: by God), **[focused] toward [the] pulling down** (demolition) **of effects of fortifications** (or: strongholds; strongly entrenched positions [of the “Domination System” – Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*]), **5. progressively tearing down and demolishing conceptions** (concepts; the effects of thoughts,

calculations, imaginations, reasonings and reflections) **and every height** (or: high position; high-effect) **and lofty [attitude, purpose or obstacle]** that is **habitually lifting itself up against** (or: elevating itself up on so as to put down) **the intimate and experiential knowledge of God, and then taking captive every thought – one after another – and leading them prisoner into the hearing obedience of the Christ** (or: the humble attentive listening, which comes from the Anointed One; or: the submissive paying attention,

which is the Anointing),
6. even continuously holding [them] in a ready state and prepared condition to support fairness and equity, while maintaining rightwised relationships from out of the Way pointed out...

Earlier in this letter (4:24) he instructed them,

“to enter within (or: clothe yourselves with) the new humanity (or: the Person that is new and fresh in kind and quality) – the one in accord with and corresponding to God (or: the person at the Divine level).”

These are all speaking of the same thing: God; Light; Jesus Christ; the New Person. In 1 Cor. 15:53 he used different metaphors and spoke of the need “**to at some point plunge (or: sink) in and clothe itself with (or: slip on; put on) incorruption and imperishability, and for this mortal (one that is subject to death) to at some point plunge and sink in and clothe itself with (or: put on; slip on as a garment) immortality (or: the absence of death; deathlessness; undyingness).**”

On offer, in the parenthetical expansion, are two other functions of the genitive that are conflated into, “which comes from and belongs to God.” They do not

come from us, and they do not belong to us. Remember, our lives are hid, with Christ, within the midst of God (Col. 3:3).

As to the verb in this first clause, the first rendering “**enter within**” is the literal translation. The second is the common usage, “clothe yourselves with.” Both of these are metaphors of an existential reality. We “enter in” so that we can “abide/dwell in the Vine.” It is also a call to union, as in the analogy of a man entering his wife – although with Paul’s metaphor of marriage, above, the roles would be reversed.

He continues with the military metaphor in the second half (the purpose clause)

of the verse, and stays with it on through vs. 17. Paul's purpose for the community is "**to stand** (or: to make a stand)" and they are to be "**facing toward the crafty methods** (stratagems; schemes; intrigues) **of the adversary.**" Since this is a focal point of their behavioral stance – both within the communities and also toward the "outside world" – let us consider the alternate renderings of the last prepositional phrase in the parenthetical expansion:

- 1) "from the person that throws something through the midst and casts division." The literal rendering of **adversary** (*diabolos*) is "cast [something]"

through [a person or a group].”

This could speak to people within the group who cast words, doubt, anger, divisive plots, etc., which cast division and splits within the community.

2) “which is the person who thrusts things through folks.” This would speak to a person whose “arrows [are] bitter words” (Ps. 64:3). *Cf* Jer. 9:8

3) “from the slanderer who accuses and deceives.” This could be from within the community, or from those outside who are adversarial toward the called-out folks.

4) “that have the quality of [what is commonly called] the ‘devil.’” We read in 1 Tim. 3:11, “**Women (or: Wives) [of the community], similarly, [should be] serious** (dignified with majestic gravity, inspiring awe), **not devils** (or: adversaries; women who thrust things through folks)...”

5) finally, I have offered a paraphrase: “which throw folks into dualism with divided thinking and perceptions.”

The members of the communities are called to take a stand against the “**crafty methods** (stratagems; schemes; intrigues)” of such folks, facing these

situations head-on – but to do this when being clothed with God. Paul begins here, and continues in vs. 12, a symbolic, apocalyptic four-fold picture of the things toward (*pros*: toward, facing, against, face-to-face-with) which the communities are called to take a stand toward, or against, with their feet firmly planted “in Christ.”

Schnackenburg observes (ibid p 268) that what Paul is speaking of is not different groups but rather the same adversarial forces, which he is picturing in different ways. We saw Paul’s selection of four categories in 1:21 (*cf* discussion there).

Paul is describing a defensive stance in

this picture, not a call to go on the offensive against anything or anyone. In 2 Tim. 2:3 Paul simply put it, **"Experience things of bad quality (or: worthless encounters) together (or: Accept your share of bad treatment and evil) as a beautiful (ideal; fine) soldier of Christ Jesus."** It is a call to stand in their calling, not an instruction to go on the offensive against perceived enemies. The instructions from our Master are, **"Be constantly loving your enemies** (urging toward reunion with, and accepting as persons standing on the same ground, those folks hostile to you; [comment: this could have applied to the

Romans, as well as to personal enemies]), and be **habitually praying goodness over the people continuously persecuting you** (constantly thinking and speaking on behalf of the folks repeatedly pursuing you to have ease and well-being)" (Mat. 5:44).

12. **because for us** [other MSS: for you] **the wrestling is not against** (toward; with a view to) **blood and flesh** (= physical bodies), **but rather against** (toward; i.e., "face to face" with) **the beginning controls and rules** (or: original rulings; or: rulers and controllers; governments; those things or

people in first position; the beginning things or people; the original ones; the princes) **and face to face with the rights and privileges** (or: liberties to do as one pleases; or: authorities; or: aspects from out of existence), **with a view to the strengths of the System** (or: strengths of the ordered arrangement; or: universal powers of domination; the world's strong-ones; or: the strengths from the aggregate of humanity) **of this darkness** (realm of shadows, gloom and dimness; [comment: = ignorance]), **facing** (toward; or: with a view to) **the spiritual aspects** (or: breath-effected attitudes; or: conditions and qualities of a spirit) **of the**

worthlessness

(the badness of conditions; the unsoundness and miserableness; the wickedness and depravity; the evil and malice; the disadvantageousness; the unprofitableness; the thing that brings toilsome labor and a gush of misery) **among those situated upon elevated**

positions

(or: situated within the heavenly positions or places; among the imposed heavenly realms; positioned in union with the celestials and heavenly ones; resident within the midst of added

atmospheres; among the folks
[residing] upon the atmospheres).

[note: this verse could be speaking about the ruling authorities of the religious world of ignorance, with its now worthless sacrifices, or, about the political system of darkened strength which was currently in power, bringing bad situations; Walter Wink, in *Engaging the Powers*, uses the phrase “against suprahuman systems and forces” for part of this verse]

Because of the apocalyptic imagery, as well as the rhetoric of this passage, I have offered a lot of parenthetical expansions in this verse. First read through the bold rendering of the entire verse, and then consider the alternate renderings within the parentheses in each part of the verse. If we keep in mind that Paul is speaking into real potential situations that the communities may be facing, it is for us to attempt to decipher these figurative expressions. It may be helpful to first review the comments on 1:21, above, before studying this verse.

The first clause gives the reason for intentionally entering into these spiritual

gifts from the Spirit, and for clothing oneself with these aspect and qualities of God for protection against non-physical attacks from others -- both from within the community and from the encompassing culture and political or economic situations. History has recorded spiritual and mental abuse committed against members of the communities by the communities' own leadership, or by the religious organizations to which the community belonged. From formal excommunication to social ostracizing, the fiery darts of words and actions can devastate a person that does not "abide in the Vine" amidst these situations. On the economic

and political scene of the 1st century, membership in the trade unions was normally required in order to practice one's trade. These unions had patron idols to which formal acts of worship (e.g., offering incense) was required. To refuse to do this could bring economic ruin. G.K. Beale points this out in his Introduction in, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999, p 29, 30, brackets mine) in regard to "Christians in general that [ran] counter to... the dominant political, economic and religious society in which they [lived]," adding,

"This must be understood

especially against the background of compromise with trade guilds and their patron deities.

Apparently a significant group among the Asia Minor churches did not think it a grave sin to show open expression of loyalty to such trade guild deities. This was especially the case when they were expected to pay their 'dues' to trade guilds by attending annual dinners held in honor of the guilds' patron deities. Homage to the emperor as divine was included along with worship of such local deities. For the culture in general these expressions of loyalty were

part of being patriotic. After all, the patron gods of the guilds together with the imperial god of Rome were purportedly responsible for the social and economic blessing that the culture had enjoyed. Refusal to show gratefulness to these gods was bad citizenship."

The pressure to participate in Emperor-worship (a very active cult in the provinces that was used by the cities to insure political and economic favor from the Emperor) was often thrust upon members of the covenant communities. We have the example of the silversmith trade (Acts 19:24ff) that thwarted Paul

and his message. The Jewish religious authorities of that time often opposed the followers of Christ. Some Jewish Christians endeavored to influence those who had been Gentiles to keep the Law (*cf* Paul's letter to the province of Galatia). Beale again comments (*ibid* p 30-1),

"In addition to the imperial and local trade guild pressures, another problem with compromise arose from the Jewish community.... The antipathy would have been heightened, since Jews would have viewed Christianity as offering the godfearers a cut-rate Judaism whereby salvation

could come without the obligations of keeping the Law." He also cites W. Horbury, "Benediction of the Minim," who, "discusses evidence of heightened and formal Jewish antagonism against Christians in the late first century and thereafter" (ibid p 31 n 14).

These were spiritual, religious and cultural issues that often caused verbal or social attacks against the followers of the Way.

That which they were "**wrestling against**" Paul terms *tas archas*, which is the accusative plural of the noun *archē*. For this reason, I first give the literal

meaning, **"the beginning controls and rules."** A cognate of this word is *archōn*, which was used to designate rulers, princes, chiefs, magistrates, or folks with power. The ruler of a synagogue was called the "Archon," in the Hellenistic cities (*cf The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim, Vol. I, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1953, p 70). So, from *archē* meaning of "first" or "beginning" or "primacy," and with its cognate signifying "rule," we have the idea of struggling against the primary or beginning controls and rules of religion, culture, political entities, and the norms of society. The teachings of Jesus, and

here of Paul, stood against those "beginning controls and rules." The Law no longer governed the called-out communities. The rules of the synagogues no longer applied -- but freedom from this required a firm stance by the communities.

The semantic range of *archē* yields the following uses: original rulings; or: rulers and controllers; governments; those things or people in first position; the beginning things or people; the original ones; the princes. We should note that all of these terms apply to things on earth and concerning this life here. The noun phrase, **the wrestling**, occurs only here in the NT. According to

Ann Nyland (*The Source NT*, Smith and Stirling Pub., 2004, p 375), the Greek word *palē* "is a technical wrestling term for throwing down an adversary and then keeping the adversary pinned to the ground," but Witherington cites A.T. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, Word, 1990 p 444) as pointing out that it also stands for any contest "and was often used of military battles" (Witherington, *ibid* p 350). Its metaphorical use here corresponds to the term "overcoming; conquering" used in Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26 *et al.* Paul's teachings were a central part of his metaphorical wrestling with the controls and rules that had been in place during the previous age of the Law, or as he

intimated, the old creation.

But there is more that they were facing and wrestling. These included being, "**face to face with the rights and privileges** (or: liberties to do as one pleases; or: authorities; or: aspects from out of existence)." Here the plural noun is *exousias*, and its uses are on offer, above. Let us consider what these terms might signify:

a) **rights and privileges** -- the called-out groups formed new social entities that created new social situations, such as described above re: slaves and masters; husbands and wives; new relations to others in the Empire

b) liberties to do as one pleases -- Paul said in Gal. 5:1 that we were set free for freedom. The called out communities had to face ethical situations where folks may misuse or misunderstand the liberty that exists in Christ and use it in unloving ways that could prove to be hurtful to others

c) authorities -- religious, political, military, governmental

d) aspects from out of existence -- this would refer to our human nature or to the existence of situations within social organizations.

The next phrase should also be

unpacked: "**the strengths of the System** (or: strengths of the ordered arrangement; or: universal powers of domination; the world's strong-ones; or: the strengths from the aggregate of humanity)."

a) **the strengths of the System** -- this could refer to the power of the Roman Empire, or to the economic system under which folks lived

b) strengths of the ordered arrangement -- is another way of saying the same thing as a), but could further allude to the religious systems among which they lived -- especially that of the

Law of Moses

- c) universal powers of domination -- speaks to the control and dominating rule of the Empire; as Christianity spread, in later years, it would refer to other dominating religions, as well
- d) the world's strong-ones -- is a rendering that might speak to local magistrates, provincial governors, the Sanhedrin, the Roman Senate, Caesar, military leaders, etc.
- e) the strengths from the aggregate of humanity -- this employs the "human" application of the term *kosmos* (world; system; etc.) and recognizes what Watchman Nee

called "the latent power of the soul," or the strengths of human nature which the communities would encounter in their daily lives. Some folks can be hard and resistant.

So all of these aspects of **the System** are reasons for employing the armor which is God.

But how should we understand the phrase, "**of this darkness** (realm of shadows, gloom and dimness; [comment: = ignorance])"? The phrase modifies the term: **the System** (etc.). Paul is describing all the above aspects of "the arranged order" as being a system of darkness. This would be applied to the

Roman Empire, the current religious systems (Judaism, and the old cult of the Law which characterized the old age of shadows and types before the coming of the Light), the social and political organizations -- in fact, everything that was outside of the kingdom of God and the Light of Christ. They were "**facing** (toward; or: with a view to) **the spiritual aspects** (or: breath-effected attitudes; or: conditions and qualities of a spirit) **of the worthlessness**" and were wrestling against these old orders by living in God's new economy and way of relating with humanity. They were standing firm, with feet well-place in the good news of the Peace (vs.

15, below) that Christ brought through the making of the one new humanity (2:15, above). In this stance, being clothed with God, they were face-to-face with **the spiritual aspects** of the old creation. In the old religions, as well as in the surrounding culture, they looked with a view to breath-effected attitudes of **the worthlessness** that was in all those systems and arrangements. They interacted with conditions and qualities of a spirit of that which can be rendered in the following ways:

- a) the badness of conditions
- b) the unsoundness and miserableness
- c) the wickedness and depravity

- d) the evil and malice
- e) the disadvantageousness
- f) the unprofitableness
- g) the thing that brings toilsome labor and a gush of misery

all of which are located and reside,
"among those situated upon elevated positions."

This last prepositional phrase refers, I suggest, to those that were earlier in this verse termed as *tas archas*: original rulings (that governed the arranged systems); or: rulers and controllers; governments; those things or people in first position (in the **System**). What I have rendered "those situated upon elevated positions" is a literal rendering

of the plural word normally translated as "heaven; sky; atmosphere" (those areas that are elevated above, but connected to, the land), with the prefix **upon** added to it. Keep in mind that Paul has been speaking metaphorically, using apocalyptic language about the need for God's armor, or the armor which is, in fact, God Himself. But he is speaking of situations right there in the everyday life of Asia Minor in the 1st century.

Although I consider the first, bold rendering of this phrase to be the correct one, I have on offer other ways of rendering this term:

- a) situated within the heavenly positions or places -- a Jewish

metaphor for the place of rule or leadership; the temple represented "heaven" (God's home) on earth

b) among the imposed heavenly realms -- the top layer of the stratified society that ruled the people; or: the realm of the dominating spirit of the leaders or of the Empire

c) positioned in union with the celestials and heavenly ones -- an allusion to the realm of spirit in an apocalyptic reference to adversarial forces in the old religions, or within governments

d) resident within the midst of added atmospheres -- similar to

c), but perhaps referring to the atmospheres of pressures, from within or without, that had come with the creation of a covenant community within the previously existing societies; pressures that now came from the previously established systems within the society of each town or city
e) among the folks [residing] upon the atmospheres -- e.g., the synagogue archons, the city magistrates, the officers of any local troop garrison.

You will note that I have purposely left out any reference to the Hellenistic world of demons -- something not found

in the canonical Scriptures of the OT. Neither have I interpreted this passage in light of the dualism of, e.g., a Persian cosmology which had in the inter-testamental period been assimilated by areas of Judaism. According to Witherington (ibid p 350), this passage is rhetorical amplification – not a picture or a listing of four separate groups. Richard Rohr observes here, “... our fight is really against "the principalities and powers" (Ephesians 6:12) – a pre-modern phrase for institutions, nation states, and corporations, which are always organized in their own favor. The problem is not first of

all ‘the flesh’ or personal sin, but systemic evil and structural, disguised violence” (Daily Meditation, 10/27/15).

Before moving on, let us consider Paul instructions in 2 Cor. 10:

3. For though habitually walking about and ordering our behavior within [the] flesh (= in a physical body; or: = in the human condition), **we are not waging warfare** (or: performing military service) **in correspondence and accord to flesh** (= on the level of estranged or enslaved humanity, or in line with human condition; or: = in the sphere of old covenant

Jewish reasonings),

4. for you see, the tools and weapons of our military service and warfare [are] not fleshly (= do not pertain to our human condition; [“are not the weapons of the Domination System” – Walter Wink]), but rather, [are] powerful ones and capable ones in God (or: by God), [focused] toward [the] pulling down (demolition) of effects of fortifications (or: strongholds; strongly entrenched positions [of the “Domination System” – Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*]),

5. progressively tearing down

and demolishing conceptions (concepts; the effects of thoughts, calculations, imaginations, reasonings and reflections) **and every height** (or: high position; high-effect) **and lofty [attitude, purpose or obstacle]** **that is habitually lifting itself up against** (or: elevating itself up on so as to put down) **the intimate and experiential knowledge of God, and then taking captive every thought – one after another – and leading them prisoner into the hearing obedience of the Christ** (or: the humble attentive listening, which

comes from the Anointed One; or: the submissive paying attention, which is the Anointing),

6. even continuously holding [them] in a ready state and prepared condition to support fairness and equity, while maintaining rightwised relationships from out of the Way pointed out, for every mishearing (or: hearing-aside; setting of our attention to the side; or: disobedience) – whenever your hearing obedience may be made full (or: as soon as the humble attentive listening and submissive paying attention has

been brought to full measure,
from, and with regard to, you
folks)!

The sphere of this spiritual activity is within our own minds and spirits, within the corporate thinking of institutions (“strongly entrenched positions”) and within social mindsets that oppose God’s Love. But upon leading these concepts, reasonings and imaginations “into hearing obedience of the Christ,” we can make use of their transformed condition “to support fairness and equity, while maintaining rightwised relationships...”

13. On account of this, you folks are to again take in hand and receive back

(or: at once take up) **the full suit of armor** (panoply; implements of war) **which is God** (or: which belongs to and has its source in God), **to the end that you would have power and be able to withstand and resist** (to stand opposite, over against as facing an opponent; or: stand in [other folks'] place, instead of [them]) **within the harmful and misery-gushed day** (or: this day of bad conditions), **and then accomplishing all** (achieving and effecting everything [the whole]), **to stand firm.**

Because of the situations listed in vs. 12, it is necessary for the covenant communities to have a defensive posture toward the repeated attacks which they

would be experiencing. The verb **take** or **receive**, in the first clause, is prefixed by the preposition *ana-* which carries the meanings of **again**, **back** or **up**. I conflated the first two meanings in the bold rendering, and have on offer the third meaning in the parenthetical expansion. Each rendering suggests a different nuance for our consideration. The first two indicate that we either already have been given this **full suit of armor**, or at least that it is available to us. The meaning, "up," simply means to make use of it, in this military metaphor. As in vs. 11, I have first rendered the term **God** as a genitive of apposition, defining what this armor really is. Also

on offer is a reading as being a genitive of possession, i.e., it is God's armor -- it belongs to Him. The third offering is rendering the noun God as an ablative, which means that this armor comes from God: He is the source of all that is listed in vss. 14-17, below.

Next, we are instructed that this armor gives us **power** and **ability**, but the purpose of these are not to go on the offensive, but rather: **to withstand and resist**; to stand opposite, over against as facing an opponent. The third rendering of this phrase emphasizes another connotation of the preposition *anti-* that is prefixed to the infinitive, "to stand." This third translation means to be in the

place that is opposite to, and facing, our own position. For example, if a person came to help us lift a heavy object, he or she might take a stand on the other side of the object in order to take hold and help us lift it. What I suggest here, is that Paul may be instructing us to take a stand in the opposite position from our own place, as in the colloquial question sometimes offered, "What would you do in my place?" (i.e., concerning some situation). Paul would be admonishing, "Stand in other folks' place" when you deal with adversarial situations. This is one way of fulfilling the instruction of Jesus,

"I, Myself, am now saying to you

folks: Be constantly loving your enemies (urging toward reunion with, and accepting as persons standing on the same ground, those folks hostile to you; [comment: this could have applied to the Romans, as well as to personal enemies]), **and be habitually praying goodness over the people continuously persecuting you** (constantly thinking and speaking on behalf of the folks repeatedly pursuing you to have ease and well-being)" (Mat. 5:44).

The next phrase, "**within the harmful and misery-gushed day** (or: this day of

bad conditions)," was referring to their present, and future, situations -- not just to some specific bad day. I have given three meanings of the adjective in the phrase. **Misery-gushed**, is the most literal and certainly paints an awful picture. But **harmful** may also apply to their situations, especially when they experience violent opposition, as did Paul (Acts 14:19). But a more general rendering would simply be a "day of bad conditions" within which they would need God's power to stand strong and not faint. The definite article was originally used as a demonstrative adjective, so in the parenthetical expansion I have on offer, "this day of

bad conditions." Recall 5:16b, above, where Paul informs them,

"the days (= present times) **are of a bad quality** (or: a gush of misery; unsound; harmful; or: in a sorry plight; or: toilsome)."

The fiery arrows (vs. 16, below) were already coming against them, and here he reminds them that they "continue" having power to extinguish them. Opposition was a constant environmental factor in the life of the called-out folks -- and it has continued that way from the Advent of the Messiah.

The final clause is rhetorical redundancy for emphasis; a restatement of his purpose for this passage which he began

in vs. 10. Here, "**and then accomplishing all** (achieving and effecting everything [the whole]), **to stand firm**" echoes the purpose statement, above, of the second clause of vs. 11: "**in order for you to be continuously able and powerful to stand** (or: to make a stand)..." Again, there is no mention of attacking anyone, or of going on the offensive. The admonition is for them to hold their position, standing within the protection of God, which is simply remaining in the Vine (Jn. 15:1ff), or being "in Christ."

14. **You folks must** (or, as a subjunctive: can; should) **stand** (or: at once take your stand), **then, after girding yourselves**

around your waist (or: loins) in union with Truth and within the midst of Reality, and then, entering within (putting on; clothing yourself with) the breastplate armor (cuirass; corselet) of fair and equitable dealing of the eschatological deliverance

(or: which is the rightwised relationships of the Way pointed out; the Righteousness; the Justice; also = covenant inclusion and participation),

Observe that he uses the verb **stand** once more. This would also mean, "Don't retreat." It would imply, "Don't be afraid of them; you are well equipped to stand-off their attacks." Those **folks** that were

the recipients of this sermon were being admonished, at that very time, to "at once [aorist punctiliar action] take your stand." But this was to be done "**after girding yourselves**" (a middle, aorist participle). This is action that they are to perform upon themselves, just as they are to "enter into," or "put on," the armor -- or abide in the Vine. Once we have been made alive in Christ and have been given the power and ability of the Breath-effect (Holy Spirit) we are expected to be a body (of Christ) that is active in doing the work that He has given us to do.

**"So stand in opposition to the
[or: your] adversary (or: take a**

stand [as in battle] against the one trying to thrust you through [with a weapon, or a word]), **and he will progressively flee** (take flight) **away from you!"** (Jas. 4:7)

Here he begins to list the items that comprise God's armor. Our **girding** is to be **in union with Truth** (Christ) **and within the midst of** [the new] **Reality** of the one new humanity (2:15, above) and the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). The preposition that Paul uses is *en*, and just as I conflated the noun **Truth/Reality** I also conflated two central ideas of this preposition: **in union with** and **within the midst of**. The literal picture of a soldier would have perhaps been that of

strapping on a belt (as the NRSV and NIV both add to the text), but the word "belt" is not in the text. Remember, these are apocalyptic pictures, not literal descriptions. We are to gird ourselves **in union with Truth, and within the midst of Reality**. Union with Christ and being within the midst of Him are two core ideas in Pauline theology. We should not miss this here, and think in terms of the false bravado that is normally pictured in Sunday School material. We need to stay in the mind of Paul, and keep before us the genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Once again I have chosen the literal rendering **entering within** as my first

reading -- which follows the location/place preposition *en* that just preceded this participle. The picture is "putting on, or clothing ourselves with," but the reality is that we "enter" into Him in order to be clothed with His armor.

The description of **the breastplate armor** requires thoughtful consideration. Again, this armor is God Himself, and it is also His armor into which we enter.

The modifying prepositional phrase that defines this particular piece is: **fair and equitable dealing of the eschatological deliverance**. The covering of our heart (core of our being) and lungs (the organ that interacts with the Breath-effect/Spirit) are covered and protected

by the fairness and equity of God's deliverance that was accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Greek phrase, *tēs dikaiosunēs*, has an extended semantic range which we will here review:

- a) which is the rightwised relationships of the Way pointed out -- rightwised means to have been turned in the right direction (towards the Father, and Christ); this term speaks to relationships with both God and others; a literal rendering signifies "the Way pointed out," which is Christ -- the Way, the Truth and the Life.
- b) the Righteousness, or, the

Justice -- these are more traditional renderings; notice that I capitalized these, for they refer to God and His work in Jesus Christ
c) = covenant inclusion and participation -- this paraphrase is favored by some modern scholars (e.g., N.T. Wright) and brings in the ideas of the Gentiles being included (2:12-19, above) and of being placed "in Christ" signifying also being "included" in the covenant and having the right and ability to participate in the covenant communities.

We can see that Paul was not being literal in his listing of the various parts

of the armor, for in 1 Thes. 5:8 he gives a variation on the theme:

"We, on the other hand, being of Day (belonging to and having characteristics of [the] Day; having [the] Day as our source), **can and should continuously be sober** (clear-headed), **putting on** (or: clothing ourselves with; enveloping ourselves in; entering within) **a breastplate** (or: thorax) **of faith and love** (or: which is and is composed of faith and love; = have trust & love as body armor) **and, as a helmet, an expectation** (or: expectant hope) **of deliverance** (health and

wholeness; rescue and salvation; restoration to our original state and condition)."

Here again we see that the breastplate and the helmet are from God, and are in fact God's work and gifts. These metaphors come from Israel's history, and Paul is here weaving the Gentiles of Asia Minor into that history. We read in Isa. 59:16b-17a,

"Then with His own arm He defended them, and in compassion and with mercy He supported, upheld and established them. So thus He entered rightwised behavior and put on an eschatological deliverance, as a

breastplate, and next He placed on [His] head the helmet of rescue, salvation and deliverance..."

(LXX, JM).

15. **and next, sandaling** (or: binding under) **the feet in readiness and in union with preparedness which comes from, has the character of and which belongs to the good news** (or: message of goodness, ease and well-being) **of the Peace** (or: which are peace and harmony [= shalom]; from the joining) – The picture that Paul presents in this clause informs his listeners that what they are to stand on is that **which comes from, has the character of and which belongs to the good news** (or: message

of goodness, ease and well-being) **of the Peace**. We can see that he is speaking to their immediate situations since he is calling for them to be **sandaling** (or: binding under) [**their**] **feet in readiness and in union with preparedness**. This finds a parallel in Jesus' instructions to His apprentices in Mk. 13:33,

"Continue looking, observing, taking note – and be on your guard! Be constantly awake, watchful and alert! Be habitually thinking, speaking and acting with a view to goodness, ease and wellbeing (or: continuously praying)! You

see, you folks have not seen and are thus unaware of when it is the appointed season (or: the fitting situation; the *kairos*; the fertile moment)."

The verb that is the cognate of the word **"readiness and preparedness"** was used in Mat. 3:3, when John quoted Isa. 40:3, **"you folks prepare and make ready the road of [the] Lord"** -- the One Who would bring **the good news of the Peace**. And Paul instructs Titus to be admonishing folks, **"to constantly be ready ones: facing and progressing toward every good work (or: virtuous action)"** (3:1; *cf* 2 Tim. 2:21). Returning to our verse here, notice that they were

to be **sandaling [their] feet IN
readiness and in union with
preparedness**. This prepared readiness
was the characteristic and quality -- and
the sphere -- of the action of sandaling
for their taking a stand. The preposition
is the now familiar *en*: in; in union with
(etc.). Again, this preparedness and
readiness has its source and origin in the
"message of goodness, ease and well-
being." It was for right then and there,
and it prepared them to stand, and made
them ready to do so. The allusion in this
metaphor may be an echo from Isa. 52:7,
"How comely on the mountains
are the feet of the tidings bearer
who is announcing peace, bearing

tidings of good, announcing salvation..." (CVOT).

The *Tanakh* gives an interesting rendering,

"How welcome on the mountain are the footsteps of the herald announcing happiness, heralding good fortune, announcing victory..."

The words **the Peace** (or: the harmony; the joining) is not the *pax Romana*, the situation where there was no war, but refers back to "the joining" of 2:15b, above,

"to the end that He may frame (create; found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder)

The Two into One New [p46 & others: common] Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making (progressively creating) Peace and Harmony (= shalom)."

The good news of the peace which the Messiah brought which erased the distinctions of Jew and Gentile, and joined them together, was the core and basis of what these communities were called to stand upon. It is the character of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul described all this in different terms in Col. 3:9-11,

"[Be] folks at once stripping off

from yourselves (undressing yourselves from; or: go out and away from) **the old humanity** (the old human; = the old Adam), **together with its practices, and then [be] suddenly clothing yourselves with** (or: entering within) **the new one** (the fresh one which existed only recently), **the one being continuously** (or: repeatedly; habitually; progressively) **renewed** (made back up new again, in kind and character) **into full, accurate, added, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight which is down from and corresponds to**

the image (an exactly formed visible likeness) **of its Creator** (of the One framing and founding it from a state of wildness and disorder), **wherein** (or: in which place) **there is no Greek** [figure of the multitudes who are non-Jews, and of those who are cultured and civilized] **and Jew** [figure of a covenant people of God], **circumcision and uncircumcision** [figure for religious in-groups and out-groups; there is no longer a covenant people versus non-covenant people], **barbarian** [foreigner who speaks a different

language], **Scythian** [figure or example of wild, uncivilized groups], **slave, freeman, but to the contrary, Christ [is] all, and within all**

(or: Christ [is] all humanity, and within all mankind; or: Christ [is] everything or all things, and within everything and all things; [note: the Greek is plural, and is either masculine, signifying “mankind,” or neuter, signifying all creation, in these phrases])."

16. within all things and situations (or:

in union with **all people**) – [be] **at once receiving again** (or: taking back up) **the large oblong shield which is the Faithfulness** (or: of Trust; which has the quality of Faith; that belongs to Confidence and Assurance; from the Loyalty), **within which you will continue having power and be progressively able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of and from the worthless person**

(or: evil one; unsound and miserable situation; disadvantageous and unprofitable condition; malicious and depraved attitude; toilsome labor that is gushed with misery).

This verse is the end of the sentence that began in vs. 14 where they were told to **stand**, or take a stand, and now vs. 16 goes on to explain that this stand is to be "**within all things and situations** (or: in union with **all people**)." The word all is both neuter and masculine, so while they are to stand firm within every situation, they are also to take a stand that acknowledges that they are "in union with **all people**." In the economy of God -- i.e., in His reign and kingdom -- we are all one humanity that is "in Him" (Acts 17:28). He is "the joining" that is "in union with" all humanity. Therefore, with feet (our stance and the metaphor for "our walk" and way of life) properly

sandaled, we are ready at once to receive from Him again, or, to take back up the **large shield** so that we can stop and **extinguish all the fiery arrows of and from the worthless person**. But what is the spiritual counterpart of this soldier's shield? We have the answer in rendering the genitive phrase (that modifies this shield) rendered as a genitive of apposition. It is the shield **which is the Faithfulness**.

Now remember, this is God's suit of armor, so this is His shield. Rendering the Greek words *tēs pisteōs* "**the Faithfulness**," we can see that this points not only to God's Faithfulness, but also to Christ's Faithfulness in His

obedience to the cross and to the death. This is our defense which extinguishes the fiery darts. He is our protection, "**for you folks died, and your life has been hidden so that it is now concealed together with the Christ, within the midst of God** (or: in union with God)" (Col. 3:3). All the other semantic terms that are parenthetically on offer also apply to God and Christ -- which is why I capitalized each one. The shield is composed of His Trust, has the quality of His Faith, belongs to His Confidence and Assurance, and comes from His Loyalty. We find in Ps. 3:3; 28:7; 33:20, etc., the soldier's shield as a metaphor for Yahweh's protection. In Gen. 15:1

God told Abraham that He was Abraham's shield. So this is not something that we have to "work up in our spirits," or "get more of." Just receive Him; take Him as both your clothing and "protective force field (to use science fiction terms of our day)." Notice in vs. 12 that we wrestle against **the spiritual aspects** (or: breath-effected attitudes; or: conditions and qualities of a spirit) **of the worthlessness**. Then in vs. 13 we have to take a stand in **the harmful and misery-gushed day** (or: this day of bad conditions). And now we need His protection from the attacks of **the worthless person**. Regarding this last

noun phrase, it will be worthwhile to review each parenthetical rendering of the semantic expansion: e.g., piercing words that come from someone with a "malicious and depraved attitude," with whom you have to work every day; or, the burning disappointments that come from your "disadvantageous and unprofitable condition" in life; or, the "toilsome labor that is gushed with misery" in the country in which you live; or, from an assault by a person that is saturated with an evil attitude (or, spirit); or, the pain of your "unsound" health, or "miserable" financial situation. He can extinguish the fire, and stop the arrow from penetrating us.

17. And at once accept (or: receive and retain) **for yourselves the helmet of the Deliverance** (or: which comes from the Salvation; that belongs to health and wholeness; which is the restoration to the original realm and condition) **and the Spirit's sword** (the short sword from the Attitude; or: the dagger which is spirit; the dirk which is the Breath-effect) – **the one being God's gush-effect**

(or: which is the result of the flow from God; the one existing [as] a result of a flux or an effect of a continuous movement, the source of which is God; or: which is a spoken Word of God; or: that

being an utterance or declaration which is God).

They are encouraged to simply **accept** the **Deliverance**, which includes the health and wholeness that has been provided for them. Its existential application is available. This deliverance brings us back into "the original realm and condition" of the fellowship and communion with God that Adam first enjoyed in the Garden. We see this in the symbolic descriptions of the New Jerusalem in Rev. 22:1 ff with its,

"river of 'water of life' (or: Life's water; or: water which is Life), bright (resplendent,

glistening, clear, sparkling) as crystal (clear ice), continuously flowing (issuing) forth from out of God's – even the little Lamb's – throne [and] within the midst of her broad place (plaza; square; street), and on each side of the river, [is] a tree (a wood; timber; a log; same word used in Gen. 2:9, LXX; figure for “the cross” in the NT) of life periodically producing twelve fruits, continually yielding (or: giving away) according to each month, and the leaves of the tree (wood; timber) [are given] for (or: into) service (nurture,

care; healing or medical service; a body of household attendants) **of the multitudes** (nations; Gentiles; non-Jews; ethnic groups)."

As we consider **the Spirit's sword** (note the genitive of possession; it is God's sword), observe that the "sword" is a response to a "flow from God"; it is "**God's gush-effect**" and God gushes Love to His adversaries, His useful kindness converting them. This "dirk" is the Breath-effect, a blowing of the essence of God. The "short sword from the Attitude [of God]" is "a result of a flux or an effect of a continuous movement, the source of which is God." This can be manifested as a "spoken

Word of God," or, "an utterance or declaration which is God." Once again, it is the result or effect of a movement that God makes. The only sword that we handle is something that gushes forth from God Himself. We see this in the apocalyptic symbolism that is pictured as, **"a sharp two-edged broadsword [that] repeatedly goes out (issues forth; proceeds) from His mouth"** (Rev. 19:15a), which is a figure of His speaking. Paul may again be echoing Isa. in these last phrases. Isa. 11:4-5 promised, concerning the Branch and Root from Jesse (King David's father) upon Whom the Spirit of God would rest (vss. 1-2),

"He will progressively administer justice to [the] low person (make decisions in and for a humble or depressed one) and will continue testing (or: working conviction from a proof for) the low and humbled folks of the Land (or: earth). And then He will proceed to strike the Land (or: the earth; the ground) with the Word of His mouth, and in a Breath by means of (or: through) His lips He will continue lifting up (or: taking back; choosing again) the impious person that lacks shame and awe. And so He will continue being girded (tied or belted around the

waist) with eschatological deliverance into rightwised relationships in the Way pointed out, and with [His] sides (ribs) wrapped with Truth and Reality."
(LXX, JM)

We see the 1st century application of this in Rev. 1:16,

"[He is] constantly holding (or: having; possessing) [the] seven stars within His right hand, and a sharp two-mouthed (= double-edged) broadsword is continuously (or: repeatedly) proceeding (issuing forth) from out of His mouth,"

then in Rev. 2:16 He warns the called-

out community in Pergamos to change their mind and way of thinking, but then continues,

"Yet if not, I am repeatedly (habitually) coming swiftly in you (to you; for you) [again: you, singular], and I will proceed waging war (doing battle) with them within the broadsword of My mouth."

In Heb. 4:12, we find God's Word (*Logos*) described as a sword:

" For the Word of God (or: God's thought, idea and message; or: the expressed Logos from God; or: the Word which is God) [is] living (or: alive), and active

(working; operative; energetic; at work; productive) **and more cutting above every two-mouthed sword, even passing through** (penetrating) **as far as a dividing** (or: parting; partitioning) **of soul and spirit** (or: of inner self-life and breath-effect), **both of joints and marrows, even able to discern** (separate; judge; decide) **concerning thoughts** (ponderings; reflections; in-rushings; passions) **and intentions** (notions; purposes) **of a heart** (= core of the being)."

In 2 Thes. 2:8 Paul offers another situation where the **Spirit's sword** is

effective,

"the lawless person (the unlawful one; the one without law; the man who violates the Law; the person being contrary to custom) **will be uncovered** (unveiled; disclosed), **whom the Lord Jesus will take back up again** (or: lift up; [reading anairew with Nestle, Tasker & Concordant texts; Griesbach & other MSS read analiskw: consume, use up, expend]) **by the Spirit of** (or: the Breath-effect from) **His mouth,** **and will deactivate** (render inoperative and useless; make inert) **by the manifestation** (the

bringing of light upon and setting in full and clear view, causing an appearance) **of his** (or: its; or: His) **presence.**"

Cf my discussion of this in *Peter, Paul and Jacob*, Harper Brown Publishing, 2012.

As we conclude the discussion of the Christian's armor (God's panoply), it is instructive to note that Paul left out of his descriptions "lances" or "javelins" -- forms of darts that a soldier would "thrust" or "cast-through" (i.e., be a *diabolos*, or, "devil") an adversary. *Cf: TDNT*, Vol. 5, p 296. There is also no mention of "arrows." We are not to thrust-at or hurl-at or shoot-at our

"enemies." This is in contrast to descriptions in the 1st century BC documents for "the community of God" in the DSS' *Manuel of Discipline* and *Milhama* -- Sukenik 20 (where we find listed for the army of the "sons of light": lances, darts, throwing spears and "slingers"; *TDNT*, *ibid* p 299-300). According to Albrecht Oepke (*ibid* p 302; brackets added), "In the literature of the Church the word [*panoply*] disappears almost without a trace."

18. By means of all thought, desire, imparted message or action toward having things be well (or: Through every prayer) and request (or: declaration) regarding need, [be] folks

continuously thinking, speaking and acting toward goodness and well-being (or: praying) **within every season** (in union with every fitting situation; on every occasion; in the midst of every fertile moment) **within and in union with [the] Spirit** (Breath-effect; Attitude), **while maintaining a constant alertness** (or: in spirit being constantly vigilant and abstaining from sleep), **also, to that end, in all focus to unremitting and stout continuance** (or: in union with every view to resolute, potent perseverance which brings control) **and request regarding need concerning** (or: surrounding) **all of the set-apart folks** (holy ones; saints; sacredly

different people),

For easier reading and to carry on the flow of Paul's admonitions, I have inserted an imperative, "[be]" in the first clause, but the structure of the text is a continuation of the previous verse by way of present participles. This indicates that what he is saying here about "prayer" (**thought... toward having things be well**) and "requests" are in fact the ways that vss. 11-17 are lived and practiced. This rhetorical section continues on through vs. 20. We read a similar admonition in Col. 4, cited below. Schnackenburg (ibid p 281) suggests this verse as an example of the advice given in 5:16, above. In Lu. 18:1,

Jesus presented them with a parable,
"with a view facing the
[circumstances for] them, [that]
it is of necessity at all times to
be constantly thinking, speaking
and active with an aim toward
having goodness, ease and well-
being (or: keep praying), and not
to give in to the bad or
worthless [situation or
conditions] (or: to dwell within
an ugly mood or a disposition of
poor quality; or: to respond badly
in [something])."

We see similar behavioral witnesses in
Phil. 1:4, Col. 1:3; 4:12, 2 Thes. 1:11,
and in 1 Thes. 5:17 we read similar

instruction,

"Continuously think, speak and act with a view toward having well-being and goodness – unceasingly (or: By habit be praying unintermittingly)."

Richard Rohr has suggested an insightful interpretation for Paul's instruction on prayer:

"To keep paying attention, and remain consciously in the flow is to "pray always."

(Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations, 02/04/2015, cac@cacrationalgrace.com)

Paul's personal requests in 19-20 provide opportunities for the folks in

Asia Minor to extend the **shield of the faith** over Paul and to project the **helmet of the Deliverance** to his head, while “**maintaining a constant alertness** (or: in spirit being constantly vigilant and abstaining from sleep)” concerning his situation. This was a corporate-wide request from Paul. We can be further informed concerning Paul's meaning here by considering his words in Rom. 8:

26. **Now similarly** (or: likewise; in like manner), **the Spirit also** (or: even the Breath-effect; the Attitude) **habitually takes hold together on the opposite side of a situation so as to assist in our**

weakness (or: joins with a helping hand in our lack of strength and infirmity), **for we have not seen, and thus do not know nor are aware of, the thing which we should think, speak or do toward having things go well unto goodness – to accord with what must be** (or: can pray commensurately to what is necessary and down from what is binding), **but rather the Spirit Himself** (the Breath-effect Itself; this Attitude itself) **from above constantly and repeatedly hits the target within us** (or: falls in on our behalf; instead of us hits

within; falls in for and over us; or: makes hyper-intercession) **with unexpressed, unutterable or inexpressible groanings**

(or: in sighs too deep for words; with wordless and inarticulate battle cries of deep emotion; in shouts of victory from the core of His Being).

27. But the One continuously searching (tracing; exploring; trying to find out [concerning]) **the hearts has seen, and thus knows and is aware of, what [is] the effect of the mind-set and way of thinking of the Breath-**

effect (or: the Spirit's opinion and thinking; or: the frame of mind and thought of the [person's] spirit and attitude), **that** (or: because) **down from God** (or: in accord with God; on the level of and commensurate with God) **it** (or: It; He) **continually hits on target within** (encounters and falls in union; obtains within while interceding), **over [the situation of] and for the sake of [the] set-apart folks** (saints; holy ones; sacredly different people).

Different forms of the word **all** are used four times in this verse, and all the participles are in the present tense:

repeated, habitual or continuous action. The first clause opens with a preposition (**By means of; Through**) that connects what follows to the previous instruction (**accept** and take up the **helmet** and **sword**) and explains the means and attendant circumstances with which they are to do this. The first "all" modifies the word commonly rendered "prayer," but which I have expanded from the elements of the word (*proseuchē*): **thought, desire, imparted message or action toward having things be well.** This word need not be just a mental activity. Edersheim gives another historical use of it:

"Where there was no Synagogue

there was at least a *Proseuche*, or meeting-place, under open sky, after the form of a theatre, generally outside the town, near a river or sea, for the sake of "lustrations" (ibid p 76; cf Acts 16:13).

Another means was by making **requests**, or "declarations," **regarding need**.

Following this explanation, in good Asiatic rhetorical form, he repeats these instructions by way of the participle form (*proseuchomenoi*) of the noun: **continuously thinking, speaking and acting toward goodness and well-being** (or: praying).

Now let us unpack the prepositional

phrases that further color-in the picture he is drawing for them:

a) **within every season** (in union with every fitting situation; on every occasion; in the midst of every fertile moment) -- here we should note that he is indicating that there are, and will be, multiple seasons, different situations, different occasions, and special (fertile) moments for implanting the Seed of Life

b) **within and in union with [the] Spirit** (Breath-effect; Attitude) -- this qualifies the thoughts, word and actions, showing the sphere and relationship in which "prayer"

and proactive deeds are to be done; they are to be constantly operating (using the sword) only when clothed with God and when living their lives in the Spirit, with His Attitude!

c) while maintaining a constant alertness (or: in spirit being constantly vigilant and abstaining from sleep) -- here he is echoing the admonition to existential "readiness and preparedness" that he discussed in 15a, above; this recalls the words of Jesus to His apprentices in the garden of Gethsemane (Mk. 14:38), as well as the same common attitude found

among other leaders at that time (e.g., Lu. 21:36; 1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8; Rev. 3:2-3; 16:15, and in other letters by Paul).

Next he lays out the purpose for all this, **also, to that end:**

a) **in all focus to unremitting and stout continuance** (or: in union with every view to resolute, potent perseverance which brings control) -- we should meditate on each phrase and term that informs the character of the action,

1) **in all focus** -- this describes total attention, excluding all else

2) **unremitting and stout**

continuance -- i.e., strong,
healthy, continuous

commitment to the task

3) "in union with" -- this
signifies joined

participation and adherence

4) "every view to resolute,
potent perseverance which
brings control" -- these are
just shades of meanings of
the noun which expand our
understanding

**b) and request regarding need
concerning** (or: surrounding) **all
of the set-apart folks** (holy ones;
saints; sacredly different people) -
- his sentence is not done, but we

can identify his concern for the covenant communities of **set-apart folks**; he continues his purposes in the next two verses, which include requests concerning his continued ministry in his own location.

19. and further, in behalf of me, so that to me a word (or: message; thought; idea; logos) would be given, in the midst of opening my mouth in freedom of speaking openly in public and with the boldness and rights of a citizen, to make known the secret (or: mystery) of the good news (or: which is the message of goodness, ease and well-being),

Their thoughts and impartations toward Paul's situations should focus on God giving him **a word**, i.e., a thought, an idea or a message -- or even the Logos, Himself. He wants this to come from the gush-effect, or the movement, of the Spirit **in the midst of opening my mouth**. He desires the Breath-effect to be active and immediate in his proclamation and instruction. He wants it to be **in freedom of speaking openly in public and with the boldness and rights of a citizen** (of both the Empire, and of God's kingdom). All this is so that he can **make known the secret** (or: mystery) **of the good news** (or: which is the message of goodness, ease and well-

being).

As discussed in 1:9, above, Paul referred to the "secret of His will (etc.)," then in 3:3-4 he spoke of "the secret from and which is Christ" and in 3:9-10 alerted us to **"of the detailed plan and household administration of the secret.... to the end that now** (at this present time), **in union with the highest heavens, God's greatly diversified wisdom** (the exceedingly varied in colors [as in a tapestry or the Veil] wisdom which is God; or: the many-phased wisdom from God) **could be made known – through the called-out community – to the governments** (etc.)..." In 5:32 he gave us another

aspect, using this same term: "**This secret (or: mystery) is great (= important), but I am speaking unto (or: into; with a view to) Christ, even (or: and; as well as) unto (or: into; with a view to) the called-out community,**" and now here, in 6:19 he categorized all of these things as "**the secret (or: mystery) of the good news (etc.).**"

There is another piece of this secret which Paul spoke of in 1 Cor. 15:

51. See (Look and consider)! I am progressively telling you a secret ([the] mystery)! We, indeed, shall not all continue falling asleep, yet we all will continue being changed

(or: On the one hand, not all of us will continue [dying], but on the other hand, we all will be progressively altered; or: We all shall not continue being put to repose, and so we all shall keep on being transformed; or: All of us shall not continue sleeping, but we all will continue being rearranged to be another or made to be otherwise),

52. within the midst of an instant (or: in union with what is uncut and indivisible), **in a rapid sweep or blink of an eye, within, or in**

union with, the midst of the last or final trumpet. You see, the trumpet will continue sounding (or: For He will proceed to be trumpeting; Indeed, it will keep on trumpeting), **and the dead people will one-after-another be awakened and raised up** [A, D and others: will keep on standing back up again; will continue being resurrected] **incorruptible** (imperishable). **And so we ourselves will keep on, one-after-another being changed** (or: progressively be made otherwise, altered and transformed).

In 1 Tim. 3, Paul made some broad

statements about the secret:

16. and so confessedly

(admittedly; with common consent and sameness of speech) **great is the secret** (or: mystery) **of the reverence** (the standing in awe of goodness, with adoration; the healthful devotion and virtuous conduct of ease, in true relation to God):

which is made visible

(manifested) **within flesh** (= a physical body),

is rightwised (set in equity and right relationship in the Way pointed out;
eschatologically delivered

and placed in covenant) **in spirit** (in union with Breath-effect),
is seen by agents (or: messengers),
is heralded (preached) **within multitudes** (among nations and ethnic groups),
is trusted and believed within [the] world (an ordered system; secular culture),
is received back in good opinion and reputation.
(or:
Who [some MSS read: God; others: He] was

brought to clear light within
flesh (= the natural realm);
was shown righteous and
just (= set in covenant)
within spirit and attitude;
was seen by agents; was
proclaimed among Gentiles
{non-Jews};
was believed within [the]
world of society, religion,
and government;
was taken back up again,
within glory – a
manifestation which calls
forth praise!).

Added insights come from Paul's letter
to the Colossians, in 4:2-4,

**"Be habitually occupied
diligently in prayer (or: Be
constantly stout toward thinking
with a view to having well-being;
Be continuing persistent and
persevering by speaking toward
having goodness [in situations])
within an expression of
gratitude (or: thanksgiving),
continuously watching and
remaining awake and alert in it,
at the same time also
progressively praying (speaking
to having ease and goodness)
about us, to the end that God
may open a door of the Word
for us to speak the secret of the**

Christ (or: may open a door pertaining to the message, for us to speak the mystery which has its origin in the Christ – the secret which is the Christ), **because of which** [B G F read: Whom], **also, I have been bound** (or: tied; = imprisoned), **so that I may set it [i.e., the secret] in clear light** (can bring it to light; would manifest it), **as it is continuously binding me** (making it necessary for me) **to speak."**

Other aspects of the secret of the gospel are unveiled in Rev. 1:20; 10:7 and 17:5, 7. Consideration of these other passages where we find the word

"secret," along with a review of 3:9-21 and the attendant comments, above, will bring Paul's reference to the secret of the message of goodness, ease and well-being into clearer focus.

20. over which I am an old man in a manacle (or: on behalf of which I continue performing the duties of an elder and an ambassador – in a chain!) – **to the end that within Him** (or: it) **I may speak freely** (or: openly in public, boldly as a citizen), **as it is necessary for me to speak.**

His Asiatic rhetoric can be seen in his emotional appeal to their sympathy concerning his physical condition and situation -- which is meant to impress

upon their hearts the importance of his requests and the need for them to follow through as he has been instructing them. But, read otherwise (as shown in the parenthetical rendering), he may be making a bold statement about his position in Christ's body, and the importance of his function (as an ambassador that is representing Christ's reign on earth) -- while at the same time picturing the irony of his situation: an ambassador in a chain! We also observe the redundancy in pointing again to his purpose: **to the end that...** He again emphasizes **speak freely**, openly and publicly -- as a citizen has the right to do. Heinrich Schlier points to the use of

this word (*parrēsia*) in Mk.8:32 where Jesus spoke "openly" to His disciples was the opposite of His usual form of speaking to them "in parables" (*TDNT*, V p 881). In Jn. 10:44b, the Jews wanted Jesus to "openly" proclaim Himself,

"If YOU (or: you yourself) are the Christ (the Anointed One; = the Messiah), openly (outspokenly; boldly and publicly, with freedom of speech, as a citizen) tell us!"

Schlier adds, concerning this word,

"It is to be found in connection with preaching the Gospel, Eph. 6:19f. *Parrēsia* is openness towards God (2 Cor. 3:12; [Phil.

1:20;] Eph. 3:12) and also towards men (2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 6:20; 1 Thes. 2:2; 2 Cor. 7:4; 1 Tim. 3:13; Phlm. 8).... Above all, the discussion in 2 Cor. 3:12ff shows that for Paul *parrēsia* to God -- the uncovered face of Paul looking towards Him, 3:18 -- implies an uncovered face which men can see... He who lifts up his face uncovered to God also turns uncovered to men" (ibid p 883).

Following all this Paul wants to impress upon his audience that **it is necessary for [him] to speak** in this manner: he needs to cross religious, cultural and political lines to reach everyone with the

good news. The same message of this verse, and vs. 19, is found in Col. 4:3. We should also take away from this verse an understanding of how Paul was including these Asian communities in his ministry, and thus how he viewed the oneness of Christ's body and their connection with him: he needed them! We all need each other.

21. Yet so that you also may know (can have seen, so as to perceive) **the things that [come] down to** (or: on) **me** (= my circumstances and affairs), **what I am continually involved in** (what matters or business I am transacting; what I'm doing), **everything** (or: all) **will proceed being made known to you [by]**

Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful attending servant within the Lord,

Paul explains that Tychicus, who was probably the person that would be delivering the sermon, would bring the various congregations the latest news concerning his personal circumstances, his affairs and what he was at that time doing -- which they would probably be anxious to hear.

22. whom I send (or: sent) to you for this very purpose, to the end that you may come to know our concerns (or: our circumstances; = how we are doing) and [that] he may call your hearts alongside (assist, admonish, encourage,

comfort and give relief to your hearts; = do the work of a paraclete for the cores of your beings).

Tychicus would be a paraclete unto them, and would encourage their hearts, etc.

23. Peace and harmony [= shalom] **to** (or: Peace from the joining [is] with, among and by) **the brothers** (= family or fellow believers; [p46 reads: the set-apart folks]), **and love** (unrestricted acceptance; [A reads: mercy]) **along with faith, trust, and loyalty from God, [the] Father and Lord, Jesus Christ** (or: from Father God, and {or: even} [the] Lord Jesus Christ; or: [are] proceeding from God – from a Father

and an Owner/Master, Jesus [the Messiah]).

Here Paul gives the traditional closing of a letter: a blessing to the recipients.

His words are also a prayer, an impartation of the core ingredients of the message of goodness. As Schnackenburg

observes (*ibid* p 289), Paul views all within the community, as well as all the communities, as a Family. *Cf* 1 Pet. 5:9

But rather than a blessing, this verse can also be read as a closing affirmation:

peace and love, along with loyalty

[are] with and among the brothers, and are by (the instrumental function of the dative) -- i.e., dispensed through -- the family of fellow believers. The "Peace

from the joining" calls up 2:13-18, the peace that came with the joining of Jew and Gentile into one new humanity. The awareness of this peace (and the joining of the two) will spread to the rest of humanity **"by the brothers."** But notice that these are all gifts **from God.** We get faith and trust from the Father, but His **loyalty** also proceeds from Him to us. Just as in 1:2, above, none of the nouns in the last phrase have the definite article (the); here the personal pronoun "our" is missing from the descriptions of "God... Christ." As the varied renderings on offer show, the prepositional phrase can be read a number of ways. Each noun (**God, Father, Lord, Jesus,**

Christ) is in the genitive (or, ablative) case, as is appropriate for this preposition, *apo*, which has a basic meaning of "separation off" or "motion away from." I have inserted the definite article in two of the offered translations, and in the last one I suggested that the phrase is simply, "from God," and so I supplied the ellipsis (with "[are]") and rendered Father as an ablative, "... from a Father and Owner/Master, Jesus [the Messiah]." Paul saw himself as functioning as a father to the called-out communities that he birthed. Jesus saw Himself desiring to function as a Mother to Jerusalem, as a Hen does to Her chicks (Mat. 23:37; Lu.13:34). Paul

described Jesus as our Brother in Rom. 8:29. Now my bold rendering presents Jesus Christ as God, and as [the] Father and Lord. Here we should think in terms of function, rather than in terms of ontology. In ch. 5, above, Christ is seen metaphorically as a Husband that loves His wife, the called-out folks. He thus figuratively impregnates folks with His Word, and produces children of God. My first parenthetical rendering gives the traditional sense (Father and Lord Jesus Christ), but the meaning of the second potential rendering of the conjunction, as "{even}," points to "[the] Lord Jesus Christ" as being "Father God." I suggest that we refrain from

being dogmatic in regard to Paul's use of these terms. More important is recognizing God as the source of the good that has come to us, and see the other nouns as terms of our relationship to God, rather than as terms that describe Him ontologically. *Cf* similar comments on 1:2 and 3, above.

Evidence that this sermon was to be circulated among the communities is that it lacks the usual personal greetings that would end a letter that was written to a specific community. Then, below, he adds a post-script:

24. Grace and favor, in union with incorruption (or: within a state or condition of being unspoiled, and being

incorruptible), **[are]** with all the people continuously loving, unambiguously accepting and experiencing the urge toward reunion with our Lord (or: Owner; Master), **Jesus Christ** ([the] Anointed Jesus). **Amen** (It is so; Count on it)!

This closing affirmation makes a revealing declaration about the quality of **grace and favor** (which is **with all the people continuously loving our Lord**): that this gift from God is **in union with incorruption**. Grace exists within a state and condition of being unspoiled, and is incorruptible. As we are instructed in 1 Cor. 15:42 in regard to resurrection,

"the resurrection of the dead people: It is habitually (repeatedly; presently; one after another) being sown within corruption (or: in union with decay and ruin; in perishability); it is being habitually (or: presently; repeatedly; one after another) awakened and raised up within incorruption (non-decayability; imperishableness)."

In 2 Tim. 1:10 we read,

"and now (at the present moment), being set in clear light so as to become visible (or: manifested) through the bringing to full light (or: the complete shining upon; the

full appearance in light; the complete manifestation by light) **of our Deliverer** (Savior; Rescuer), **Christ Jesus** – **on the one hand, idling down death** (or: The Death) **so as to make it unproductive and useless, yet on the other hand, illuminating** (giving light to) **life and incorruptibility** (the absence of the ability to decay; un-ruinableness) **through means of the message of goodness, ease and well-being."**

In his letter to Titus, Paul admonished him,

"Similarly (or: Likewise), **be**

repeatedly and habitually doing the work of a paraclete....
[while] constantly holding yourself at [their] side, offering (tendering; presenting; exhibiting) yourself [as] a model (example; pattern; an impression) of beautiful actions (fine deeds and ideal works), [exhibiting] incorruptness (absence of spoil or ruin; incapability of decay) [and] seriousness (gravity; dignity) [p32 & other MSS add: freedom from envy; willingness] within the teaching" (2:6-7).

We also find the term "incorruption" in Rom. 2:7b associated with the Life that

came through Jesus Christ,

"glory (a good reputation; a manifestation of that which calls forth praise) **and honor** (value; worth) **and incorruptibility** (or: incorruption) – **life which belongs to, is connected with, and is proper to the Age** (or: eonian life; the life of and for the ages)."

We again find the term "incorruption" in 1 Cor. 15:53-55,

"For it continues being necessary (it is habitually binding) **for this perishable and corruptible to at some point plunge** (or: sink) **in and clothe itself with** (or: slip on; put on)

incorruption and imperishability, and for this mortal (one that is subject to death) **to at some point plunge and sink in and clothe itself with** (or: put on; slip on as a garment) **immortality** (or: the absence of death; deathlessness; undyingness).

Now whenever [other MSS add: this corruptible would (or: may) put on incorruption and] **this mortal would** (or: may) **plunge, sink in and clothe itself with** (or: slip on; put on) **the Immortality, then will continue taking place** (or: proceed being birthed; successively come into existence)

the word (the thought; the message; the saying) **which has been written,**

"The Death was drunk down and swallowed into Victory (or: overcoming)!" [Isa. 25:8]

"Where, O Death, [is] your victory (or: overcoming)?

Where, O Death, [is] your stinger (sharp point; sting; goad; spur)?" [Hos. 13:14; note: TR reads "O Unseen (Hades)" in the second line, following the LXX and Heb.]

Notice that the **Victory** swallowed **the Death**, and then in the same passage we are informed,

"But grace and joyous favor [is] in God (or: by God) – the One presently and progressively giving the Victory (or: the overcoming) TO US, in us and for us through our Lord (Owner; Master), Jesus, [the] Christ!"
(vs. 57)

The Victory that is given to us and in us is the swallowing down of the Death that was in us. But leading into this discussion of incorruption in 1 Cor. 15 is vs. 52b, following an apocalyptic description of hearing the message about the Messiah (the final trumpet),

"the dead people will one-after-another be awakened and raised

up [A, D and others: will keep on standing back up again; will continue being resurrected] **incorruptible** (imperishable). **And so we ourselves will keep on, one-after-another being changed** (or: progressively be made otherwise, altered and transformed)."

With the coming of the Messiah came incorruption, and the resurrection from among dead folks.

So Paul leaves the Asia Minor communities with the present fact of grace and favor that came "within a state or condition of being unspoiled, and

being incorruptible." This is indeed good news.

Witherington (ibid p 359) offers an insightful quote from G.B. Caird (*Paul's Letters from Prison*, Oxford University Press, 1976 p 40):

"The salvation of man is not to be conceived as the rescue of favored individuals out of a doomed world to participate in an otherworldly existence totally unrelated to life on earth. Man's personality is so intimately linked with his environment that he must be saved in the context of all the corporate relationships and loyalties, achievements and

aspirations, which constitute a genuinely human existence."

Comments On 1 Cor. 15:22

**“within the Christ, all humans will
keep on being made alive”**

First of all, this one verse should not be taken out of Paul's context of the immediate passage. Here is my expanded rendering of that context:

20. Yet now – at this present time! – Christ is roused and awake from having been raised up from out of the midst of dead people: a Firstfruit (= the first of the harvest; the Sheaf Offering, signally the beginning of the harvest [Lev. 23:10]) of those having fallen asleep, and are yet sleeping

(reposing).

21. For since through a person (or: a human; or: humanity) [came] death, through a Person (or: a Human), also, [comes] resurrection of dead people.

22. For just as within Adam all humans keep on (or: everyone continues) dying, in the same way, also, within the Christ, all humans will keep on being made alive (or: in union with, and within the midst of, the Anointed One, everyone will one-after-another be created with Life)

23. – yet each person within the result and effect of his or her own class (or: ordered place; appointed position [in line]; arranged time or order of

succession; = place in a harvest calendar, thus, due season of maturity):

Christ a Firstfruit (a First of the harvest), **next after that, those belonging to the Christ** (or: the ones who have their source and origin in the Anointing; those who are [a part] of the Christ) **within the midst of, and in union with, His presence,**

24. thereafter, the purposed goal and destiny

(the finished work; the embodiment of maturity and perfection; the fulfillment; the result; the outcome; the end and purpose attained; the realization of the perfect discharge; or: the end;

the closing act; the consummation), **when He can proceed handing over** (or: would progressively pass along and entrust; should, by habit, give over) **the reign** (or: sphere of sovereignty; kingdom) **to God, even [the] Father** (or: in [His] God and Father), **at the time that He would bring down to idleness** (make unemployed and ineffective; nullify; abolish; render useless and unproductive) **every rulership of government** (all headship and sovereignty), **even all authority and power** (or: every right, privilege and what comes out of being – also, ability)!

25. For it is binding and necessary for

Him to be continuously reigning (ruling as King; exercising sovereignty) **until which [time or situation]** (or: until where) **He would put** (or: may place; could set) **all the things that have or hold ruin** (or: the enemies) **under His feet.**

26. **[The] last holder of ruin** (or: enemy; quality having ill-will) **being progressively brought down to idleness** (made unemployed and ineffective; rendered useless and unproductive) **[is] the Death** (or: Death, a last enemy, is being presently nullified and abolished).

27. **For you see,**

"He completely arranges,

humbly aligns and then appends and puts under shelter all humanity (or: subjoins, supportively arranges in subordination, and brings under full control, all things) under His feet (= as supporting forces in His kingdom)." [Ps. 8:6]

Now whenever He should say that all humanity (or: everything) has been completely aligned and arranged under full, subjected and sheltered control, [it is] evident (clearly visible) that [it is] with the exception of, and outside of, the One subjecting the whole (or: arranging all things and situations in humble, subordinate,

attached alignment) **in Him, to Him and for Him.**

28. Now whenever the whole (or: all things) may be completely supportively-aligned in Him (or: subjected/appended to Him; subordinately sheltered and arranged for Him), then the Son Himself will also continue being supportively aligned to, fully subjoined for and humbly attached under as an arranged shelter in, the One subjecting, appending and sheltering the whole in Him (or: attaching all things to Him), to the end that God can be all things within the midst of and in union with all humanity (or: may be everything in all things; or:

should exist being All in all; or: would exist being everything, within the midst of everyone).

The greater context of the chapter involves the topic of resurrection, and here, in vs. 21, the context is anthropological -- Paul is speaking about the entirety of humanity. We find an echo of this verse in Paul's elaboration in Rom. 5:12-21.

Verse 22 continues Paul's anthropology and "all humans" is the subject of each of the parallel clauses (*pantes* taken as a nominative, masculine). The topic under discussion is not "believers" or "the church," but rather, "humans." We see him expanding Christ's rule to "all the

things..." in vs. 25, which vs. 26 instructs us as including "the Death." In his quote of Ps. 8:6 (vs. 27) he returns to speaking of "all humanity" (taking *panta* as masculine, in both uses, since this fits best his anthropological theme) as he focuses on "the purposed goal and destiny" (vs. 24, *telos*). In vs. 28 he again expands to "the whole" (*ta panta*) which calls to mind Rom. 11:36a. But here, in 28b, he uses the most inclusive term to express the final situation: "to the end that [a purpose clause introduced by *hina*] God can be all things within the midst of and in union with all humanity (*panta* taken as a masculine -- again in line with his

anthropological theme)." Note that I also render this final *panta* as a neuter in the parenthetical expansion, ending with the offer of a simple inclusive/ambiguous "All in all," and then, "everything, within the midst of everyone (here rendering *pasin* as a masculine, corporate noun)." So it is within this "all" context that we must first exegete vs. 22. Here we find the rhetoric of parallelism with contrast as an extension of Paul's statement in vs. 21 of "resurrection of dead people" that has come "through a Person (or: a Human)," meaning, through Christ. The contrasts are between Adam and Christ, and between "keep on dying" and "will keep on being made alive." I have

rendered this second clause as a durative future, to be in parallel with the durative present tense of the first clause. So the statements of the two clauses are:

a) "all humans keep on dying" -- modified by the prepositional phrase, "within Adam"

b) "all humans keep on being made alive" -- modified by the prepositional phrase, "within the Christ."

We must next consider the parallel functions of the contrasting conjunctions: "just as" -- "in the same way, also."

Now to the hermeneutics: what do these two conjunctions mean? We are informed of the first one in Paul's

argument of Rom. 5:12ff. There, in vs. 15 we read,

“Yet to the contrary, [it is] not in the same way [with] the effect of grace (result of favor; the thing graciously given) as [it was with] the effect of the fall to the side (or: = the result of the stumbling aside and the offence is not simply balanced out by the result of the joyful gift of grace – the gratuitous favor). For you see, since (or: if) by (or: in) the effect of the fall to the side (the result of the stumbling aside and the offense) of the one THE MANY (= the mass of humanity) died, MUCH

MORE (= infinitely greater) [is] **the Grace of God** (God's Grace; favor which is God), **and the gift** (or: gratuitous benefit) **within Grace – a joy-producing act of Favor – by that of the One Man, Jesus Christ, surrounded** (or: encircles) **into encompassing superabundance** (extraordinary surplus and excess) **into THE MANY** (= the mass of humanity).”

Then further on in Rom 5, we are instructed:

18. Consequently, then, as [it was] through the effect of one fall to the side (or: the result of one offense) **[coming] into all**

mankind ([permeating] into all humanity; = [extending] into the whole race) [**bringing them**] into a **commensurate effect of a decision** (a corresponding result of a negative evaluation which fell in line with the decision and followed the pattern which divided [us] down), **THUS ALSO** and in the same way, **through one just-effect and the result of one right act which set [all humanity] right and in accord with the Way pointed out** (through the result of one act of justice, equity and solidarity; through a single decree creating

rightwised relationships; through one effect of rightwising which turns [people] in the right direction) **[it comes] into ALL MANKIND** (all humanity; all people; = the whole race) **[bringing them] into a setting right of Life and a liberating rightwising from Life [including them in covenant community]**

(or: Life's turning [folks] in the right direction resulting in right relating, equity and justice which is in accord with the Way pointed out; a making of situations and conditions to be right,

which pertain to Life; an expressing of fairness and equity, which is LIFE; a rightly directed solidarity coming from Life; a just-acting deliverance having the qualities of life).

19. For you see, JUST AS through the unwillingness to listen, or to pay attention, resulting in disobedience (or: the erroneous hearing leading to disobedience) of the one person THE MANY (= the mass of humanity) were rendered (established; constituted; placed down and made to be) sinners

(failures; ones who diverge and miss the target), **THUS – in the same way – ALSO through the submissive listening and paying attention resulting in obedience of the One, THE MANY** (= the mass of humanity) **will continue being rendered “set-right folks”**

(placed down and established [to be] just ones; constituted folks who have been rightwised to be people in the Way pointed out; made righteous ones who are guilt-free, fair, equitable, and rightly-turned in the solidarity of

covenant relationships).

20. Now Law and custom at one point entered in alongside (or: intruded into the situation by the side) **to the end that the effect of the fall to the side** (or: so that the result of the offense and the stumbling aside) **would increase to be more than enough** (should greatly abound and become more intense). **But where the Sin** (the failure; the divergence and missing of the target) **increases** (or: abounded to be more than enough; becomes more intense) **THE GRACE** ("the act producing happiness, which is granted as a

favor" – Jim Coram) **at once**
super-exceeds (or: hyper-
exceeded) **over and above,**
surrounding to excessive
abundance and overflow,
21. **to the end that JUST AS the**
Sin (the failure; the erroneous act;
the deviation and digression
which issued in missing the goal)
at one point reigned (or: ruled as
king; exercised sovereign sway)
within, and in union with, the
Death, THUS SO (or: in THIS
way) **also the Grace and joyous**
favor would reign (should rule as
king; can exercise sovereign
sway) **through an eschatological**

deliverance that created rightwiseness (or: by means of being rightly-turned into an existence with equity in [covenantal] solidarity of right relationships which accord to the Way; through a liberating Justice-[expression]) **[which leads] into Life which belongs to, pertains to and has the characteristics of the Age** (or: eonian life; Life of the Age [of Messiah]; a life for the ages) – **through Jesus Christ, our Owner** (Lord; Master).

This is anthropology; it is race-wide in its extent. The next question must be whether the second clause should be

read in light of these two conjunctions. To introduce into the text theological qualifiers is to participate in eisegesis. The text does not limit the first clause, nor does it limit the parallel second clause. An unbiased reading of this verse takes the subjects of both clauses (all humans) as being the same group of humans (all). The contrasting prepositional phrases inform us as the reason for dying as opposed to the reason for being made alive. If we move further into Paul's discussion of resurrection in this chapter, we find other sets of contrasting parallels that speak to this same topic: vss. 45 and 47. Here Paul reintroduces Adam (first and

last) and humanity (first and second). We should not miss the "divine passive" of vs. 44a,

"It is habitually (continually; repeatedly; presently) **being sown a body having the qualities and characteristics of a soul** (a soulish body; or: = a body animated by soul; or: = a natural entity); **it is habitually** (repeatedly; constantly; presently; one after another) **being awakened and raised up a spiritual body** (a body having the qualities and characteristics of the Breath-effect; or: = a spiritual entity)."

This is all the work of God. God gives birth to us as a part of the first Adam, and also gives birth to us as a part of the eschatos (last). Again, there is no work of humans indicated in this later passage: no act of believing, receiving, assenting, etc. This passage is again anthropology: the old humanity; the new humanity. Adam was the "federal," or representative head of the dead humanity; Christ is the "federal," or representative, head of the second humanity. In Paul's arguments we see no choice to be in Adam, and we observe no choice to be in Christ.

Verse 22 must be read in its context. Beginning with vs. 20 we read that,

"Christ is roused and awake from having been raised up from out of the midst of dead people: a Firstfruit..." We can read *en* in vs. 22 as "in union with." Thus, we can understand the last clause of vs. 22 as speaking of being "in union with Christ" who is now "raised up from out of the midst of dead people." There is a connection, in the text, of Christ's resurrection with all humans being one after another (the durative future) made alive, because of the union that God has made between all humans and the Last Adam. But this comes about (as we have seen throughout history, since His resurrection), "each person within the result and effect of his or her own class

(or: ordered place; appointed position [in line]; arranged time or order of succession; = place in a harvest calendar, thus, due season of maturity)."

Should Christians Be Involved in “Spiritual Warfare”?

For all of my adult life I have either heard Pentecostal folks speak about, or I have read about the subject of, “spiritual warfare” in which the “mature Christian” should be engaged. The purpose of such activity is said to advance the kingdom of God, to set people and/or cities and geographic areas free from demonic influence, to overthrow spiritual “principalities and powers,” and to “cast down spiritual strongholds” that have people or geographic areas in bondage to satan or

his “kingdom.”

The activities themselves include prayer, fasting, speaking in tongues, walking the perimeter of certain areas (“placing one’s feet upon” that section of land so as to “claim it” for the kingdom of God), “intercession” (which could be a combination of all of these, or could be lying down in silent prayer or in uttering Spirit-inspired utterances and/or groaning, or in performing some activity which the Spirit brings to the person’s mind to do), voicing proclamations, and/or entering into spiritual experiences. This list could probably be expanded, but I am only mentioning these in order to define the subject of this

study.

Now to my questions: Is there any basis in the NT for Christians to be so involved, in order to attain the purposes listed in paragraph one, above? Do these activities work? Is it the will of God for us to do this? Is “spiritual warfare” a legitimate aspect of the kingdom of God? First of all, we do not find the specific phrase “spiritual warfare” in the Scriptures, and the term “warfare,” as a noun (*strateia*), is used only twice in the NT: 2 Cor. 10:4, and 1 Tim. 1:18.

Strateia means: military service; the activity of an army or a soldier; warfare. The verb (*Strateuomai*) is used in the same contexts of these verses, plus five

other places. Lu. 3:14 uses it of the soldiers asking questions of John the Baptist; 1 Cor. 9:7 uses it as a point of comparison, along with vineyard workers and shepherds; 2 Tim. 2:4 uses it for an illustration; Jas. 4:1 uses it metaphorically of conflicts about pleasures or sensual enjoyment among the members of the body; and 1 Pet. 2:11 speaks of “abstaining from the fleshly lusts which are warring against the soul.”

So it would seem that “warfare” in the sense described in the first two paragraphs, above, are confined to 2 Cor. 10:3-4, and 1 Tim. 1:18. This does not seem to me to be a very strong

foundation upon which to build teachings about which a large section of Christianity are encouraged to be consistently involved.

Let us consider the verses In 2 Cor. 10:

3. For though habitually walking about (= living our lives and ordering our behavior) **within [the] flesh** (= physical body; = natural inner being), **we are not waging warfare** (or: performing military service) **in correspondence and accord to flesh** (= on the level of estranged humanity, or in line with human principles),

4. for you see, the tools and

weapons of our military service and warfare [are] not fleshly (= do not pertain to our human condition; [“are not the weapons of the Domination System” – Walter Wink]), **but rather, [are] powerful ones and capable ones in God** (or: by God), **[focused] toward [the] pulling down** (demolition) **of fortifications** (strongholds; bulwarks; strongly entrenched positions [of the “Domination System” – Walter Wink]),

5. progressively tearing down and demolishing conceptions (concepts; the effects of thoughts,

calculations, imaginations, reasonings and reflections) **and every height** (or: high position) **and lofty** [attitude, purpose or obstacle] **that is habitually lifting itself up against** (or: elevating itself up on so as to put down) **the intimate and experiential knowledge of God, and then taking captive every thought – one after another – and leading them prisoner into the hearing obedience of the Christ** (or: the humble attentive listening, which comes from the Anointed One; or: the submissive paying attention, which is the

Anointing),

6. even continuously holding [them] in a ready state and prepared condition to support fairness and equity, while maintaining rightwised relationships from out of the Way pointed out, for every mishearing (or: hearing-aside; setting of our attention to the side; or: disobedience) – whenever your hearing obedience may be made full (or: as soon as the humble attentive listening and submissive paying attention has been brought to full measure, from, and with regard to, you

folks)!

Verse 4 gives the focus of our “military service and warfare”: pulling down fortifications and entrenched positions.

Vs. 5 defines these “fortifications and entrenched positions”: conceptions, reasonings, imaginations, etc., or high and lofty thoughts, attitudes, purposes or obstacles.

Paul further identifies these “strongholds and fortifications” as things which “[lift themselves] up against the intimate and experiential knowledge of God.” Then he further describes this “warfare” as: “taking captive every thought,” and bringing our thoughts as prisoners into the hearing obedience (or: humble

attentive listening) of the Christ. Note that it is Christ's attentive listening, His hearing obedience, to which these thoughts are to be made prisoners. Or, put another way, it is the submissive paying attention, which is the Anointing, which makes our thoughts captive to Christ.

Now verse 6 expands this by saying that it means to continually hold our thoughts in a ready state, and in a prepared condition, with a view to supporting fairness and equity while maintaining relationships that are turned in the right direction: i.e., toward Christ. And this "warfare" applies to "every mishearing or setting of our attention to the side," or

to every disobedience.

It would seem, then, that this “warfare” takes place within our own being, and regards our thoughts, our concepts and our hearing of God in regard to obedience, or that it involves activities aimed toward positively affecting the inner beings of other folks. In this context there is no clear evidence that this warfare is aimed at other beings in the spiritual realm. It involves human beings, or it is to be aimed at spiritual systems that are created by human beings: thoughts and concepts.

So what about 1 Tim. 1:18?

18. I am presently placing this passed-on message (notification;

announcement) **to your side, child Timothy, down from the preceding prophecies upon you** (or: in accord with the prophecies habitually leading forth upon you), **to the end that you may constantly perform military service** (or: do battle; perform warfare) **within them** (or: in union with them) – **the beautiful** (fine; ideal) **military service** (or: battle; warfare),

19. **while constantly holding** (or: having) **faith** (and: trust) **and a good conscience** (a profitable knowing-together) – **which some** (or: certain ones), **thrusting away**

(or: pushing and driving away),
**experienced shipwreck about
the faith** (or: concerning [their]
trust):

The context of these verses are:
prophecies upon Timothy, and the area
of faith and trust in connection with a
good conscience. There is no hint about
warring against principalities and
powers or “spiritual rulers over cities or
countries.”

In the next verse, Paul gives an example
of two people (not spirits) who had
become shipwrecked in this area of their
lives:

**20. of whom are Hymenaeus and
Alexander, whom I gave (or:**

hand) over to the adversary (or: satan) to the end that they would be child-trained, educated and disciplined [so as] not to constantly blaspheme (speak abusively or slanderously).

Now here is a fine example of Paul's warfare: he hands these two over to the adversary (Greek: *satan*). He is not fighting against satan, but rather using it (or: whatever it was that Paul was referring to as “the adversary”). And he had a positive end in view for these folks: child-training, education and discipline!

The same theme of these verses is carried on in chapter 2 (an artificial

division in this letter):

- 1. Consequently I am habitually calling you alongside to encourage, counsel and exhort you to first of all be constantly making petitions for needs, prayers** (speaking and thinking toward things being well), **encounters** (or: intercessions; meetings within situations to converse or hit and obtain the objective), **[and] expressions of gratitude** (or: of the goodness of grace and favor) **over** (or: on behalf of; for) **all mankind** (humanity) –
- 2. over** (or: for) **kings and all**

those being folks within a position of holding control over (or: above) **[others]** (or: being in superiority or high station), **to the end that we may continuously lead** (or: carry through) **a course of life that is still – at rest** (free from all agitation or disturbance with tranquility arising from without), **and also quiet – peaceable** (gentle, exciting no disturbance in others, with tranquility arising from within) **in all reverence** (pious and devout relations with everything) **and majestic seriousness** (dignity and gravity which inspire awe).

Verse 1 is an extension of the thoughts expressed in vs. 18, above (alluding to warfare), and is giving examples of the same: making petitions, prayers, expressions of gratitude – and all these over the situation of and on behalf of all humanity. Then verse 2 gives specifics for whom the petitions, prayers and gratitude are to be expressed: kings and those in a position of control over others.

Now what is the purpose of this warfare? “...**to the end that we may continuously lead** (or: carry through) **a course of life that is still – at rest** (free from all agitation or disturbance with tranquility arising from without), **and**

also quiet – peaceable (gentle, exciting no disturbance in others, with tranquility arising from within) **in all reverence** (pious and devout relations with everything) **and majestic seriousness** (dignity and gravity which inspire awe).”

These, my friends, are the contexts and focuses of the warfare that Paul encouraged. James, cited above, used the metaphor to refer to corporate conflicts about pleasure and sensual enjoyments, while Peter used it about internal dealing with internal lusts. But what about Paul’s metaphors in Eph. 6? He speaks of us “wrestling” there, which is another picture of our spiritual

conflicts. So let us look at this passage. The first nine verses are admonitions to children, to fathers, to slaves, and finally to owners. These admonitions all applied to situations in this life, primarily in the natural realm. The next verses give specific examples of how to bring the previous admonitions into our lives, starting with an overview in vs. 10,

10. Of the remainder (or: Finally), be constantly empowering yourselves (engendering ability within yourselves) within, and in union with, [the] Lord (= Christ or Yahweh) and within, and in union

with, the force (or: strength) **of His might** (or: the mightiness of His strength and forcefulness):

This is how to do what Paul has just been admonishing. Empower yourself within, and in union with, “the force of His might.” But how do we do that? Paul goes on to explain:

11. you folks must enter within (or: clothe yourselves with) **the full suit of armor and implements of war** (panoply; the complete equipment for men-at-arms) **which is God** (or: which comes from and belongs to God), **in order for you to be continuously able and powerful**

to stand (or: to make a stand)
facing toward the crafty
methods (stratagems) **of the**
adversary (or: that which throws
folks into dualism with divided
thinking and perceptions; or: the
person that throws something
through the midst and casts
division; the one who thrusts
things through folks; the slanderer
who accuses and deceives; or,
commonly called: the "devil"),
12. **because for us** [other MSS:
for you] **the wrestling is not**
against (toward; with a view to)
blood and flesh (= physical
bodies), **but rather against**

(toward; i.e., "face to face" with)
the beginning controls and rules
(or: original rulings; or: rulers
and controllers; governments;
those things or people in first
position; the beginning things or
people; the original ones; the
princes) **and face to face with**
the rights and privileges (or:
authorities; or: aspects from out of
existence), **with a view to the**
strengths of the System (or:
strengths of the order; or:
universal powers; the world's
strong-ones) **of this darkness**
[comment: = ignorance], **facing**
(toward; or: with a view to) **the**

spiritual aspects (or: breath-effected attitudes; or: conditions and qualities of a spirit) **of the worthlessness** (the badness of conditions; the unsoundness and miserableness; the wickedness and depravity; the evil and malice; the disadvantageousness; the unprofitableness; the thing that brings toilsome labor) **situated within the heavenly positions or places** (or: among the imposed heavenly realms; positioned in union with the celestials and heavenly ones).

[note: this verse could be speaking about the ruling authorities of the religious

world of ignorance, with its now worthless sacrifices, or, about the political system of darkened strength which was currently in power, bringing bad situations; Walter Wink, in *Engaging the Powers*, uses the phrase “against suprahuman systems and forces” for part of this verse]

13. On account of this, you folks receive back again (or: at once take up) the full suit of armor (panoply; implements of war) which is God (or: which belongs to and has its source in God), to the end that you would have power (or: be able) to withstand and resist (to stand opposite,

over against as facing an
opponent; or: stand in [other
folks'] place, instead of [them])
within the harmful day (the day
of bad conditions), **and**
accomplishing all (achieving and
effecting everything [the whole]),
to stand firm.

Here, then, is the purpose of what Paul
is saying regarding this wrestling: to
stand firm – to not be moved from your
position of living in faith and love, and
to accomplish what he admonished in vs.
1-9. We have domination systems to deal
with in our cultures. Slavery was just
one of those systems in place during
Paul's day. Upon sharing this study with

John Gavazzoni, in reference to the “stand firm” of vs. 13, above, he referenced Gal. 5:1,

“For the [aforementioned] freedom, Christ immediately set us free (or: [The] Anointed One at once frees us in, to, for and with freedom)! **Keep on standing firm, therefore, and do not again be habitually held within a yoke of slavery** (or: a cross-lever [of a pair of scales] whose sphere is bondage)

(or: Continuously stand firm, then, in the freedom [to which the] Anointing sets us free, and let not

yourselves be progressively confined again by a yoke pertaining to servitude)!”

So this is where we are to stand, in freedom, with Christ's saving deliverance covering our thinking (the helmet), His rightwised life surrounding our heart, His truth and reality girding us, His faith and trust protecting us from incoming lobs from various adversarial situations, our feet shod with the readiness of His good news – which is PEACE! – and our actions (typified by the hand) filled with God's utterances. Returning to Eph. 6, again:

14. **You folks stand** (or: at once

take your stand), **then, after girding yourselves around your waist** (or: loins) **in union with Truth and within the midst of Reality, and then, entering within** (putting on; clothing yourself with) **the breastplate armor** (cuirass; corslet) **of fair and equitable dealing** (or: which is the rightwised relationships of the Way pointed out; the Righteousness; the Justice),
15. **and next sandaling** (or: binding under) **the feet in readiness and preparedness which comes from and has the character of and which belongs**

to the good news (or: message of goodness, ease and wellbeing) **of the Peace** (or: which comes from and has the character of peace and harmony [= shalom]; or: which is Peace) –

16. within all things and situations (or: in union with all people) – **[be] at once receiving again** (or: taking back up) **the large oblong shield of the Faith** (or: Trust; Confidence; Faithfulness; Assurance; Loyalty), **within which you will have power** (or: be able) **to extinguish all the fiery arrows of the worthless person** (or: evil one;

unsound and miserable situation; disadvantageous and unprofitable condition; malicious and depraved attitude; toilsome labor).

17. And at once accept (or: receive) for yourselves the helmet of the Deliverance (or: which comes from the Salvation; that belongs to health and wholeness; which is the restoration to the original realm and condition) and the Spirit's sword (short sword; dirk; or: the dagger which is spirit; the dirk which is the Breath-effect) – the one being God's spoken Word

(or: an utterance or declaration which is God).

Notice that all of this armor is defensive of our inner being, with the exception of the Spirit's (God's) declaration: the message of good news which Paul proclaimed in the first chapters of this epistle. It can also refer to words which the Spirit speaks in our hearts, or which God prompts us to speak to others. It is not a sword to fight demons, but rather a word of goodness and release to those who would use their tongues to send barbed words against us. In speaking of this "utterance from God," this "sword," note how the writer of Hebrews sets the environment of its work, in 4:12,

“For the Word of God (or: God's thought, idea and message; or: the Word which is God) **[is] living** (or: alive), **and active** (working; operative; energetic; at work; productive) **and more cutting above every two-mouthed sword, even passing through** (penetrating) **as far as a dividing** (or: parting; partitioning) **of soul and spirit** (or: of inner self-life and breath-effect), **both of joints and marrows, even able to discern** (separate; judge; decide) **concerning thoughts** (ponderings; reflections; in-rushings; passions) **and intentions** (notions;

purposes) **of heart** (= core of the being).”

Its work is in the core of our beings: our soul and spirit, and our structural members. It concerns “thoughts and intentions.” Reminds us of 2 Cor. 10:4, above, does it not? But let us continue with our Eph. Text:

18. By means of all thought, desire or imparted message toward things being well (or: Through every prayer) and request (or: declaration) regarding need, [be] folks continuously speaking toward well-being (or: praying) within every season (in union with

every fitting situation; on every occasion) **within and in union with [the] Spirit** (Breath-effect), **while maintaining a constant alertness** (or: in spirit being constantly vigilant and abstaining from sleep), **also, to that end, in all unremitting continuance** (or: perseverance) **and request regarding need concerning** (or: surrounding) **all of the set-apart folks** (holy ones; saints; sacred people),

19. and further, in behalf of me, so that to me a word (or: message; thought; idea; logos) **would be given, in the midst of**

opening my mouth in freedom of speaking openly in public and with the boldness and rights of a citizen, to make known the secret (or: mystery) of the good news (or: which is the message of goodness, ease and well-being),

So in vs. 18-19 Paul gives examples of using all this armor which is God, and then refers to his own context and environment, to openly and boldly be making known the secret of the good news. The purpose of all this metaphorical armor involves the living of our lives in His kingdom, and the spreading of the gospel. It is not for warring against supposed “beings” in the

spirit world.

Now I want to take you back to an incident involving the life of the prophet Elisha, in 2 Kings chapter 6, where a Syrian army had surrounded the city of Dothan in which Elisha and his servant happened to be. Elisha tells his servant to not fear because there were more with them than were with those surrounding the city. Upon the servant's "eyes" being "opened," he saw that the mountain (the location of Dothan) was "full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (vs. 17). Elisha asked Yahweh to smite the army with blindness, which He did, after which Elisha led the army off to the king of Israel, then had them given food

and drink before sending them home to their master.

What I find interesting in this account is that the “horses and chariots of fire” – obviously a figure of God’s heavenly army – are not confronting an army of satan, nor a spiritual horde of demons. The heavenly host does a job on people, causing them to be temporarily blind. The concept of “demons and spiritual principalities” is notably absent from this picture. Demons are a concept from pagan mythology (Kittle’s *Theological Dictionary of the NT*) that crept into the Jewish world view from their contact with pagan religions, and Jesus addressed psychological and physical

ailments in the terms and concepts which the culture of that time held. Yet these are some of the concepts that we are called upon to pull down (2 Cor. 10:4). Also, Jesus was healing and delivering people by His authority; He was not entering into battle with “spiritual entities.”

In the situation of God delivering Israel from Egypt, it was God dealing with the king and people of Egypt, not God fighting “spiritual principalities,” or doing “spiritual warfare,” as those in Christianity view current situations. In Gethsemane, when Jesus said that He could call upon more than twelve legions of agents to aid Him, He was

referring to aid against the soldiers coming to arrest Him, not to stand against a horde of spirit beings.

In Daniel 10, Daniel had a heavenly visitation, and the agent tells him that (vs. 13) “the prince of Persia resisted” him. Now among those who believe in practicing “spiritual warfare,” it is presumed that this prince was a spiritual entity. However, the text does not state this. Pharaoh resisted God, but he was not a spiritual entity. So there is no reason to presume this about the prince of Persia, nor about the prince of Greece (vs. 20). Chapter 11 goes on to speak of actual kings of Persia and Greece. The 12th chapter of Revelation gives a

picture of “war in heaven: Michael and His agents fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, as well as his agents” (vs. 7). Now note that in vs. 9 the figure of “the dragon” is also described as “the one who thrusts [things] through [folks] (or: the devil), as well as the adversary (commonly translated: satan). So this picture is given a partial explanation of the adversarial reality at work that is pictured as “the dragon.” Then we are told that this adversarial force is cast out of heaven into the earth. So what does this mean? Well, vs. 10 gives us the result:

“Then I heard a great (or: loud) voice within the sky (or: heaven)

repeatedly saying, ‘At the present moment (or: Just now) the deliverance (the return to the original state and condition; the rescue; the health and wholeness; salvation), and the authority, and the kingdom (or: reign) of our God was (or: is) birthed (comes into existence; came to be), also the authority of His Anointed (or: His Christ; His anointed one), because our brothers' accuser (the accuser of our fellow believers) was cast down (and: is hurled down) – the one that was or is by habit repeatedly accusing them before (or: in the

sight and presence of) **our God, day and night**” [note: this phrase logically indicates that the location is on earth, where there is day and night].

This is another statement of the gospel, the good news of ease and well-being that came with Jesus and His work of the cross, as is referenced in vs. 11 which follows. This work of Christ was figuratively pictured (as is the majority of this book of apocalyptic literature: symbols and things shown by signs) as “war in heaven.” Being cast out of heaven is a figure for losing the place of ruling and authority. This happened to humanity in the figures of the light-

bearer being cast down (Isa. 14:4-23, proverb against the king of Babylon) and also in the word against the prince of Tyrus (Ezk. 28).

“For you see, God's kingdom (or: the reign and rule which is God; the expression of God's sovereignty) **is not** (or: does not exist being) **solid food and drink, but rather, fair and equitable dealing** (which brings justice and right relationship in the Way pointed out; rightwising), **peace** (and: harmony; [= shalom]) **and joy** (or: rejoicing) **within set-apart Breath-effect** (or: a dedicated and holy spirit and

attitude; or: in [the] Holy Spirit)”
(Rom. 14:17)

This is the realm of our life in God, and
our work of the Lord.

Paul further states in vs. 19,

**“Consequently, then, we are
continuously pressing forward
and pursuing the things
pertaining to, belonging to and
which are the peace [= shalom]
and the things pertaining to,
belonging to and which are the
act of building a house,
pertaining to [input] into one
another (or: which [effect]
edification [infusing] into each
other).”**

In 2 Tim. 2:24-25, we see another description of life in the Spirit:

“Now it is continually binding for (or: it is a constant necessity to) a slave of [the] Lord (= Yahweh's or Christ's slave) not to be habitually fighting (or: it is not necessary for the Lord's slave to be battling or contending), but to the contrary [he/she] is to be gentle (kind; mild) toward all, qualified, skillful and able in teaching, one holding up under poor conditions (or: having an upward focus in bad situations; holding an “up attitude” in regard

to evil), **in accommodating meekness and with consideration constantly educating** (training; disciplining; instructing; correcting) **those habitually setting themselves in complete opposition or who offer resistance.”**

No admonition to “spiritual warfare” here.

You may ask, well what about 1 Tim. 6:12? A more correct rendering is:

“Constantly contend (as in the public games in the stadium or on the racecourse) **the beautiful** (ideal; fine) **struggling contest of the faith** (or: whose source and

character are trust). **Take hold of** (or: Get a firm grip upon) **the eonian life** (the Life that has the quality and characteristic of the Age, and pertains to the eons, continuing on into the ages) **into which you were called – even [when] you agreed** (or: confessed; said the same thing with another) **the beautiful** (fine; ideal) **like-message of agreement in the sight and presence of many witnesses.”**

It is a picture of athletes in the games, not soldiers at war, and the realm of activity is trust and faith – associated with eonian life. No context of demons

or mythical spirit beings.

Paul makes a similar statement in 2 Tim. 4:7,

“I have contended the beautiful contest in the racecourse (or: I have with agony struggled, wrestling in the ideal combat {the fine fight} in the public games); I have finished the race (ended the racecourse; reached the goal of my contest; I have fought to the finish); I have kept (observed; watched over; guarded; kept in custody) the faith and trust.”

Finally, we see that it is against the folks holding wrong teachings in the called-out community of Pergamos that Christ

says,

“Yet if not, I am repeatedly (habitually) coming swiftly in you (to you; for you) and I will wage war (do battle) with them within the broadsword of My mouth.” (Rev. 2:16)

This is obviously either a word of correction, or a decision such as Paul made regarding those who need discipline. Again, it is the “heavenly” doing battle upon the earthly. It is not Christians performing “spiritual warfare” upon entities in the spirit world.

We, on the other hand, are to enter into

His rest. We are in the kingdom where “a wolf and a little lamb shall graze alike, and a lion shall eat crushed straw like an ox, and a serpent shall have soil as its bread. They shall not do evil, nor shall they bring ruin in My entire set-apart mountain [figure of His kingdom], says Yahweh” (Isa. 65:25).

One parting thought, inspired again from the discussion with John on this subject, concerns Matt. 16:18-19. What about the enigmatic statements by Jesus, here, about the “gates of the [the] unseen,” and about “binding and loosing”?

18. "And now I, Myself, am saying to you that you are Peter (or: that you continue being an

isolated stone). **And you see, [it is] upon this: the rock mass (or: bedrock) [that] I am going to construct and build up My house – the called-out community. And even gates of [the] unseen (or: gates of an unseen place; [= boulders on the entrances of graves; = {the prison} gates of the 'house of death'; or: the bars enclosing the realm of the dead]) will not bring strength down against it (or: will not come to their full strength in relation to it; or: will not overpower it; will not prevail in resisting it).**

19. "I am going to give to you

the keys [= means of locking or unlocking] **which have their origin and source in the reign of the heavens** (or: which pertain to and have the characteristics of the kingdom of the heavens; or: which belong to the sovereignty of the heavens; or, as a genitive of apposition: the keys which are the sovereign reign of the heavens).

And so, whatever you can (or: may; should) **bind upon the earth will be [something] having been bound, and still remaining bound, within the midst of the heavens. Also, whatever you can** (or: may; should) **loose upon**

the earth will be [something] having been loosed (unbound; untied), and remaining free of bonds, within the midst of the heavens."

The “unseen (Greek: *haidēs*)” was the realm and condition of the metaphorically “dead state” of those to whom Christ came to give resurrection life. Some of them He described as being “whitewashed tombs, full of dead men’s bones.” They were “blind leaders of the blind,” and were thus in the state of the unseen. They were in darkness and could not see Truth and Reality (Christ), until He gave them light. They were the prisoners whom He came to set free, and

the gates of their prisons (their unseen place) could not prevail against Him. They were in their personal “hells” (not a Biblical term, but it speaks to us a certain cultural concept), living in a condition where they could not see the Light. They needed to be loosed from their “bonds,” or else have their wounds “bound up.” This “binding and loosing” is something that has already been done “in the heavens” via the work of Christ. Jesus passed on to the called-out community the ability to loose folks and to bind their wounds. This was figured by giving to Peter the “keys of heaven’s reign and sovereignty.” Remember that it is Christ who has the keys of “death and

the unseen” (Rev. 1:18)

If we apply the phrase “gates of [the] unseen” to the realm of the dead, and to the phase of God’s dealing with humanity following physical death, which ends this natural life, then we see that a great hope awaits those yet locked behind these gates. Just as Jesus proclaimed the good news “to them that are dead” (both metaphorically dead and the physically dead: 1 Pet. 3:18-20; 4:6), so too these gates will not prevail against the work of the called-out community, with both those who are metaphorically dead, and with those who are physically dead.

Kenneth Greathouse pointed to an

important statement that Jesus made in Matt. 28:18,

And so, after approaching, Jesus, [breaking the silence], suddenly spoke to them, by saying, “All authority (or: Every right and privilege that is from out of Being) is (or: was at once) given to Me within heaven and upon the earth!”

So if folks are attempting to do “spiritual warfare,” against Whose authority are they now fighting? And in our prayer life, we should keep in mind the words in Jas. 3:10,

“Out of the same mouth is continuously coming forth

blessing and cursing (or: negative wishing; **adversarial prayer**). **My brothers, there is no need** (or: it is not necessary) **for these things thus to be repeatedly birthed** (or: to keep on happening in this way).”

Was this why Paul was able to turn someone over to satan (the adversary) so that his spirit would be saved (1 Cor. 5:5)? Does the called-out community now have the authority (through Christ) to use satan, as the Lord directs them?

WHAT DID PAUL MEAN by “ANATHEMA”?

The KJV made famous an unfortunate translation of the Greek word “anathema,” as Paul used the word in the NT. It renders it “accursed” four times, “curse” once, and transliterates it “anathema” once. Other translations (e.g., the NRSV, NASB) have followed suit, and the NIV is even worse, adding the word “eternally” to its rendering of this word (“eternally condemned”) in Gal. 1:8-9 (the word “eternally” is not even in the Greek text here).

We see this word first used in Scripture

in Lev. 27:28 (LXX, JM), so let us investigate its use there:

“Now everything set, or placed, up [i.e., as an offering] which a person may set up (or: should dedicate) to, or for, the LORD, which he owns... every set, or placed, up thing (or: dedicated offering) shall be fully set-apart (literally: a holy of holies; the most set-apart) to, or for, the LORD.”

The word which I have translated as “set, or placed, up” or “dedicate” is our word “anathema.” The Greek elements of this word are “ana” (up; back up) and “thema” (the result of a setting or a

placing). This word was used in situations of setting or placing an offering or a sacrifice up on an altar before God (or, in paganism: a god). It was a time-honored technical word which Johannes Behm informs us that, “It denotes ‘something dedicated or consecrated to the deity’” (*Theological Dictionary of the NT*, Vol. 1, WM. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977, p 354), i.e., an act of devotion. Our verse in Lev., above, instructs us as to how God viewed and received this act of worship. We come across the participle form of this word in Nu. 18 (LXX) where Yahweh is telling Aaron the things that will be his, and for the priests and

Levites, from the offerings that the people of Israel would bring to the tabernacle/temple. In vs. 14 Yahweh says,

“Everything being set, or placed, up (anathematized) among the sons of Israel shall be yours.”

Now in Nu. 21:2-3 we find another application of this concept with a verb form, and then with the noun that Israel would use to newly designate what had been a Canaanite kingdom that had made war against Israel, carrying off some of them as captives.

“Then Israel vowed a vow to the LORD, and said, ‘If You would

give this people over to me as subjects under my hand, I will set it up (dedicate it; anathematize it), along with its towns. So the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and handed over Chananis as subjects under his hand and He set him up (dedicated him; anathematized him), along with his towns. And so they called the name of the place Anathema (or: Set-up; Dedicated).” (LXX, JM)

Now it would seem that Israel conquered Chananis' kingdom, but it does not mean that they killed everyone. That must be read into the text. This

kingdom became a subject of Israel and it was dedicated to God. By using this verb, Israel was offering this people to God, and God accepted them as His. How that worked out existentially, for that people, is not disclosed to us. But the concept was that they became God's just like all offerings made to Him. Next, in Deut. 7: 25, we find instruction concerning "carved objects of their gods" (or, idols) which Israel was told to burn. Also, they were not to take the silver or gold from them, for this would be an offense and an abomination to Yahweh. Vs. 26 instructs them not to bring such abominations into their houses, for if they did, He said that,

“you shall exist being a thing set up before a deity (a dedicated thing [to that idol]; an anathema), like as this thing [that you have brought into your house].”

Then He continues on, instructing them how they should regard doing such a thing: **“With an offense you shall take offense, and with abhorrence you shall abhor it, for it is a thing set up [before a deity] (or: because it is an anathema).”**

Note that He said to them that they would become what they worshiped. In Deut. 13:15, those who went to cities of the land in order to serve other gods were to be killed and the city was to be **“set up and dedicated [as an offering before the deity of that city].”** They were

to “anathematize it with an anathema.” Note the continued theme of an offering to a deity – and its association with the people themselves. We become what we worship. In actuality, Israel dedicated such cities to God, and in 13:17 Israel was told not to take anything of that which was set up – either because it had been offered to an idol, or because the whole city was given to God in its having become an anathema. Deut. 20:17 speaks of setting up a variety of tribes of people as an offering to a deity, taking nothing alive. If we understand that Israel only offered sacrifices to Yahweh, then this verse (terrible as it sounds to our ears) is telling Israel to offer these

tribes to Him. And if we remember what was said in Lev. 27:28, above, all those folks became holy to Him. Indeed, the Law brought death in all its setting of things apart. This covers the use of anathema in the Pentateuch.

One example from the book of Joshua should suffice to understand the use of this word in this book. In Josh. 6:17 we can observe the view, and ultimate intent, of the conquest of Jericho:

“And so the city, and all the things within it, shall continue being a thing set up [as an offering] and dedicated to the Lord of Hosts.” (LXX, JM)

In the next chapter, the sin of Achan was

that he **“stole from the thing set up [i.e., offered] and dedicated”** (7:11) to God.

But we have a prophecy of an end of that system of sacrifice, for in Zech. 14:8 we are told that, **“in that Day, living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem,”** and then in vs. 11,

“And they shall permanently dwell in her, and there shall not any longer be something set up or placed [as an offering to God] (or: and so it {i.e., the city} will no longer be anathema), and Jerusalem will continue dwelling securely.” (LXX, JM)

If we tie these two thoughts of Zech.

14:8 and 11 with Jn. 4:14, 21-24, we see a fulfillment of this prophecy announced in the statements by Jesus to the woman at the well.

With these OT examples in mind, let us see how Paul used “anathema” in Rom. 9:3 (with comments on this verse from, *Just Paul, comments on Romans*, pp 163-4, by the author),

3. For you see, I kept on claiming, while having goodness, holding well-being and possessing ease, that I myself am to be (or: to continuously exist [as]) a result or an effect of something set up as an offering devoted to God (= a sacrifice; [comment: this would correspond to

Jesus telling His disciples to follow Him, bearing their crosses]), **forth from the Anointing** (or: = [thus being separated] from [the body] of Christ; or: arising from the Christ) **over [the situation of]** (or: for the sake of) **my brothers, my relatives** (kinsmen; joint or commonly born ones; fellow countrymen) **according to flesh** (= in the sphere of natural human birth),
“Rendering the first verb *euchomai* (**claiming... having... holding... possessing** – together with its modifier, *eu-*) as I did, and the direct object *anathema* in accord with its earlier meaning (which may well have continued, even though in some circles it

became degraded), we get a different picture – and to my thinking, one that is more logical and in accord with Paul's anointed communicating. Paul has just said that nothing can separate us from God's love. So would he now “almost wish himself accursed from Christ” (as the common translations offer)? I think that his words have been grossly misunderstood.

“What I offer, in regard to the object of the verb, is the literal meaning of the noun: from *ana-* (up) and *thema* (the result or effect of setting or placing). This was used in situations of setting or placing an offering or a sacrifice up on an altar before God (or, in paganism: a

god). It was a time-honored technical word (*cf Theological Dictionary of the NT*, Vol. 1, WM. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977, p 354). Paul was claiming – while having God's goodness and ease about it – that he was to follow Christ in being **an offering to God – forth from the Anointing – over the situation of [his] brothers**, his fellow Jews or Israelites. We see this happening with Paul and his associates in 2 Cor. 4:

11. For we, ourselves – the continuously living ones – are ever being repeatedly handed over into death (or: = continuously delivered into life-threatening experiences) –

because of Jesus – to the end that the life, also, of Jesus (or: so that also the life which comes from and is Jesus; or: so that Jesus' life) can (may; could; would) be set in clear light and manifested – within our mortal flesh!

12. So then (or: Consequently), the Death is repeatedly and progressively operating and inwardly working within us, yet the Life [is constantly operative] within you folks.

And we read in 2 Tim. 4:6,

‘You see, I, myself, am already being progressively poured out as a

drink offering,’ and the words of Jesus in John 15:13 come to mind,

‘No one continues holding (or: having) greater love than this: that someone should place (set; lay; lay down) his soul (or: soul-life; inner being; self; person) over [the situation or circumstances of] (or: on behalf of) his friends.’

Furthermore, in [Rom.] 16:4, below, Paul commends Pricilla and Aquila, **‘who, over my soul (= person, or, life), placed their own necks under the axe.’** Paul’s, words here, in vs. 3, call to mind the response of Moses to Yahweh in Ex. 32:32 where in light of Israel’s sin (the

golden calf), Moses offers to have himself removed from the scroll of God's plan for Israel's story. He essentially offered himself as a sacrifice to cover the sin of the people. But it was not God's plan to take him up on the offer."

In his letter to the province of Galatia, Paul used our word *anathema* twice in the first chapter. Here is an excerpt from my Comments on Galatians (from, *John, Judah, Paul & ?*):

8. However, even if we – or an agent from the atmosphere or sky (or: a messenger from out of the midst of heaven)! – should ever bring or announce something as "good news"

(as the message of goodness; as being the evangel or gospel) **to you folks which is to the side of that which we announce** (or: is parallel to what we announced) **to you folks in the message of goodness, ease and well-being, let it be placed on the altar before the Lord** (set up as a result of a divine offering [i.e., to see if it is "accepted" by God, or "rejected," as Cain's was]; or, possibly: cursed).

“Paul addresses the potential of deceptive visionary experiences – things that have plagued the called-out communities for centuries, and even to this day. But he even includes himself and his associates (‘we’) in this warning

against an altered or distorted teaching about the Christ event, its effectiveness and the good news that was given to and through him. The issue upon which he focuses is circumcision, but in 5:3 he instructs them that this issue involves **‘the whole Law.’** In 5:2 & 4 he shows that this **‘yoke of slavery** (or: a cross-lever [of a pair of scales] whose sphere is bondage)" – 5:1b – effects them to the extent that **‘Christ will benefit [them] nothing** (will be of use to [them] [for] not one thing),’ and that those who turn to the Law as a part of their relationship to God, and to others, will experience a fall **‘from out of the grace and favor!’** “Here, he makes reference to that **‘which**

is to the side of that which we announce, or is [even] parallel to what we announced' to them. Nothing should be added that would even be 'beside' or 'parallel' to the message that was originally brought to them. If anything of this nature would be proclaimed or taught to them, **'let it be placed on the altar before the Lord.'**

"In this rendering I have turned to the original meaning of the word *anathema*. This was a technical term for any sacrificial cultus. The Greek elements mean 'to set, place or put [something] up,' and the idea was to put it on an altar as an offering to God. Because what was put on an altar was something that had

been killed, the word came to have an associated meaning of being ‘dedicated.’ But to render the word in this latter sense is foreign to the theology of Paul, the messenger of grace.

“The verb of the last clause is simply the third person singular, imperative of the verb ‘to be.’ Since there is no expressed subject of the verb, we must supply one from the context: her, him or it. Most translators have taken the antecedent of this verb to be the ‘we or an agent’ in the first clause. But a closer antecedent, and of much greater importance, is the potentially false teaching – and this is the issue of this whole letter. The called-out congregations have a long history of

teachings being brought in that are ‘to the side’ of the revelation which was given to Paul. It is these variant teachings that need to be taken to the Lord, placed upon the figurative ‘altar’ within the midst of the assembly (His temple, the place of the altar), and within the midst of each person's heart, so that the Spirit of God can make the decision about it – whether it is acceptable to Him or not. [*Cf* how prophecy is to be treated: 1 Cor. 14:29, ‘...**and let the other folks continue thoroughly sifting and sorting so as to fully evaluate and reach a decision.**’] The first offerings that are described in Scripture were those of Cain and Able in Gen. 4:3ff and the

issue came to be which one was acceptable to Yahweh, and which one was not. Cain was not rejected by God; the issue was what he presented to God. When the Judaizers were bringing circumcision (a figure in this letter of the whole Law) to be the identity marker for the newly created covenant communities, it cut directly against the path of faith/trust that was the heart of the good news of God's grace, and covenant-inclusion that was based upon the faith and faithfulness of the Messiah. “Saying that the person should be ‘accursed,’ or rejected – either by the assembly or by God – misses the point of the greater issue: the deceptive

teaching which could far outlast the existence of the one who brought it. So I have taken the deceptive and false evangel to be the antecedent of the final verb, and have chosen the word 'it' as the subject.

9. So as we have said before (or: = above [in vs. 8]), **and I am right now presently saying again, if anyone is habitually announcing** (proclaiming) **as "good news" that which is to the side of that which you receive** (or: took to your side), **let it be placed on the altar before God** (set up as a result of a divine offering [to see if it's acceptable]; or, possibly: cursed).

“His restatement is rhetorical emphasis:

he wants his point to sink in deeply.”

(brackets added)

The word is also used in 1 Cor. 16:22.

Here are my renderings of the last 3 verses of 1 Cor. 16:

22. If anyone continues having no fondness or affection for the Lord, let him constantly be a person placed up [in prayer to be consecrated before the Lord] – [you see,] our Lord is present (has come).

23. The joyous favor and grace of the Lord Jesus, [the] Christ (or: [the] Anointed Master, Jesus,) [continues] with you folks!

24. My love (unambiguous

acceptance and drive toward union) [is] **with all of you folks, in union with Christ Jesus. It is so** (Amen; Count on it)!

Quite a concept in vs. 22: hold him/her up before the Lord in prayer, not curse him/her. Paul instructed us to “bless, and not curse” (Rom. 12:14). And here is its use in Acts 23:14,

13. Now there were more than forty men forming this oath-bound conspiracy,

14. who, upon coming to the chief priests and the older men (or: elders), said, "We placed ourselves under an oath in a gift devoted (anathema) [to God] to

taste nothing until which [time, or, occasion] we can kill off Paul.

They were not “cursing” themselves, but rather were dedicating their lives to God for this brutal cause. There is one more place where *anathema* is used in the NT: 1 Cor. 12:

3. Wherefore, I am now proceeding to make known to you folks that no one – speaking within God's Spirit (or: speaking in union with the Breath-effect of God; speaking in the sphere of a Breath which is God) – is in the habit of saying, "Jesus [is] a result of something set up as an

offering to a deity (or thus: Jesus [is] accursed)!" **And no one is able** (normally has power) **to say,** "**Jesus [is] Lord** (or: Lord Jesus; perhaps: = Jesus [is] Yahweh)!" **except within and in union with [the] Holy Spirit** (or: in a set-apart and consecrated spirit and attitude; in [the] Sacred Breath).

This final verse would, in my opinion, witness against Pinal Substitutionary Atonement. Jesus was not a sacrifice set up as an offering to God. God was within Christ reconciling the aggregate of humanity to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). Jesus was offering His life to humanity.

Psalm 23 (LXX)

1. [The] **LORD** (= Yahweh) **continually shepherds** (habitually cares for and tends, repeatedly leads to pasture and constantly protects) **me [as a part of the flock], and He will continue causing me to lack nothing** (or: so, by habit, in not even one thing will He fail me, or come too late [for; to] me; or: and thus will He keep on causing me not to be in need of even one thing).

2. **Into a place of [the] tender shoot** (or: Into the midst of a verdant place), **there** (in that place) **He encamped me** (or: causes me to settle down in a tent);

upon water of rest (or: at restful water; on a water of ceasing) **He nourishes and rears me.**

3. He turned my soul around (or: He turns upon my whole being; He restored my self-life; He turned-about my inner being): **He leads and guides me upon the well-worn Path of the Way pointed out, in righted covenant-participation, because of and for the sake of His Name.**

4. For you see, even if I may (or: should; would; could) **be caused to journey** (travel; pass from place to place) **within the midst of a shadow of death** (or: death's shadow; a shadow, from death), **I will continue not being**

caused to fear bad [times] (will not be repeatedly frightened by worthless [situations or people]; will not be habitually afraid of misfortunes, harmful [experiences] or base [schemes]), **because You are, and continue being, with me: Your rod and your staff – these, from a call to be at my side, give me aid and impart relief, encouragement and comfort** (these are paracletes to help me).

5. You prepare a table (= spread a meal) **before me right opposite the folks habitually afflicting me** (or: You make ready my table, in my sight, from within the midst of the people constantly bringing pressure against me and rubbing

me the wrong way); **You anoint** (or: fatten) **my head in** (or: with) **olive oil, and Your cup is progressively** (or: continuously; repeatedly) **intoxicating** – **as the best** (as the most excellent, or strongest, [wine]).

6. And thus, Your mercy and compassion will in itself continue eagerly pursuing in order to track me down – all the days of my life, and [this is for] the [situation; occasion] for me to continuously settle down and dwell within (or: to be habitually residing centered in) **[the] Lord's [= Yahweh's] house on into a long duration of days.** (JM)

JUST WHAT IS GOD'S KINGDOM?

The word “kingdom” usually brings to mind the idea of a territory (a domain) that is under the rule of a “king.” We tend to call up images of royal courts with some sort of hierarchy below the king, and of course an army that is outfitted with some form of weaponry that will maintain the sovereignty of the king and order within his realm.

The concept of a kingdom was well known to Israel, and eventually Israel itself wanted to be a kingdom and have a king like the nations that surrounded

them. Up to that time they had been governed by judges who would deliver them from the attacks from these other nations. The prophet Samuel was the last of those judges, and we read an enlightening statement from Yahweh upon the occasion of elders' request for Samuel to make a king for them. In 1 Sam. 8:7 He tells Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." They already were a kingdom, but not one like the other nations. Yahweh was their King, and His rule was mediated to the people through the judges until the

time of, and through, the prophet Samuel. Their desire for a human king and a physical kingdom was a rejection of God as being their Sovereign.

So from the time of their first king, Saul, we read in the books of Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles and the Prophets about Israel's history as a kingdom. During and following the periods of their exiles, they looked and hoped for God to raise up another king, like David, who would throw off the yokes of their oppressors and set up a kingdom in the land of Israel that would rule the world. This hope was placed in their expectation that God would raise up a Messiah (Anointed One) that would

deliver them. In Dan. 2, we read an apocalyptic dream that king Nebuchadnezzar had, which was interpreted by Daniel, that prophetically described the coming kingdom which had been seen as “a stone cut out without hands [which] struck the statue” in the king’s dream (vs. 34). In vs. 35 we see that “the stone... became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Then, in vs. 44, Daniel explains that “in the days of these kings [represented by the multi-metal statue] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom [pictured as the stone, in the dream] which shall not be destroyed... but shall stand for the eons.” I suggest that it was this kingdom

which John the baptizer proclaimed as having **“approached [to be] now near at hand and is close enough to touch (= has arrived and is now accessible)!”**

(Mat. 3:2). Then, in Mat. 4:17, Jesus made a similar proclamation,

“You folks be progressively changing your thinking (change your frame of mind, mode of thought, perceptions and understanding and turn your focus to [Yahweh]), because the sovereign reign and activity of exercising the sovereignty of the heavens (or: kingdom from the sky and the atmosphere) has drawn near and now continues

being at hand and is close enough to touch (= has arrived and is now accessible).”

However, because Jesus did not fit the popular, political or religious image of the expected Messiah, the Judean leadership rejected Him as being the Messiah, and Jesus was crucified. This seemed to confirm their decision: how could the promised Messiah be crucified? Of course His resurrection showed that they had been wrong, but then He went away and did not stay to set up a physical kingdom in Jerusalem. So had He been wrong to proclaim that the kingdom was at hand, close enough to touch, and accessible to His people?

Many Christians, even today, make the same mistake made by the Jewish leadership in the 1st century: they are expecting Jesus to come and set up a physical kingdom in Jerusalem – sometime in the future. But how are we instructed about God’s kingdom? What does it look like and what are its characteristics? Is it a literal civil government? Does, or will, it take the form of physical rule within human societies? Or is the term “kingdom,” which is better rendered, “reign” or “sovereign influence and activity,” better understood as a metaphor for the reality of God’s relationship with people? Paul gave an astounding description of

God's kingdom, in Rom. 14:17,

“for you see, God's kingdom
(or: the reign-and-dominion which
is God; the expression, influence
and activity of God's sovereignty)
is not (or: does not exist being)
solid food and drink, but rather,
eschatological deliverance into
fair and equitable dealing which
brings justice and right
relationship in the Way pointed
out (being turned in the right
direction; rightwisdom; also =
covenant inclusion and
participation), **peace** (and:
harmony; = shalom) **and joy** (or:
happiness; rejoicing) **within set-**

apart Breath-effect (or: in union with and amidst a dedicated spirit and a sacred attitude; or: in [the] Holy Spirit).”

Why did Paul use the term "God's kingdom" in this context? He had been talking about making a brother sad because of food (vs. 15), and said if they were doing this,

“[they] **are no longer continuing to walk about** (= living [their] life) **in accord with** (or: down from and on the level of) **Love** (or: you are not yet habitually walking [their path] in participation with transcendent unity of unambiguous, uniting

acceptance toward others).”

Now vs. 16 speaks about their "**good thing** (or: the excellence and virtue which pertain to [them])" being slandered because of this behavior. Then we have vs. 17 which again speaks of behavior, which Paul categorizes as "God's kingdom." Verse 18 continues the subject of behavior -- that which is both well-pleasing to God, and approved by men. And this is "righteous living," or, "fair and equitable dealing in just relationships which accord with the Path" that Christ "pointed out" to us (and this = "**continuously slaving for and in the Christ**," vs. 18), which Paul gives in the above definition of "God's kingdom."

Note also that a characteristic of His kingdom is "**peace**," which the LXX used to translate the Hebrew "shalom," which signifies also the prosperous way of life, and wholeness. The kingdom is involved with right relationships (primarily with other people). Finally, it is a life lived in the spirit, which results in joy and rejoicing in Yahweh. THIS is God's kingdom.

But there is more. Paul gives another definition of God's kingdom in 1 Cor. 4:18-21ff. Once again, the context is the behavior of some within the church at Corinth. "Some are puffed up..." (vs. 18). This condition is also indicated in their "speech" (vs. 19). But God's

kingdom is more than speech,

“For God's reign (or: the kingdom and sovereignty which is God; the sovereign influence or activity from God) **[is; lies] not within an idea** (a thought; a word; a message; a verbal expression), **but rather within ability, in union with capability, or in the midst of power”** (vs. 20).

This would indicate action, or behavior. Paul refers to his own potential behavior among them, in vs. 21,

“What do you folks want (presently desire; normally intend; by habit purpose)? **Should I come to you people within [the realm**

of] a rod (staff; = with corrective measures), or within love, and in a spirit of gentle friendliness and tender kindness (or: meekness)?”

The next chapter of 1 Cor. continues on about the "behavior" of some within the church. But keep in mind that Paul has been speaking of the context of God's kingdom (vs. 17). So we can conclude that God's kingdom can be the able use of correction (the power of the rod), or love and a spirit of gentle friendliness and tender kindness.

So, thus far, have we encountered anything about civil government or about a king sitting upon a literal throne? No,

we see in these passages allusions to the reign of God as it is being experienced in the called-out, covenant communities and in the life of Paul. These quotes from Romans and 1 Corinthians color-in a picture of God's kingdom as being the Way that was pointed out by Jesus, in His teachings, and then by the Holy Spirit, in the lives of the 1st century congregations as they are being "led by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:14) – all of which continues turning them in the right direction (toward Christ) and keeps them in right relationships with everyone.

Paul refers to God's kingdom again in 1 Cor. 15:50. He had just been speaking

there about the resurrection of dead ones (vs. 42) and contrasting the spiritual to the natural, or soulish (vs. 46), and noting how the first Adam is out of the earth and made of dust, while "**the Second Human** (Person; Man; [other MSS add: {is} the Lord]) [**is made**] **out of heaven** (or: [is] from [the] atmosphere and sky; [p46 reads: {is} spiritual])." (vs. 47). Verse 49 speaks of how we bear the image of the dusty one, and of how we can bear the image of the Heavenly One. So this is the context: contrasts of the natural and earthy to the spiritual and heavenly. Now vs. 50 reads,

“Now I am saying this, brothers

(= fellow members and believers), **that flesh and blood** (= humans in their estranged condition; = people of dust who have not been resurrected) **have no power and continue unable to inherit or receive and participate in an allotted portion of God's reign** (kingdom or sovereign action) – **neither is corruption and decay** (the perishable) **continuing on to inherit** (participate in the allotment of) **the Incorruption** (Imperishability).”

Note that last contrast: corruption (in the same category as the natural, or earthy)

and incorruption (another quality of the spiritual, the heavenly, or, God's kingdom). So God's kingdom does not appear to pertain to the earthy or to flesh and blood (natural man). But this does not mean that His reign is not here, on earth. It simply pertains to the realm of spirit, the realm of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Again, we see no reference to governmental organization or physical thrones here.

When Jesus was before Pilate, He did not say, "My kingdom is not going to be established now, but will be later, when I return." No, He said,

“My kingdom (My sovereignty;

the realm and activity of My reign and activity; My reign as king) is **NOT** (does not exist being) **from out of this System** (world of organized government, culture, economics or religion; or: universe) **as its source or origin.** **If My kingdom** (or: reign, realm and sovereignty) **were from out of this System** (or: world of government, culture, religion and economy; secular society), **as a source or origin, My subordinates** (deputies; officers; those under My orders) **would have been progressively contending, struggling and**

fighting, to the end that I could
(or: would) **not be given over to**
the Jews (= religious authorities).
But now (= as a matter of fact, or,
as it is) **My kingdom and reign is**
NOT (does not exist being) **from**
that source (from within this
place; thence or hence).” (John
18:36)

In John 3:3, Jesus said that one must be born from above to even perceive God's kingdom. And then in vs. 5 He said,

“Certainly that is so. I am now
saying (laying it out; = pointing
out) **to you, unless anyone** (or:
someone) **may be born forth**
from out of water and spirit (or:

– as well as Breath-effect and attitude –) **he continues being unable** (he remains having no power) **to enter into God's realm** (or: reign; kingdom; sovereign activity and influence).”

It would seem from this that God's kingdom is made up of only those who have had such a birth.

Then, in Mat. 19:14, we find Jesus using children as an example for the qualities (e.g., simple trust, as my friend John Gavazzoni has pointed out) of those who make up the kingdom, and of those to whom it belongs:

“Stop preventing them and allow the young children to

come toward Me, for you see, the reign and kingdom of the heavens (or: = the sovereignty of this atmosphere) belongs to and is comprised of such folks as these.”

What a startling revelation to His listeners this must have been!

But we find Paul and Barnabas giving further insights into this “birth” in Acts 14:22b,

“It continues binding and necessary for us to enter into the reign of God (or: God's kingdom; the sovereign activities which are God) through the midst of many pressures,

**squeezings, tribulations,
afflictions and oppressions.”**

And then, in 1 Thes. 2:12, Paul
admonishes his listeners,

**“to be continuously walking
about worthily of the God (=**
living your lives in a manner
equal in value with regard to the
God) [**Who is] continuously**
calling (or: repeatedly inviting)
you people into (or: unto) **His**
own royal activity (or: reign;
kingdom; sovereign influence)
and glory (or: manifestation
which calls forth praise; or:
reputation; or: opinion and
imagination; or: = manifest

presence).”

We saw above that God's kingdom is something that is inherited (I Cor. 15:50). In 1 Cor. 6:9-10 we note that unjust ones, idolaters, thieves, etc. will not **inherit** the kingdom. In Matt. 25:34 we see that the "sheep" – those who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, were hospitable to strangers, clothed the naked, took care of the sick, visited the prisoners – **inherit** the kingdom. Once again we find the theme of behavior related to the kingdom.

Paul gives further light on just what this inheritance is, in Eph. 1:13b-14,

**“... within and in union with
Whom also, upon trusting and**

believing, you people are stamped (or: were sealed; marked for acceptance, or with a signet ring; = personally authorized) **by the set-apart Breath-effect of The PROMISE** (or: with the holy attitude of assurance; in the sacred essence from the promise; or: for the Holy Spirit which is the Promise) **Which is continuously a pledge and guarantee of our INHERITANCE** (or: Who remains being an earnest deposit, a security and the first installment of our portion which was acquired by lot) – **[leading] unto**

a release into freedom

(liberation from slavery or imprisonment) **from that which was made to surround [us/you]** (or: of the encircling acquisition; or: which is that which has been constructed as a perimeter around [us]), **[being immersed] into the praise and approval from** (or: which is) **His glory** (or: from His manifestation which calls forth admiration and which yields a good opinion; which pertains to His imagination; of a reputation which is Him)!”

Gal. 3:14 also speaks of the Promise,
“to the end that the Good Word

(the Blessing; the Word of wellness and goodness)

pertaining to Abraham

(belonging to and possessed by Abraham; whose intermediary source is Abraham) **could within**

Jesus Christ suddenly birth

Itself (or: may from Itself, within

Christ Jesus, at once come into

being [and be dispersed]) **into the**

multitudes (the nations; the ethnic

groups; the Gentiles), **so that we**

[note: "we" = the new "one"

mankind?] **could receive the**

Spirit's PROMISE through the

Faithfulness [of Christ]."

Verses 17-18, in Gal. 3, relate "the

inheritance" to the Promise in which, **"God has Himself graced [it]** (has for Himself, in favor, freely granted [it]), **so that it now stands as a favor of grace, to (or: for; in) Abraham through a Promise** (or: because of a promise)," and thus, by extension, is also given to Abraham's seed. So we are finding the metaphor of **"inheritance,"** which, as noted above, is related to **"the kingdom,"** now connected to **"The Promise,"** which comes to us as a "gift." When in Gal. 4:30 Paul instructs us to, **"Cast out (or: At once expel) the servant girl (the slave-girl; the maid) and her son,"** he is referring to the Sinai covenant (Gal. 4:24-25) and the literal

expectations from that covenant, including what it produces. In contrast to the old covenant and the Law from Sinai, Paul informs us, in Gal. 4:28, that, “**we, brothers** (= fellow believers; = my family), **corresponding to** (in the sphere of) **Isaac, are** (continuously exist being) **children of Promise** (or: ones-born of [the] Promise).” From the association of the words, “inheritance” and “promise” to “kingdom (reign, etc.),” we can deduct that the “children of Promise” are also “children of the kingdom” (*cf* Mat. 13:38). Or, we can also conclude that His kingdom is His people (as Israel was, until Israel wanted a flesh kingdom, in the days of Samuel).

Now Eph. 5:5 speaks of those who are "**not now holding enjoyment of an inheritance** (does not currently continue having use of an allotted gift from someone who has died) **within the Christ's and God's reign or sphere of sovereign activity** (or: in union with the kingdom of the Anointed One [= the Messiah], as well as of God; or: centered in the royal influence from the Christ, and from God; [p46: within the reign of God])" – once again associating the concept of "inheritance" with that of "kingdom."

From observing how the **inheritance** is connected to the **Promise**, we now turn to Acts 1:3-4 where Jesus was,

“continuously saying things concerning God's reign and sovereign activities (or: and progressively laying out thoughts about the kingdom and realm of God, as well as the ruling influence, which is God),” then proceeds to tell them, **“not to be presently separated** (or: caused to depart) **from Jerusalem,** but rather, to continue remaining with regard to, and waiting around for, the **Father's promise** (or: the Promise, the source of which is the Father; or, as a genitive of apposition: the promise which is the Father)!” Is God our inheritance? It was for the tribe of Levi:

“For this cause hath Levi neither portion nor inheritance, with his

brethren – **Yahweh is his inheritance**, as Yahweh thy God spoke unto him.” (Deut. 10:9, Rotherham; see also Deut. 18:1-2)

Now let's tie these thoughts together, since Levi was the tribe from which came the priests. John instructs the called-out communities, in Rev. 1:6a, that God,

“**made** (formed; created; produces) **us** [other MSS: **in**, for, **with** us; **of** us] [**to be**] **a kingdom** (or: sovereign reign; [other MSS: constructed of us a kingdom which brings sovereign influence]): **priests in** (or: by; for; with) **His God and Father...**”

This is an echo of Ex. 19:6, speaking to Israel,

“As for you, you shall become Mine: a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

(Concordant Version)

In both of these last two verses it is A PEOPLE (God's people) that is called "a kingdom." And since they are "[His]," they are His kingdom. After proofreading this article, my son Joshua commented,

“All of the above evidence of God being our inheritance and we being His reminds me of the family relationship dynamic (i.e. – The father and mother belonging

to the children and the children belonging to them and each individual member belonging to one another; all enjoying the benefits [a multi-directional “inheritance”] that comes from being actively in right wised relations with each other [actions and activities with each other directly related to the reality of being actions and activities of His “kingdom”...the purest and most beautiful, observable form of the evidence of His active sovereign influence])!”

Now let's consider some of the things to which Jesus compared the kingdom:

Mat. 13:24, “The reign and sovereignty activities of the heavens (or: kingdom of the atmospheres) is likened and compared to a person (human) sowing (scattering) fine, ideal seed within his field.”

Notice that the previous parable spoke of sowing "the word of the kingdom" (vs. 19) and that this is interpreted, in the good soil, as "hearing" and "comprehending" the Word (the Logos)" (vs. 23).

Mat. 13:31, “The reign and sovereignty of the heavens (or: kingdom of the sky and atmosphere) exists being (or: is)

like seed of a mustard plant – which, upon taking, a man (a person) sowed within his field.”

Now above, the field was compared to comprehending the Word of the kingdom – the heart or mind (understanding) is that which receives the seed of the Word, thus the man in vs. 31 would be planting the mustard seed into himself, or into others like him.

[please note: this same parable is given in Mark 4:30-32, but here it is called "the kingdom of God." Some would try to differentiate between these two synonymous phrases. Note also Mark 4:26 where "the kingdom of God" is

compared to sowing seed and then harvesting the crop (vs. 29).]

If we consider this parable in Mat. 13:31 as speaking of growth from a small Seed to a large plant that can house agents of the heavens (birds of the air – including doves), then the parable speaks of life and growth: something organic. There is no thought of conquest or rule in this picture of the kingdom. Then in Mat. 13:33,

“The reign (kingdom; sovereignty) of the heavens and atmospheres exists being (is) like leaven (or: yeast) which a woman, upon getting (taking; receiving) [it], hides within (=

mixes in) **three large measures** (1.5 pecks, or 12 quarts, per measure) **of wheat flour, or meal, until [the] whole [batch] is leavened to thus be fermented, risen [and teeming with life]!”**

Again we see growth and expansion. Starting from something small (bread only takes a little leaven) and putting it into something that would otherwise remain flat, and not "rise," we see that the entire mass of dough (could we say the whole world) expands into the finished product, ready to serve as food or offering.

Mat. 13:44, **“The reign (or: kingdom; sovereignty) of the**

heavens and atmospheres exists being (or: is) like a treasure – having been hidden (or: being concealed) within the midst of a field – which, upon finding, a person hid (concealed) [again] and then, from the joy he has, he proceeds leaving [it] and one after another sells as many things as he is then possessing and is proceeding in purchasing that field” [note vs. 38: in that parable the field is ‘the world; the aggregate of humanity; the universe’]

Here we have a figure of Christ purchasing the whole field (a figure of

the whole world) to get the treasure (humanity) that He found in the field. If this interpretation be true, then the kingdom is compared to the plan of redemption. God considers us His treasure.

In vs. 45 we have the figure of a traveling merchant "selling as much as he had" to buy a valued pearl. This is a parallel to vs. 44.

Next, let's consider the parable of the dragnet and the catch of fish, in Mat. 13:47-50. The dragnet is a figure of God's sovereign action upon the "sea of mankind," which brings into His control "every species [of marine life]" (vs. 47) which included "ideal ones... [and]

decayed and rotten ones” (vs. 48).

Once again, regardless of how you interpret the figures in the metaphor, you see the kingdom compared to a process – a sequence of events. As my son Joshua observed, the events are “actions that yield great worth, substance, increase and value.” Yet, in this case, Jesus used this parable to prophesy God’s sovereign actions upon Jerusalem and the Jewish leadership in His day: the destruction of Jerusalem. It turned out to be an event that brought an end to the Jewish temple cultus. At the same time, in this parable, there is no comparison to the “rule of a king, a governor, or a magistrate,” or to “civil

government,” but rather to the daily life of fishermen. Are the folks that are fishing a figure of God, or of His servants (His disciples and followers, or, historically, the Romans)? The collecting of everyone into the net, and then separating them, reminds us of how the sheep and the kids (immature goats) are separated the Mat. 25:32-46 (where Jesus compares Christ’s separating the species of His herd to that of a shepherd, i.e., an example of the way of an ordinary life and periodic activities). In both cases the "unacceptable" ones go into fire: decisions are made. In 13:49, Jesus told them the time frame to which this parable spoke: “**the destined**

conclusion of the (or: this) age,” which happened in AD 70. In this picture, the fire does not annihilate them, for vs. 50 says,

“and then will continue casting them into the furnace (oven; kiln) of The Fire [= God's dealings]: the weeping (crying and lamentation) and the grinding of teeth' will continue being in that situation or place.”

Now I also suggest that this means that the net "drags" everyone into the kingdom, where this judgment takes place, i.e., for the appropriate dealing for each one, or, for each group. This can involve weeping (sorrow about

losses, etc.; cf 1 Cor. 3:10-17) and grinding of teeth (regret, or anger), but those experiencing His dealings are alive and are being processed by them. And again, remember that Jesus said that He would make [us] “fishers of humans” (Mat. 4:19). So the kingdom, in this parable, is the work of God, through His agents upon humans – whether in their hearts, their spirits, their souls or their bodies – or, upon institutions (e.g., the temple cultus). The specific, immediate focus of this parable involved the Romans being His agents to bring the end of the old covenant. In these examples of God’s kingdom, God constantly makes decisions about

humanity, but His actions take place in the realm of ordinary living, here on earth, and not necessarily at a future or remote “judgment seat.” Speaking of which, God’s seat of judgment during the times of the Israel’s early history was within the heart of the tabernacle/temple. God spoke to Moses from out of the tabernacle (Lev. 1:1; Nu. 1:1). We see Moses going into the tabernacle, from time to time, to discuss with God various issues concerning Israel (e.g., Nu. 7:89). In that type, God’s throne was “the mercy seat” (Ex. 25:22). Later, God’s home among Israel became a temple, and now we have come to see that WE are God’s temple (1 Cor. 3:16-

17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21). The situation that exists now is,

“let the peace (or: joining; [= *shalom*]) **of the Christ** (belonging to and originating in the [Messiah]; the harmony which is the Anointing [other MSS: God]) **continuously umpire** (act as a judge in the games) **within your hearts** (= in union with the core of your being)” (Col. 3:15a).

In Mat. 18:3 we see that one must be **"turned around,"** and become **"like little children"** in order **to enter** into the kingdom. Then, in vs. 4 we read these are folks having the characteristics of the kingdom:

“Therefore, whoever will be progressively bringing himself low in attitude, situation and condition, so as to be humble, insignificant and unimportant in his own eyes, like this young child – this person is the greatest (= most important) with the heaven's reign (or: the kingdom emanating from the atmospheres).”

This virtually turns the human concept of “kingdom” on its head.

And in 18:23-35 the kingdom of the heavens becomes an issue of mercy and forgiveness, in the parable of the "unmerciful servant." This sounds like

"the Way pointed out" – i.e., like the Way of mercy, and forgiveness. It is the **“eschatological deliverance into fair and equitable dealing which brings justice and right relationship in the Way pointed out** (being turned in the right direction; rightwisdom; also = covenant inclusion and participation)” of Rom. 14:17, above – which is the life of the kingdom, and this speaks to our behavior and to our relationships with one another. The kingdom can also mean correction or judgment, where it is needed, as we see in this parable (Mat. 18:32-35). But note vs. 21, where Peter asks Jesus a question that prompts this parable. It is a question about how we

should live. Peter asks, "How often shall I forgive my brother?" In the kingdom life it is 70X7, or, it is a Way of Life that offers continual forgiveness to others. Now let us turn again to Paul, and see what he said in Col. 1:13-14,

13. He who drags us out of danger (or: rescued us) **forth from out of the midst of the authority of the Darkness** (from Darkness's jurisdiction and right; from existing out of gloomy shadows and obscure dimness; = the privilege of ignorance), **and changes [our] position** (or: transported [us], thus, giving [us] a change of standing, and

transferred [us]) **into the midst of the kingdom and reign of the Son of His love**

(or: into the midst of the sovereign influence of the Son Who has the characteristics and qualities of His accepting love; into union with the sovereign activities of the Son Whose origin is His love; or: into the sphere of the reign of the Son of the Love which is Him; into the center of the kingdom of the Son, which is His love),

14. **in Whom** (or: in union with

[which Son]) **we continuously have and hold the release into freedom from slavery or imprisonment** (the liberation from our predicament) **[which results in] the sending away of the failures** (or: the dismissal of the errors pertaining to falling short and straying to the side of the target; the flowing away of the sins; the divorce from mistakes).

Some have suggested that “the kingdom and reign of the Son of His love (etc.)” is speaking of a different kingdom than the one of which Jesus spoke, and which the Jews had anticipated, but there is no evidence for this conclusion. It is simply

the kingdom that belongs to the One to whom the Father said, "This is My Beloved Son," (Mat. 17:5), which equals, here, **“the Son of His love.”**

There is only one kingdom of God, and we now exist in this kingdom. In God's economy (which is another term for His kingdom/reign, or His household) there no longer exists Jews and Gentiles, for,

“You see, He Himself is our Peace (or: continuously exists being our joining and harmony [= Shalom]) – **the One making** (forming; constructing; creating; producing) **The Both [to be] one, and within His flesh.... to the end that He may frame** (create;

found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder) **The Two** [i.e., Jew and Gentile] **into One New** [p46 & others: common] **Humanity centered within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making** (progressively creating) **Peace and Harmony** (a joining; = shalom)” (Eph. 2:14-15).

God will not now make a separation between the nations, so as to set up a separate kingdom in Palestine that is different from the one of which Paul speaks, here, in Col. 1:13.

Jesus set the scene for a pivotal verse (Lu. 17:21b, below) when in Lu.

17:20b-21a, he informed the Jews (in this case, the Pharisees) that,

“The reign (or: kingdom; royal rule; sovereign activities and influences) of God is not proceeding in coming with a careful keeping watch from the side

(or: by means of or accompanied by attentive or intensive observing; [note: this word was used of watching the symptoms of an illness, as well as about making observations of the sky]).

Neither will folks continue

**saying, 'Look here!' or,
'There!'"**

In other words, it is not going to be a literal, physical kingdom or reign!

So let us consider this astounding (for the Jews, and us), pivotal declaration for this discussion, Lu. 17:21b,

“You see – now consider this, and understand – God's reign (kingdom; royal rule; sovereign influence and activity) continually exists inside you folks (or: is on the inside of you people; or: = within your community).”

The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures reads the pivotal word which I have rendered

"inside/within" as "inside" in the interlinear section (while the NWT of its side bar reads "among"). The Friberg, Friberg and Miller *Analytical Lexicon of the Gr. NT* gives the first meaning of this word, entoV, (used in this verse) as "an adverb of place: within; inside." Liddell and Scott give the same as the root meaning, in their lexicon. The objection to this concept, of the kingdom of God "existing inside/within you," is that in Lu. 17:21 Jesus was answering the Pharisees, so the question becomes, How could the "kingdom" be "inside" them? Now consider that those Pharisees were at that time like worthless fish in the parable of the dragnet in Mat.

13:47ff, above, where the “worthless fish” were “inside the net” – or “inside the kingdom” in this picture. Then remember, in Mat. 23:27, that the Pharisees were also like whited tombs that were full of dead men’s bones – i.e., they made their beds in hades, in the dark abode of the dead (which corresponds to these whited tombs), yet God was with them there, as with the psalmist in Ps. 139:8. There is nowhere where God and His kingdom are not present, and thus God, in His kingdom, was still there within them, judging them and would eventually bring correction to them (and this is the purpose of judgment and correction: to transform them into

“good fish” – as He did with the Pharisee Saul, who was transformed by Jesus to become Paul). And in this time of purification (*cf* Mal. 3:2-3) His fire would have to remove the dross within them; or switching metaphors, it would burn off their interior land (as in Heb. 6:8) to remove all the thorns and briars, to make their piece of ground good soil, ready to receive His Word and bear the fruit of the Spirit. "The people that walked in darkness [the Pharisees, in this case] have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.... they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest..." (Isa. 9:2-3). That is a

picture of their final end: joy. The kingdom comes and invades the darkness – every man in his own group, in his own time (1 Cor. 15:23). Or, as the psalmist proclaimed, "Yahweh will enlighten my darkness" (Ps. 18:28). Then we see that John recorded,

“And the life was continuing being, and began progressively existing as, the Light of mankind (or: Furthermore, the Light progressively came to be the life known as "humanity," and was for human beings; or: Then the life was existing being the light from the humans). **And the Light is constantly shining in the dim and**

shadowed places, and keeps on progressively giving light within the gloomy darkness where there is no light (or: within the midst of the obscurity of The Darkness where there is no light of The Day; or: = in the ignorant condition or system)...” (Jn. 1:4b-5a).

It may happen slowly, with some, and not even happen during this life, but we are instructed that This Light was, and continues being,

“the True and Genuine Light which (or: Who) is continuously (repeatedly; progressively) enlightening (giving light to)

every person (or: human)
continuously (repeatedly;
progressively; constantly; one
after another) **coming into the**
world (or: the ordered system of
culture, religion, economics and
government; or: the universe)
(or: It was the real Light,
progressively coming into the
world {organized system}, which
is progressively enlightening {or:
shedding light on} every human)”
(Jn. 1:9).

There is no place where His light does
not shine. So to conclude our
consideration of Lu. 17:21, we see that
God's kingdom continually exists inside

of people, and as Paul revealed in Acts 17:28, all people exist inside of God. The message has already gone forth (the agent has blown the trumpet – Rev. 1:10; 4:1; 8:2, etc.), and,

"The reign of the ordered System (of the world of religion, culture, government and economy; or: of the realm of the religious and secular) suddenly came to belong to our Lord [= Yahweh or Christ] and to the anointed of Him

(or: The kingdom of the arranged system at once became our Lord's and His Christ's; The rule as king

which pertains to the world, was birthed to be the possession of [Yahweh], as well as of His Anointed),

and so He will continue reigning (ruling as King) **on into the ages** (or: indefinite time periods) **of the ages** [other MSS add: So it is (Amen)]." (Rev. 11:15).

Jesus said in Mat. 28:18, "**All authority** (or: Every right and privilege from out of Being) **is** (or: was) **given to Me within heaven and upon the earth** (or: in sky and atmosphere, as well as on land)!" That's when the message went forth, of which John heard in the vision

in Rev. 12:10,

“Then I heard a great (or: loud) voice within the atmosphere (or: sky; or: heaven) repeatedly saying, ‘At the present moment (or: Just now) the deliverance (the return to the original state and condition; the rescue; the health and wholeness; salvation), and the authority, and the kingdom (or: reign) of our God was (or: is) birthed (comes into existence; came to be), also the authority of His Anointed (or: His Christ; His anointed one), because our brothers’ accuser (the accuser of our fellow believers) was cast

down (and: is hurled down) – **the one that was or is by habit repeatedly accusing them before** (or: in the sight and presence of) **our God, day and night.**’”

The last phrase logically indicates that the location is on earth, where there is day and night.

In Lu. 10 Jesus sent out seventy of his apprentices, and in vs. 9 instructed them to tell folks,

“God's reigning and activity of exercising sovereignty (or: kingdom) has drawn near upon you people – close enough to touch (= has arrived and is now

accessible)!”

Jesus later, in vs. 17, heard their response about God’s reign coming upon those folks,

“Now the seventy [other MSS: seventy-two] returned with joy, one after another saying, “O Lord, even the demons (Hellenistic concept and term: = animistic influences) are continually being subjected to us (or: set under and arranged below for us) within and in union with Your Name!”

Then in vs. 19 He told them,

“So look, and realize – I have given to you folks the authority

to habitually step on and trample snakes (serpents) and scorpions – as well as upon all the power and ability of the enemy (or: the hostile or adversarial person) – and nothing will proceed in any circumstance causing you folks harm (or: wronging you or treating you unjustly).”

While I suggest that Jesus was speaking figuratively about snakes and scorpions, He was telling them that they had been given an experience of His reign, and that thus they had been able to deliver and heal folks. These activities were the “stuff” and “substance” of God’s reign,

and were its central purpose that would come to fruition with His death and resurrection.

In regard to this "kingdom" discussion, I would add that it is a real kingdom and an active reign of God, and that it has real effects upon "the kingdoms of this world." Christ raises up, or puts down, those in governments, in accord with His plan of the ages. I have observed that His decisions and judgments are on-going, as well as His shepherding and nurturing of His children. He directs His program of the ages through His Spirit acting upon the hearts of humans, and through the love and mercy being expressed through His body right now,

just as He did through His disciples when He sent out the 12 and the 70, as well as that which was demonstrated through the apostles, in the book of Acts. Do I expect this to become more evident? Yes. The "increase" of His "chieftainship" (Concordant Version) or "dominion" (Rotherham), which speaks of His reign and sovereign activities in His kingdom, will continue indefinitely (Isa. 9:7), until the goal of the subjection of all has been obtained (1 Cor. 15:25). Humanity's imagined "free" will has nothing to do with it. 1 Cor. 15:22-28 can have both individual and corporate applications (the latter being on the scale of involving all mankind). I

suggest that the realization of Eph. 2:6,
"He jointly roused and raised
(or: suddenly awakens and raises)
[us] up, and caused [us] to sit
(or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us])
together within the things
situated upon [thus, above] the
heavens,"

began with the resurrection of Jesus and was first manifested at Pentecost; it has continued ever since. Observe, e.g., Christ's authority for bringing healing, deliverance and the shepherding of His flock, as displayed in the lives of Peter, Paul and other NT personalities. We participate in this enthronement here and now, but it is only displayed as

cruciform lives, dispensing His life to others – not as organizational hierarchies.

What we observe in our own lives may not live up to the ideas or expectations that we might have built up or imagined through the influences upon our thinking from a variety of Christian traditions.

But if we believe that God is continuously sitting upon His throne (e.g. Rev. 19:4), then we should join the voice of the large crowd saying, "**Praise Yahweh (Hallelujah)! Because the LORD [= Yahweh] our God, the Almighty, reigns!**" (Rev. 19:6)

The prayer modeled by Jesus for His disciples in Lu. 11:2 said, "Your

kingdom come." And as we have seen, the word kingdom (*basileia*) can also mean "reign," or "royal rule." Was Jesus here indicating that the kingdom (or, reign, rule, sovereign influence and activities) of God was somewhere else and needed to arrive? In one aspect, yes – it was to be the disciples' prayer for His rule to become actualized and active within them and among the covenant communities. In another aspect, no – God's dominion has always been here, and for Israel it was literally manifested in their deliverance from Egypt, and until their rejection of Yahweh as their king (1 Sam. 8:7). I believe that God's judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70 was a

manifestation that the rule of "the King of the Jews" was very much real. It is my conclusion (along with scholarly studies by others) that it was at this time that Mat. 26:64 was fulfilled, for Jesus was there speaking TO the high priest, and TO those surrounding him, when He said,

“You yourself are saying [it] (or: are [so] saying)! Moreover, I am now saying to YOU people, from now (this present moment) on YOU folks will proceed to be seeing ‘the Son of the Man (= Adam's son; the eschatological Messiah figure; the representative human) continuously sitting at

**the right [hand]’ of the Power,
and ‘progressively coming (or:
repeatedly coming and going)
upon the clouds of the
atmosphere (or: sky; heaven).’”
[Dan. 7:13; Ps. 110:1]**

They would have first seen this through the behavior of His followers, as recorded in the book of Acts, but I suspect that they actually saw this, in AD 70, and possibly had a vision of Christ during that time of His judgment upon them, and on Jerusalem, through the Romans. He may have appeared to them as He did to John in Rev. 1:13-16, or they may have, like Saul on the road to Damascus, seen a bright Light, and may

have asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The writings about that period of the Jewish War, by the Jewish historian, Josephus, speak of folks having seen “signs” or “portents” in the sky over Jerusalem. Mat. 21:43 records Jesus telling the ranking priests and the Pharisees,

“Because of this, I am now saying to you men that God's reign (or: the kingdom of God; the influence and activity of God's sovereignty) will be progressively lifted up away from you folks, and it (or: she) will proceed being given to an ethnic multitude (or: nation; people group; swarm of people)

consistently producing its (or: her) fruit.”

In vs. 45 we read that the priests and Pharisees knew that the “**you men**” of Jesus’ pronouncement was referring to them. In Lu. 12:32, Jesus told His followers,

“Stop fearing (or: Do not continue being wary), little flock, because it delights the Father (or: because the Father thought it good, and thus, approved) to give the reign (rule; kingship; kingdom; sovereign influence and activities) to you folks.”

This corresponds to Jesus’ parable in Mat. 25, where in vs. 34b He says to the

sheep,

“Come here, you folks having received words of ease and wellness from (or: spoken well of by; or: having received the blessing of; or: bearing thoughts, ideas, expressions and the Word of goodness from) My Father! At once come into possession of the inheritance of, and enjoy the allotment of, [the period of, place of, or realm of] the reign (or: kingdom; influence and activity of sovereignty) having been prepared and made ready from a founding (a casting down [as of a foundation; or: of seed]) of a

system (or: of [the] adorned arrangement; of an arranged order; of [the] world).”

Upon reviewing this article, John Gavazzoni remarked that it would be good to add, “Paul’s description of the nature of the true reign of God,” as he stated it in Rom. 8:2,

“For the principle and law of, from and which is the spirit and attitude of 'The Life within Christ Jesus'

(or: For you see, the Law of Life’s spirit, joined with [the] Anointing of Jesus; or: For the Spirit’s law of life within Christ Jesus; or: the Law [= Torah] from the Breath-

effect, which is Life in union with [the] Anointed Jesus)
frees you away from the Law of the Sin (or: the principle of failure and the missing of the target; the code of behavior that produces error; the principle of deviation from the goal; this law from the mistake) **and the Death** (or: immediately set you [other MSS: me] at liberty from the law that deals with and has the character of sin and which comes from death).”

This law from sin and from death refers both to the principle of the old Adamic life and to Israel's Torah. In the new

covenant, we live by the Spirit of the Life which is within Christ Jesus, and this new existence constitutes God's kingdom. John Dominic Crossan made the following insightful comments,

“The Kingdom of God movement was Jesus' program of empowerment for a peasantry becoming steadily more hard-pressed, in that first-century Jewish homeland, through insistent taxation, attendant indebtedness, and eventual land expropriation, all within increasing commercialization in the booming colonial economy of a Roman Empire... Jesus *lived*,

against the systemic injustice and structural evil of that situation, an alternative open to all who would accept it: a life of open healing and shared eating, of radical itinerancy and fundamental egalitarianism, of human contact without discrimination and divine contact without hierarchy. That, he said, was how God would run the world if God, not Caesar, sat on its imperial throne. That was how God's will was to be done on earth – as in heaven. But heaven was in very good shape. It was earth that was the problem. He died for that vision and that

program. I emphasize that, for Jesus, the Kingdom of *God* meant just what it said, a religious vision and a religious program but incarnated in rather than separated from the social, political and economic realities of everyday life” (*Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, pp 211-12; emphasis original).

Can we envision such a reality? The Seed of this is within us; we are called to live it out by the power of the Holy Spirit incarnated within us, and present

among us.

In conclusion, we have considered many examples of how God's kingdom is His active interaction with humanity and His influence upon people, both directly and through His called-out communities. It is here now, it is accessible to us, it is within us, and it is among us through the power and ability of His Spirit.

Furthermore, we observe no human structure or hierarchy in His reign; it is organic, like a Vine with Its branches. It is the eschatological deliverance that produced righted living (in Christ) with the peace that came through the joining of all races and cultures into one new humanity, and it exists within the joy that

is centered in, and in union with, the Holy Spirit. With the advent of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) everything changed. With the Word becoming flesh, we read in Jn. 1:9,

“It was (or: He was, and continued being) **the True and Genuine Light which** (or: Who) **is continuously** (repeatedly; progressively) **enlightening** (giving light to) **every person** (or: human) **continuously** (repeatedly; progressively; constantly; one after another) **coming into the world** (or: the ordered system of culture, religion, economics and government; or: the universe)

(or: It was the real Light, progressively coming into the world {organized system}, which is progressively enlightening {or: shedding light on} every human).”

My sister, Rebecca, quotes Bishop Phillips Brooks,

“... the ideal life is in our blood and never will be still. We feel the thing we ought to be beating beneath the thing we are” (*More Heart Throbs*, Joe Mitchell, Ed., Chapple Publishing Co., Ltd., 1911).

In a public interview, Brad Jersak stated

that, “the kingdom is the Jesus way of life.”

WHERE JESUS GAVE WARNINGS of JUDGMENT

This study will list Jesus' warnings according to the categories of the words that He used in the various warnings, then give discussion of the aspects of the words and their contexts.

Concerning the Valley of HINNOM
(Greek: *gehenna*)

Matt. 5:22

22. "However, I Myself am now saying to you people that everyone, who – from internal swelling or agitated emotions of his natural disposition, or from the fruition of his mental bent – is habitually being impulsive or

intensely angry to his brother (= fellow member of the society) **will be held within the decision** (or: held under the control of the crisis or the judging of the local court). **Now whoever may at some point say to his brother, 'Raca** (an Aramaic word of verbal abuse: contemptible imbecile; worthless good-for-nothing; senseless empty-head; brainless idiot; blockhead)!' **will be held within** (and thus: accountable to) **the Sanhedrin** (the ruling Jewish council). **Yet whoever may at some point say, 'Inept moron** (Stupid scoundrel; Despicable fool; You perverse idiot)!' **will be held within** (and thus: accountable to) [**placement**]

into the [part of] the Valley of Hinnom which pertains to the fire (i.e., the incinerator for refuse in the dump outside of Jerusalem).

Note that the contexts of each situation are 1st century Palestine: judgments here on earth, not something that is “after death.” All of the offenses are relational, and are of similar severity, with each judgment context becoming more severe. The last one (*Gehenna*) involved the death penalty (by the Romans) and the dishonor of not being buried, but being treated as a criminal and having the offender’s body simply cast into the dump.

Matt. 5:27-30

27. "You folks hear (or: heard) that it was declared,

'You will not commit adultery!'

[Ex. 20:13]

28. "Yet I, Myself, am now saying to you people that every man who is continuing in, or, repeatedly looking at and observing (constantly watching or leering at; = fantasizing over) a [married] woman, with a view toward the [situation, or, condition] to crave her (to experience strong passion for her, or, to desire to rush in a heat of emotion upon her), has already committed adultery with her, within his heart!

29. "So if your right eye is habitually a

bait-stick which entraps you, immediately tear it out and throw it away from you! You see, it constantly brings things together for benefit and advantage in (for; to) you folks that one of your members should loose itself away (may destroy itself; could come to be lost), so that your whole body should not be thrown into the Valley of Hinnom (Greek: Gehenna – the city dump [= to dishonor you by giving no burial; to treat you as a criminal]).

30. "Also, if your right hand is habitually a bait-stick which entraps you, at once cut it off and throw it away from you! You see, it constantly

brings things together for benefit and advantage in (for; to) you folks that one of your members should loose itself away (may destroy itself; could come to be lost), so that your whole body should not go off into the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna – the city dump outside Jerusalem).

Here, Jesus is addressing moral and behavioral issues, and the latter having the potential of resulting in being crucified and then the body being cast into the city dump. Note the continual or habitual significance in the present tense of the Greek verbs. He is warning against making such behaviors a way of life.

Matt. 10:28

28. **"Stop being** (or: Do not continue being [other MSS: You should not be]) **made to fear from the one normally killing the body, and yet continuing unable** (with no power) **to be killing the soul. But rather, be habitually fearing the person being constantly able and continuing with power to loose-away and destroy** (or: to cause to be lost) **both soul** (the interior life; [note: may refer to the person's reputation in regard to character and other personal qualities]) **as well as body within the Valley of Hinnom.**

We see that the result of judgment by the person who has the power to kill in such

a manner that it effects the “soul” also has the power to throw the entire person into the Valley of Hinnom (*Gehenna*), just like in the above examples. Who had that power? The Roman Prefect over Judea (at this time, Pilate). He could not only kill you, but also ruin your reputation and the perception of your character (your “soul”), and also affect the lives of your family, as they might also be considered to be enemies of the Empire. This person (Pilate) killed Jesus, and for many Jews this made it hard for them to accept a “crucified Messiah.” For them His reputation (soul) was destroyed. Remember, Jesus was speaking to an honor/shame-based

society. Honor, for oneself and for one's family, was everything. Being killed just meant that your life on earth was ended (which eventually happens to everyone); being killed as a criminal meant being considered as an outcast of society with people remembering you as being a shameful person who was without honor. Your life would come to be considered as having had no value.

Crossan informs us about Roman crucifixion with its customary lack of burial in his book, *Who Killed Jesus*, cited above. In his chapter on "Burial," he explains,

“The hierarchy of horror was loss of life, loss of possessions, loss

of burial, that is, destruction of body, destruction of family, destruction of identity. For the ancient world, the final penalty was to lie unburied as food for carrion birds and beasts” (ibid p 160).

He quotes Tacitus (*Annals* 6.29) who said, “a man legally condemned forfeited his estate and was debarred from burial” (ibid p 161). Crossan goes on to say,

“Lack of proper burial was not just ultimate insult, it was ultimate annihilation in the ancient Roman world. There would be no place where the dead one could be

mourned, visited, or remembered.... It was precisely that lack of burial that consummated the three supreme penalties of being burned alive, cast to the beasts in the amphitheater, or crucified. They all involved inhuman cruelty, public dishonor, and impossible burial.... In the case of crucifixion, it presumes that the body was left on the cross until birds and beasts of prey had destroyed it” (ibid p 161).

Crossan also points us back to Deut. 21:22-23, where we read in vs. 23b, “for [one] being hung [is under] a

malediction of Elohim, and you shall not defile your ground that Yahweh your Elohim [is] giving to you [as] an allotment” (CVOT).

This lends comprehension to the warning that Jesus gave in regard to having one’s body end up in the city dump (the Valley of Hinnom, or, *Gehenna*) – the place where the Romans would ultimately deposit the human remains of one that was crucified. Crossan quotes Martin Hengel’s comment (*Crucifixion*, p 88) that,

“In this way [the crucified person’s] humiliation was made complete. What it meant for a man in antiquity to be refused burial,

and the dishonor which went with it, can hardly be appreciated by modern man” (ibid p 163; brackets mine).

Matt. 23:15

15. "It will be a tragic fate for you, scribes and Pharisees – perverse scholars who live by separation and have all the answers! Because you habitually go around the sea and dry [land] to make one convert (proselyte), and whenever he may become (should be birthed) [one], you proceed making him a son of the valley of Hinnom (= a person having the character and qualities of a city dump, or a part of a refuse depository [Greek: Gehenna]) twice as

much as yourselves.

The tragic fate of which Jesus spoke here was a figurative reference to the coming judgment upon Jerusalem, to which He gave more detail in chapter 24. This happened in AD 70, and the whole city became as the city dump (the valley of Hinnom, just outside the city) when the Romans destroyed it. Not only that, their old religion with its temple cultus was buried, so converting someone to Judaism would only lead them into death, along with the Jews. But the good news is that when Jesus, as the Messiah, was buried, He as Israel's representative took all Israel to the grave and then raised them all up in the

new creation [2 Cor. 5:14, “**One Person** (or: Man) **died over [the situation of] all mankind** (or: for the sake of all); **consequently all people died** (or: accordingly, then, all humanity died);” 2 Cor. 5:17, “**Consequently, since someone {is} within Christ** (or: So that if anyone {is} in union with {the} Anointed One; or: And as since a Certain One {was} in Christ), **{there is} a new creation.**”]

Matt. 23:33-35

33. “[You] **snakes! [You] offspring** (brood) **of vipers** (poisonous serpents)! **How can you flee and escape from the judgment which has the qualities, character and significance of the**

valley of Hinnom (= the sentence to the city dump [Greek: Gehenna]; the decision which pertains to the waste depository of the city)?

34. "Because of this – look and consider! – I, Myself, am continuing in commissioning and sending off to you people prophets, wise people and scholars (scribes; theologians of the Law). Of them, [some] you folks will be killing, and [some] you will crucify (put to death on stakes). Further, of them [some] you people will severely whip (scourge; lash) within your synagogues, and then you, yourselves, will be pursuing and persecuting [them] from city to city (or: town to

town),

35. "so that upon you, yourselves, can (or: should) come all [the] just (equitable; rightwised) blood being continuously poured out (or: spilled) upon the Land – from the blood of rightwised (just; fair; in-right-relationship) Abel, until the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah (or: Baruch), whom you people murdered between the Temple and the altar.

Jesus here amplifies what he had said, above, in vs. 15. Once again, the judgment would happen in their time and in a way that would look like the dishonor of their city dump, the valley of Hinnom. It happened in AD 70. It was

the final effect of the termination of the age of the Law of Moses, in conjunction with the new age of the Messiah. Note the plural pronouns in this verse that decidedly indicated to whom these warnings applied: “**you folks,**” the people at that time that were listening to Him and resisting Him. The “**you people**” of vs. 35 referred to the Jews, as a nation, but specifically to their leadership. God’s habit, in the OT, was to judge the people in accord with the behavior of their leaders. He primarily deals corporately.

Mark 9:43-49

43. "**Further, if ever your hand should at some point be entrapping you (be**

giving cause for stumbling or becoming captured, trapped, held in bondage or enslaved), **at once cut it off! It is ideal [for] you, yourself, to enter into the Life maimed, than, having the two hands, to go off into the Valley of Hinnom** (or: Gehenna; [note: this is a ravine south of Jerusalem where fires were kept burning to consume the dead bodies of animals, criminals and refuse]) – **into the fire which is not extinguished.**

[note: Nestle-Aland, Westcott & Hort, Tasker, and Panin texts, following the oldest MSS, omit vss. 44 and 46, which are the same as vs. 48; MSS A D and others contain them:

"where their maggot (or: worm) continues not coming to the end [of its food], and the fire continues not being extinguished.']

45. "And if your foot should begin repeatedly entrapping you in some snare, at once cut it off! It is ideal [for] you, yourself, to enter into the Life lame and crippled, than, having the two feet, to be thrown into the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna: the city dump).

47. "And if your eye should begin repeatedly entrapping you in some snare, throw (or: cast) it out! It is ideal [for] you, yourself, to enter into God's kingdom (reign, activities and influence)

one-eyed, than, having two eyes, to be thrown into Hinnom's ravine (Greek: Gehenna; = the city dump outside Jerusalem),

48. "'where their maggot (or: worm) continues not coming to the end [of its food], and the fire continues not being extinguished.' [Isa. 66:24]

49. "Indeed, everyone (all humanity) will be salted (seasoned and preserved) in (with; by) fire! [some MSS add: – even every sacrifice is to be salted with salt]

This is mostly a parallel to Matt. 5:27-30, above. Now consider the graphic quote of Isa. 66:24, here in vs. 48. There, in Isa. 66:1-14, it speaks of

blessings and comfort to Jerusalem.

Then vss. 15-17 tell of Yahweh's coming with fire, in judgment. But vss. 18-23 describe the coming of His glory (Christ) and of the worship of Yahweh, with the final verse (24) being the one that Jesus quotes here in Mark 9, "And they will go forth [out of Jerusalem] and see the corpses of the mortals who transgressed against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they will become a repulsion to all flesh." (Isa. 66:24)

Take note that this is speaking of "the corpses" – i.e., "dead bodies." It is not speaking of some "afterlife" situation.

All of this happens in this life, upon the earth – not in "eternity" nor in some other place or sphere.

Lu. 12:4-5 is a variation of Matt. 10:28.

And James 3:6 is the final use of the term Gehenna in the NT,

6. Well the tongue [is] a fire; [its fuel is] the System of injustice (or: the ordered and decorated but dominating world of secular culture, religion, politics and government which is unjust; or: The tongue, also, [is] fire: the world of disregard for what is right).

The tongue is placed down within our members, continuously spotting (staining; = defiling) the whole body, and repeatedly setting on fire the

wheel of birth (= the cycle of the origin [of life], or of generation; the wheel of genesis), **as well as being continuously set on fire by (or: under) the garbage dump** (the depository of refuse; Greek: Gehenna – the Valley of Hinnom).

Here James (literally, Jacob) is using the word *Gehenna* metaphorically, but he is using it in reference to behavior of people in this life here on earth.

Concerning Hades (the Unseen; Hebrew: *sheol*; = the grave)

Matt. 11:23-24 (Lu. 10:15)

23. "And as for you, Capernaum! Will you be 'exalted as far as heaven (or: the sky)'? No!

'You will be brought down and

"mounted" (as a female by a male) **as far as the Unseen** (Hades; = Sheol; the grave; the abode of the dead)!' [Isa. 14:13, 15]

Because if the powers and abilities, being birthed and happening within you, had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained in place unto today.

24. "What is more, I now say to you folks, that it will consequently be more endurable in, and for, [the] land of Sodom, in [the] day of separation and decision, than for you folks!"

This is a metaphor for a city being brought to ruin and being buried.

Matt. 16:18-19

18. **"And now I, Myself, am saying to you that you are Peter** (or: that you continue being an isolated stone). **And you see, [it is] upon this: the rock mass** (or: bedrock) **[that] I am going to construct and build up My house – the called-out community. And even gates of [the] unseen** (or: gates of an unseen place; [= boulders on the entrances of graves; = {the prison} gates of the 'house of death'; or: the bars enclosing the realm of the dead]) **will not bring strength down against it** (or: will not come to their full strength in relation to it; or: will not overpower it; will not prevail in resisting it).

19. "I am going to give to you the keys [note: = means of locking or unlocking] which have their origin and source in the reign and activities of the heavens

(or: which pertain to and have the characteristics of the kingdom of the heavens; or: which belong to the sovereignty from the atmospheres; or, as a genitive of apposition: the keys which are the sovereign reign of the heavens).

And so, whatever you can (or: may; should) bind upon the earth will be [something] having been bound, and still remaining bound, within the midst of the heavens (or: in the atmospheres). Also, whatever you can

(or: may; should) **loose upon the earth will be [something] having been loosed (unbound; untied), and remaining free of bonds, within the midst of the heavens (or: in the atmospheres).**"

We should compare this with Rev. 1:18 where keys and "death/the unseen" are again associated,

18. **"even The Living One (or: the One continuously living), I also brought Myself to be (or: birthed Myself) [to be] a dead one (or: I also came by Myself to be dead), and now, Look and consider! I am living on into the ages of the ages (or: the unspecified and indefinite time periods of the eons), and I constantly hold (or: have; possess)**

the keys of Death and of the Unseen
(Greek: *hades*)."

Christ shares His keys (means of unlocking the prisons that hold folks in death, with regard to their relationships with God, with themselves and with one another – *cf* Eph. 2:1) with His followers so that we can do what we see our Father doing: restoring folks to life by imparting His Spirit into them. The resurrection life of Christ (Jn. 11:25) restores life and shines His Light into their darkness (Jn. 1:5; 9) where – until the coming of the Light – everything is “**unseen.**”

We see the association of "death and the unseen" in Rev. 20:13-14. First, these

two "**deliver up the dead**," so we can see "hades" associated with the grave. The context is a situation of the dead being evaluated and decided about (or: judged), in vs. 12. It is a judgment that is based upon their works (not their beliefs). Next, in vss. 14-15, "**death and the unseen** (or: the grave)" are cast into the lake of the Fire. Those not "**found written in the book of the Life**" are also cast there.

We will look at "the lake of the Fire" and "the book of the Life" in another study. But we should note that in vs. 14 this "pond of the Fire" is described as the second death, and ch. 21:8 says that this lake/pond burns with "**Fire and**

Deity (or: the Devine Nature – *theion*). And so both death and the unseen have a new location: within God – Who is a **consuming fire** (Heb. 12:29). The picture is of the negative aspects of creation, and the judgment upon humanity that was made in Eden, are being returned into God, and thus, we can conclude, are being transformed. Those listed in this verse needing purification and transformation also have "**their part**" here – for they are the ones whose names are not yet written in the book of the Life of Christ. So their supposed "free will" is taken away by God's decision to purge them of all these negative qualities. Those yet "**dead in**

trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) are cast into an immersion (baptism) of Holy Spirit and Fire (Matt. 3:11) to experience His dealings upon and within them.

The only place that Rev. mentions "hades" is in 6:8, where it is again associated with "death," and where the pale horse rider is given authority to kill with sword, hunger, death and little animals of the land (or: earth). Once again, the context is here in this life, on this earth.

The book of Acts uses "hades" to refer to where Christ went, but where His soul (= Him) was not left (Acts 2:27; 31). The obvious reference is to His

death and burial.

Next we will look at 1 Cor. 15:55b, where the KJV, following the RT (Received, or Majority Text), renders "hades" as "grave." If those translators had been consistent, it would read "O hell, where is your victory?" However, all modern texts read "death" a second time. But this is a quote of Hos. 13:14, where the Heb. text reads "sheol" in the second line, and the LXX reads "hades." Young, following the RT reads "hades" here in 55b.

The last place to investigate "hades" in the NT is Lu. 16:22-24, in Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. This is the only place where "hades" is associated

with a flame and testing. It is also associated with his being buried. If we see the Rich Man as a figure of the Jewish leadership (in vs. 14 we see that Jesus began this discourse in response to them), then this is a metaphorical use of the "grave" for the Jewish religion dying and being buried when the Romans burned Jerusalem in AD 70.

Concerning *Tartarus*

Although Jesus did not use this word, there is just one more Greek word that should be added to the above list of categories, all of which are mistranslated as "hell" in the common translations of the NT. It is the word, "Tartarus," and although found twice in

the book of Job, in the NT it is found only in 2 Pet. 2:4,

4. For since (or: if) God did (or: does) not spare agents (or: folks having a, or, the message) – but who at one point were (or: are) straying from the goal (or: when failing to hit the mark; at missing the target; upon committing error) – but rather gave (or: gives) them over into an act of judging – of being repeatedly pruned (cut back for correction), while being constantly watched over, kept, maintained and protected – giving [them] the experience of Tartarus [Hellenistic mythological term and concept: the subterranean world; but *cf* LXX, Job

40:15 (where it refers to the marshlands and wild areas around the Jordan River) and 41:23 (where it indicates the caverns and lower parts of deep waters and the abyss)] **in dark, gloomy pits** (caves; caverns) [other MSS: in ropes (or: chains; bands; cords); = in bondage].

Observe the use of “*tartarus*” in the LXX. There it referred to marshlands and wild areas around the Jordan, and to caverns and lower parts of deep waters, in these verses from the book of Job. I now quote (as a reminder) from my commentary on this verse in 2 Peter, above:

“From this we can see that the word

Tartarus had been domesticated by the Jews and had come to have a “this world” application, even if its use was figurative in nature. The different MS traditions of the noun (**pits** versus ropes) in the last phrase have good witnesses for each reading – and it is only a slight difference in spelling that distinguishes these words – and while one describes wild living conditions, as for outcasts, the other implies imprisonment. As to the word **pits**, Barclay instructs us that the word,

‘[S]iros or *seiros* which originally meant a great earthenware jar for storing of grain. Then it came to mean the

great underground pits in which grain was stored and which served as granaries. *Siros* has come into English *via* Provencal in the form of *silo*, which still describes the towers in which grain is stored. Still later the word went on to mean a pit in which a wolf or other wild animal was trapped.... But there is a very similar word *seira*, which means a *chain*.... The Greek MSS of *Second Peter* vary between *seiroi*, pits, and *seirai*, chains” (ibid p 321; emphasis original; brackets added).”

Concerning "Outer Darkness"

Those cast out of the feasting in the reign of the heavens, Matt. 8:12,

12. **"Yet the 'sons of the kingdom** (or: reign; = those who were in line to inherit the kingdom; or: = those who were supposed to manifest its reign) **' will be thrown out into the external darkness** (external obscurity of the shadows).

There [= outside the banqueting building] **it will be 'weeping and grinding of teeth'** (or: The crying and the gnashing of teeth will be in that [outdoor] place, or situation)."

Here, from vs. 10 of this text, it would seem that Jesus is referring to the leadership in Israel that lacked faith, while those "from the east and the west"

(vs. 11; perhaps referring to other religions, but definitely speaking of the Gentiles) would be included. Verse 12 speaks of a loss of position and inclusion in kingdom functions.

We read of the person without appropriate clothing at the wedding feast, Matt. 22:13,

13. At that point, the king said to the servants, 'Upon binding his feet and hands, you men throw him out into the darkness (dim obscurity) which is farther outside. In that place there will continue being the weeping (or: lamenting) and the grinding of the teeth.'

Here, the point of the parable is

exclusion from the wedding party, which is another figure for participation in kingdom functions. We should not “read into” this some kind of “eternal punishment.” It primarily refers to the Jewish leadership that did not accept Jesus so as to be clothed with kingdom celebration garments (Christ, Himself), and from this union with Christ become part of the agents sent forth in the book of Acts Jesus had said to the ranking priests and scribes, in Matt. 21:43,

“God's reign (or: the kingdom of God; the influence and activity of God's sovereignty) will be progressively lifted up away from you folks, and it (or: she)

will proceed being given to an ethnic multitude (or: nation; people group; swarm of people) consistently producing its (or: her) fruit!”

We see that this happened, following His resurrection.

The slave who buried the talent, Matt. 25:30,

30. 'And now, you men at once throw the useless slave out into the darkness (dim obscurity and gloominess) which is farther outside. In that place there will continue being the weeping (or: lamenting) and the grinding of the teeth.'

Here the useless slave loses his job –

another figurative reference to what would happen to the Jewish leadership, in regard to the sovereign activity of God through people. The "weeping and grinding of teeth" is a picture of sadness and regret for the various losses. These were all prophetic pictures of the Jews as a religion and a nation losing their position in His reign and in what He was doing in the earth. They were being broken out of their olive tree, and others were being grafted in (Rom. 11:17). They entered into the darkness of this world where the Light of God's reign (now happening through His called-out, covenant communities) is not yet shining, but into which it is progressively

coming.

COVERS

The background of the cover is a photograph of a lush, green mountain valley. A river flows through the center of the valley, surrounded by steep, grassy slopes. The sky is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

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