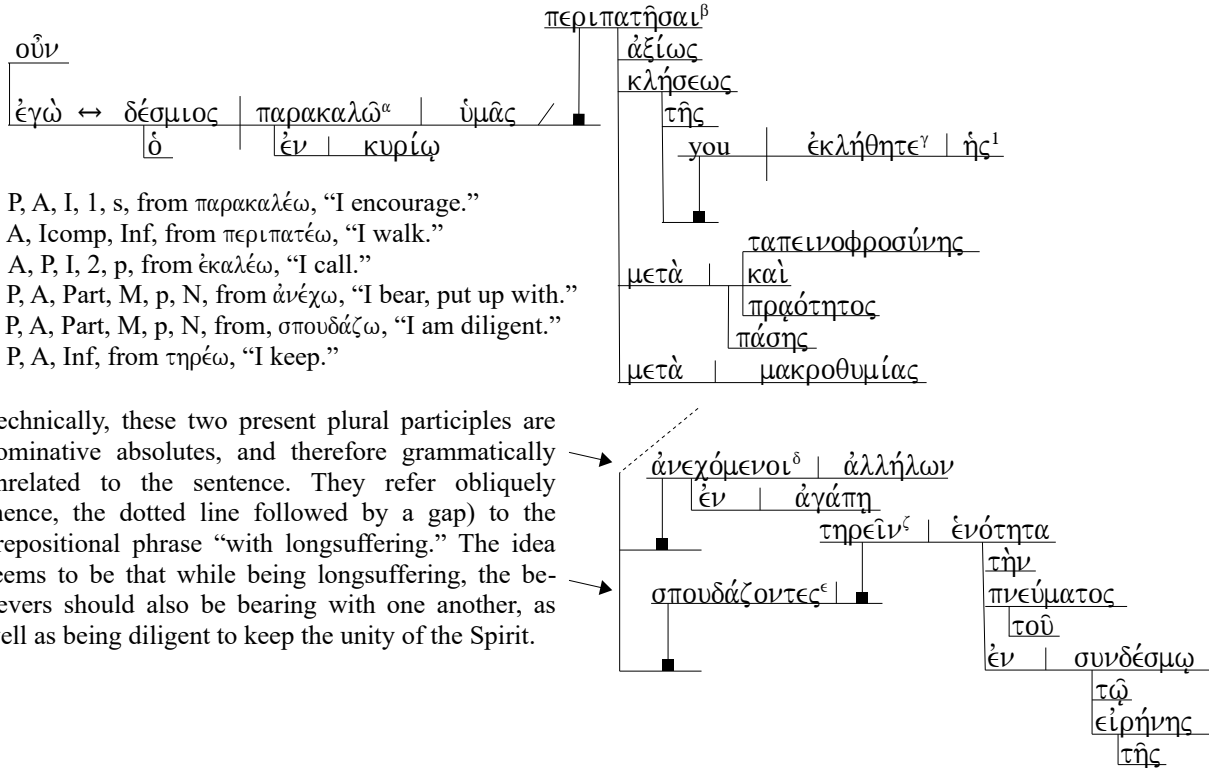


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4:1-3 παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε <sup>2</sup>  
μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραότητος, μετὰ μακροθυμίας ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ <sup>3</sup>  
σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης.



*Translation: Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, encourage you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

The topic of the Unity of the Church of Jesus Christ which began in 2:11 continues through 4:16. The current short paragraph, 4:1-6, deals with the sub-topic, “Unity Promoted through the Body of Peace.” This first sentence, 4:1-3, deals with “The Calling of Every Believer.”

There is, however, a shift in the tone of the epistle at this point. Though unity remains the main sub-theme, the perspective shifts from doctrinal to practical. Verses 1-4 begin dealing with problems in application of truth, either actual or potential. In all probability, Paul knew of some aberrations in the assembly that required strong leadership to correct. Hence verses 1-4 deal with an encouragement, aimed primarily at mature believers,<sup>2</sup> reminding them of the correct approach in maintaining unity.

**Exegetical Considerations**

1. παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε (*parakalō oun humas egō ho desmios en kuriō axiōs peripatēsai tēs klēseōs hēs eklēthēte – Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, encourage you all to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called*)

Paul introduces the doctrine of calling in order to bring forth a practical admonition. The doctrine of calling is a complex one, and Paul’s approach here implies a previous knowledge of the doctrine which deals with the means by which the individual believer enters into the state of salvation. One’s calling,

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then, results not only in “getting saved” but entering into a condition of salvation with all its grace benefits for daily living, which includes regeneration, Spirit baptism and indwelling, becoming gifted, as well as many other provision for living a godly life. In this context there was a problem within the assembly in Ephesus which must be dealt with, namely divisive behavior. See comments on vs. 4 below.

It is worth noting that the popular idea of a person being called to a specific place of ministry is without merit. Calling never deals with such ideas. One is called to salvation, and once called the individual responds, as calling is a sovereign act of God. Once called, the believer is now admonished to live a life consistent with it.

The verb *parakalō*<sup>3</sup>, which here I have translated “I encourage,” carries the content of a strong encouragement to action, and, in this case, an encouragement to live a particular kind of life.

The infinitive “to walk,” (*peripatēsai* from *peripateō*) is a metaphor for the characteristic activity of one’s daily life, daily activity that is worthy of one’s calling. Paul’s logic here is straightforward. Salvation brings a person into a relationship with God, and therefore, the individual is to walk in a manner worthy of that relationship. Within that context, the believer is to make wise decisions as to the time and place of his service to God. What is required by God is not where one serves, or even what one does while serving, but *how* one serves.

The doctrine of calling cannot be divorced from the doctrine of the believer’s lifestyle. Paul alone uses *peripateō* 32 times in his epistles to refer to this lifestyle, and Peter and John in their epistles use it another 11 times.<sup>4</sup>

2. μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ πραότητος, μετὰ μακροθυμίας ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων ἐν ἀγάπῃ  
(*meta pasēs tapeinofrosuēs kai praotētos, meta makrothumias anechomenoi allēlōn en agapē* – **with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love**)

The preposition “with” (*meta*) indicates association. “With” occurs twice, the first time with the compound nouns “humility and meekness,” the second time with “longsuffering.” These characteristics are general attitudes that govern the Christian’s walk.

“Humility” (*tapeinofrosuēs*) and meekness are associated together not only here, but in Colossians 3:12. Humility is sometimes translated “lowliness,” or “lowliness of mind.” It carries in its positive sense the idea of having a “modest opinion of oneself” (Thayer). However, it is also used in the negative sense of false humility. See Colossians 2:23.

Both Paul and Peter associate humility with personal relationships. It is one of the basic attitudes enjoyed in getting along with other people. Peter associates it with overcoming Satanic attack in 1 Peter 5:5-9. 1 Peter 5:5 says, “Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (NKJV). Humility appears, then, to be the opposite of being haughty, high minded, which is one of the attacks of Satan (see also Romans 12:2).

It may well be that a person who succumbs to circumstantial stress does so under the influence of Satanic attack, as high-mindedness is the basis for such an attack, which could greatly affect the relationship between believers.

“Meekness” (occurs 15 times as the related words *praotes*, *prautes*, and *praus*) is an often misunderstood word. Meekness is not to be confused with shyness or timidity, nor with a lack of assertiveness or boldness. Vine correctly states,

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It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was 'meek' because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.<sup>5</sup>

While meekness includes the idea of gentleness, it also includes the idea of a correct consideration of one's self, and a willingness to step out in boldness as a result. Therefore, to translate the word "gentleness," as is often done, includes only one part of the meaning of the word as used in the New Testament.

The concept of being meek appears to be used in three ways:

1. Sometimes *meek* emphasizes the judicious and accurate *application* of power and authority. See Galatians 6:1, for example.
2. Other times *meek* emphasizes the judicious and accurate *withholding* of power and authority. See 1 Corinthians 4:21.
3. But often it combines both concepts without distinction as in 1 Peter 3:4.

It appears here that it is used in the second sense, as seems to be described in the next verse.

"Longsuffering" is the third attitude associated with the Christian's walk. This word is also often misunderstood. The fruit of the Spirit longsuffering is to be contrasted with the idea of *patience* or *endurance*.

The Greek word for longsuffering is *makrothumia*. Used 14 times in the New Testament, it is derived from two words: *makros* means long, either in time or distance, and *thumos* means anger, passion, which is derived from *thuo* meaning to offer a sacrifice, to kill.

On the other hand, the Greek word for *patience* or *endurance* is *hupomonē*. It is used 32 times, and the verb form is used 17 times. It is also derived from two words: *hupo* means under and *monē* means to remain.

The two words have quite different definitions. Longsuffering is the ability to experience various circumstances without losing one's temper, or getting angry. *Patience* or *endurance* is the ability to experience various circumstances without attempting to get out from under them. Paul considered the two words to mean different things. See Colossians 1:10-11; 2 Timothy 3:10; and 2 Corinthians 6:4-7.

Other contrasts occur in Scripture, but these should be sufficient to see the difference between the two. The significance in the passage before us is vital. Longsuffering, unlike endurance or patience, relates strongly to interpersonal relationships, and hence we find the independent nominative participle clause, "bearing with one another in love." The participle *anechomenoi* is an independent nominative, and grammatically unrelated to the clause.<sup>6</sup>

3. σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης (*spoudazontes tērein tēn henotēta tou pneumatos en tō sundesmō tēs eirēnēs* – *being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*)

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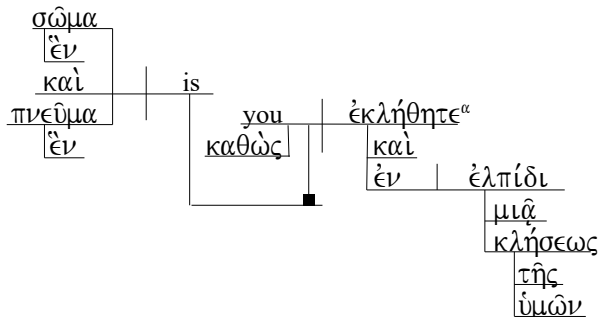
This final independent participial clause brings together the three associated words associated with the Christian walk. Humility, meekness, and longsuffering are all necessary to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.<sup>7</sup> This requires diligence on the part of the believer.

One caveat is necessary here. While maintaining humility, meekness and longsuffering in keeping the unity of the believers is of vital importance, doctrinal purity, and a lack of divisiveness are also necessary. No matter how diligent one is in attempting to keep the unity of believers, it is not always possible in the light of an unwillingness of some to give up erroneous thinking, and to promote serious error, which can in turn cause weak believers to be driven from the truth.

Such an admonition would not have been necessary if there had been no signs of strife within the assembly in Ephesus. Paul's encouragement in this location is not to invalidate his strong requirements when dealing with those who upset the assembly through either doctrinal or personal wrong-doing.

It is likely that this admonition was given to those in the Ephesian assembly that were, to some extent, being divisive, and attempting to promote ideas that were not from God. It is possible that then, as today, pagan thought was intruding into the life of the believers, and some were being led astray, departing from the true doctrines. Paul warned the Ephesian elders of this very possibility in Acts 20:17-36.

4:4 ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν.



α A, TP, I, 2, p, from καλέω.

*Translation:* There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling.

Verses 4-6 deal with the multifaceted basis for the unity of the believer. The number *one* occurs seven times in these two verses, detailing a series of singular elements that support the doctrine of the unity.

**Exegetical Considerations**

4. ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν (*hen sōma kai hen pneuma kathōs kai eklēthēte en mia elpidi tēs klēseōs humōn – There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling*)

The unity of believers is based on facts, not on emotional associations. Paul makes that clear in verses 4-6. Here are basic doctrines, some of which may have been at issue among those who were divisive, causing disunity.

The first truth is that there is one body, referring to the body of Christ, the totality of the assembly of God's saints viewed throughout the current age. There are not several bodies, though some teach that false doctrine even today. The local assembly, for instance, is not one of many bodies of Christ. A local assembly of true believers shares in the quality of the body (see 1 Corinthians 12:27).

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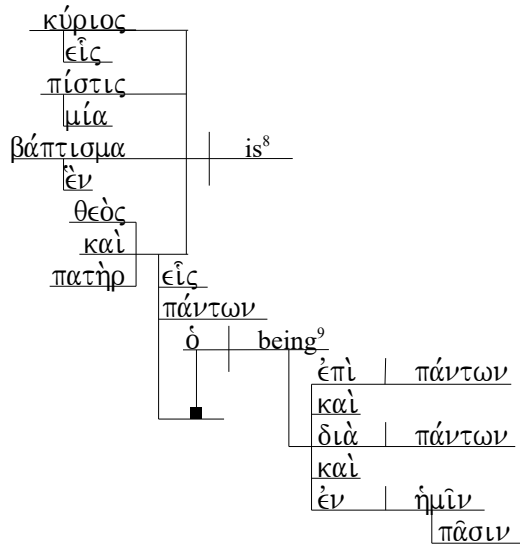
Directly associated with the one body is the one Spirit who brought the body into existence, and who sustains the body through time by the addition of more members. This close association provides the basis for the rest of the associations in this verse through verse 6.

The phrase “just as you were called” brings one of the functions of the Spirit into the spotlight. Note the Greek diagram, where the subordinate clause is directly associated with the existences of the two parallel truths of one body and one Spirit. The calling of God is accomplished in time by the person of the Spirit who sustains the one body. This emphasis on calling drives our thoughts back to vs. 1, where Paul encourages the believer to walk in a manner worthy of the calling.

The idea of “one hope of your calling” is best understood to be the singular expectation for the believer’s lifestyle resulting from God’s calling. That lifestyle is to be characterized by the application of the grace provisions the Christian enjoys in the state of salvation. Therein lies the singular hope, the ultimate expectation that the spiritual believer has.

Paul builds on this short sentence by introducing other unifying features in verses 5-6.

4:5-6 εἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα, <sup>6</sup> εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡμῖν.



*Translation: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, the one who is over all and through all and in you all.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

**5. εἷς κύριος μία πίστις ἓν βάπτισμα (heis kurios mia pistis hen baptism – There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism)**

Verses 5-6 make up one sentence, which we divide for convenience sake. Four singularities make up the unifying doctrine, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. The order of these singularities is significant.

One Lord is first mentioned because the activity of the Lord Jesus Christ is the historical means by which next two singularities exist, which leads to the final singularity, God the Father. Christ’s sacri-

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fice, His resurrection, and His current ascended activity produced the historical means by which the body came into existence through the Spirit. This in turn, produced a single body of faith.

The one faith refers to the body of belief which all Christians share. The one faith is not, however, all inclusive. As one studies the New Testament, it becomes clear that to Paul, the "one faith" is not found primarily in the Old Testament, or even in the Gospels, but in the New Testament apostolic writings. With the Old Testament and the Gospels as its background, the new programs of salvation, grace for daily living, and future expectation of the resurrection and rapture of the believers comes into sharp focus, for they are clearly distinct from the features of the Mosaic and kingdom programs presented in those previous documents.. None of these new articles of faith, as well as the various multifaceted truths associated with them, can be found anywhere other than the New Testament epistles.

These facts are punctuated by the one baptism. Here is a problem, as the word baptism (βάπτισμα) refers to several different acts in the Scriptures. It refers to John the Baptizer's act, the baptism carried out by Jesus' disciples in the Gospels, to the future baptism of Israel into judgment (the Holy Spirit and fire, Matthew 3:11), and finally to the baptism by the Holy Spirit. How, then, can Paul speak of "one baptism?"

In this context, Paul must mean Spirit baptism. It is clear that Paul means *one* in the same sense as the previous meaning of that word. It means "one and only one." Yet today most Bible students do not believe that there is only one baptism. Generally among conservatives two baptisms are thought to be valid, water baptism and Spirit baptism. Yet most today make it refer to water baptism. Even *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* holds that untenable view. Likewise, Barnes, Robertson, JFB (who call it "the sacramental seal of faith"), Ellicott, Alford, B. F. Johnson, and Darby all hold to water baptism.

In the author's library, only one writer gets it right! And that is J. Vernon McGee, who says, "'One baptism' has reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is real baptism. Ritual baptism is by water." Frankly, this cannot mean water baptism, for the issue is unity in the body of Christ, which unity is brought about by Spirit baptism. The weak arguments that are used to identify the baptism here with water are unsound. Typical is that of *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, which says, "It seems unlikely that this refers to the latter, Spirit baptism, because it is in the triad of elements that pertain to Christ, the second Person of the Trinity. Also nothing in the broader context (Eph 4:1-16) suggests that this is the Spirit's baptism. If it refers to water baptism, then the idea is that by this single act believers demonstrate their spiritual unity."

On the contrary, the broader context screams out that the body of Christ is the factual basis for unity, not some ritual, which by the time of the writing of Ephesians was probably being rarely exercised. One searches in vain for the idea that water baptism produces unity. Indeed, in a practical way it has become divisive, even as it was in Corinth, where water baptism had become so corrosive an element that it lent to flagrant carnality and division in the assembly.

Hence Paul states in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,<sup>15</sup> lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.<sup>16</sup> Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.<sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect" (NKJV).

Spirit baptism, on the other hand, is the means by which the Holy Spirit unifies the believer with the Body of Christ. Forst Corinthians 12:12-14 states, "For as the body is one and has many members, but

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all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

And the context of the previous quote is quite similar to the Ephesians 4 context, one of unity of the believer. It boggles the mind to think that so many find water baptism in Ephesians 4, when the context so clearly indicates that Paul must be referring to Spirit baptism.

Today, there is only one baptism, and it is hardly water baptism. It is the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Water baptism, which was primarily a Jewish rite, was only applied to Gentiles in the early transition to indicate that they were part of the same program as the Jews, who regularly practiced baptism. Yet, it quickly became contentious, and appears to have generally ceased by the time of the writing of Paul's later epistles. At least, water baptism is never mentioned in a positive light by Paul.

**6. εἰς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων (*heis theos kai patēr pantōn – one God and Father of all*)**

The final singularity Paul mentions is God the Father. In one sense, this sums up the ultimate teaching of unity, as the Father is the focus of the grace life. All three persons of the trinity appear in verses 4-6, but it is the Father who is said to be the over-arching person of unity, as found in the three-fold expression of His personal presence.

The statement in vs. 6 first indicates that God is the Father of all. This is a Trinitarian statement, not a social one or genetic one. He is the Father as He expresses Himself within the Trinity. This is not a statement of eternal reality, but of the temporal relationships within the godhead. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are designations of the three eternal persons. However, they are not essential statements, but sovereign expressions of each Person's relationships to the present creation. In this sense the descriptor “Father of all” includes His relationship to: 1) the other two persons (see Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22<sup>10</sup>), 2) the rest of creation, including spirit beings, fallen and elect, and, 3) humanity, fallen and elect.

**ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡμῖν (*ho epi pantōn kai dia pantōn kai en pasin hemin – the one who is over all and through all and in you all*)**

The Father's presence with reference to the creation, then, is three-fold: 1) He is over all, 2) He is through all, and 3) He is in you all.

A Trinitarian might ask, could not all three of these statements be made of the other persons of the Trinity? The answer is, yes, of course, with reference to the fact that all three persons inhere the essence, and the essence is omnipresent within the creation, the statement could be said concerning all. However, it is not. It is specifically, and contextually, stated of the Father in contrast to the other Persons. The question is, why is that so?

Paul is presenting a vital truth concerning the relationship of the Father both within and without the Trinity. In Romans 6:10-11 Paul makes it clear that the Father is the focus of the Christian life, unlike the popular misconception that the godly life is Christ-centered.

The three-fold focus on the Father is as follows:

1. *The one who is over all*: This is a statement of personal transcendence, and is to be taken in the spatial sense. It refers to the fact that God's present residence is in heaven, and implies that His person has never been resident on the earth, as have both the Son and the Holy Spirit. However,

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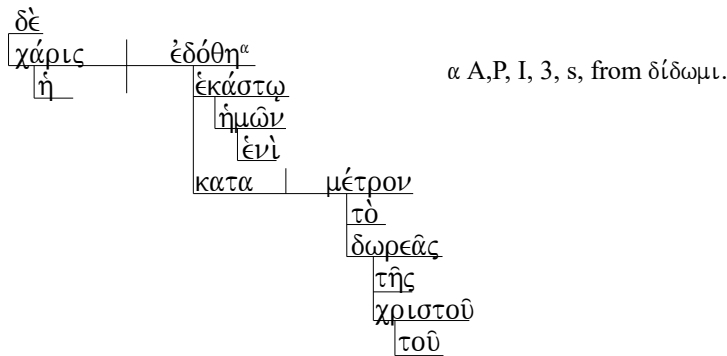
it does not imply that His residence cannot change, as some have it. It evidently will in the future (Revelation 21:2-7)<sup>11</sup>.

2. *And through all*: Here we have a statement of personal immanence. Since His person inheres the essence, He is personally omnipresent throughout the creation.
3. *And in you all*: This is personal, non-residential indwelling. It is unique, since it implies a personal relationship with believers of this age because of the change from the Old Testament set of programs, going back to the creation, and continuing until the current age. It is an essential indwelling of the person, rather than a residential indwelling, such as that associated with the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7 begins a paragraph that extends through vs. 16. It is, in a real sense, a bridge between the concept of unity of the church and the spirituality of the individual believer. It concludes the unity doctrine and lays the groundwork for Paul's presentation of the doctrine of practical spirituality.

The association between the unity of the body of Christ and the spirituality of the believer becomes evident once the student arrives at the paragraph beginning in 4:17.

4:7 ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ χριστοῦ.



*Translation: But to each of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

The final paragraph in the section dealing with the unity of the church introduces the topic of spiritual gifts beginning in vs. 7 and continues to vs. 16. Its doctrinal topic is the practical application of body truth to the ministry of the individual. It deals with such topics as spiritual gifts, and the singularity of the body of Christ.

**Exegetical Considerations**

7. ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις (*heni de hekastō hēmōn edothē hē charis* – **But to each of us was given grace**)

Paul indicates that each believer is given grace. Starting in Ephesians 3:2 the word grace refers to the provision of God for the daily life of the believer. Paul first applies it to himself in 3:8, where he identifies the grace given to him specifically for the purpose of evangelizing the Gentiles. Now he broadens the statement beyond himself, and says “to each of us the grace was given.” The word the (*hē*) before grace (*charis*) is an article of previous reference.

Paul's meaning is simple: the same grace he received to evangelize Gentiles is given to *us*, that is, to each believer. All believers receive the same provision for service to God that Paul did. However, the next phrase in the verse indicates some variation in that provision of grace.

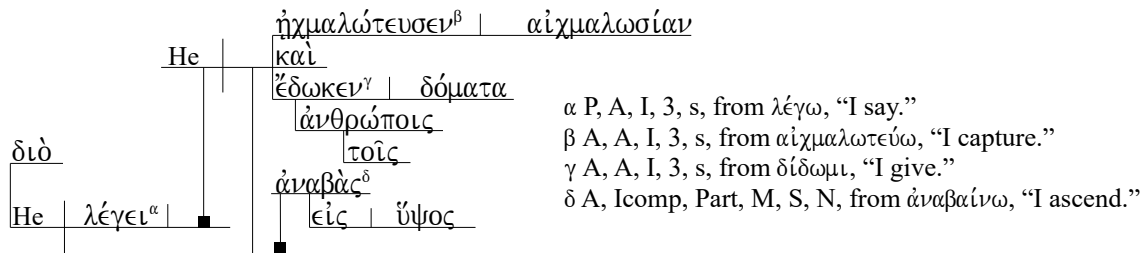


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κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ χριστοῦ (*kata to metron tēs dōreas tou christou – according to the measure of the gift of Christ*)

The key to this prepositional phrase, which relates back to the verb “was given,” is the object of the preposition “according to” (*kata*), the noun measure (*metron*). God does not give His grace indiscriminately, but measures out the correct ability to each individual as that individual has need. The reason for this measuring of grace will become evident as we continue through this paragraph, but the basic idea is that Christ’s gift to each individual is applied in a measured amount. The meaning of the word “gift” begins to become clear starting in the next sentence. It relates to a special supernatural ability provided by Christ to believers.

4:8 διὸ λέγει ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.



*Translation: He says, As He ascended into a high place, He led captive a group of captives, and He gave gifts to men.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

8. διὸ λέγει ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος (*dio legei anabas eis hupsos – Therefore, He says, As He ascended into a high place*)

The word “therefore” takes us to the previous sentence. Paul is continuing the discussion of the measured grace gift for each believer. “He says” indicates that Paul is referencing an allusion from another Scripture, in this case, Psalm 68:18. The allusion is not to lend support for the doctrine that Paul is teaching concerning the gift of Christ, of which the Psalm does not speak, but of the similarity of language that indicates God is in control of the events of men. Paul uses this language, which the rabbis applied to Moses, to indicate God’s intervention in history.

Here, of course, Paul is referring not to Moses, but to the ascension of Christ. However, many scholars believe that this is not a reference to the ascension in Acts 2, but to an earlier “out of body” ascension during the time Christ’s body was in the grave. This seems highly likely, which can be seen from the rest of the sentence.

Dr. McGee is correct when he says, “He led captivity captive, which refers, I believe, to the redeemed of the Old Testament who went to paradise when they died. Christ took these believers with Him out of paradise into the very presence of God when He ascended.” Unfortunately, Dr. McGee seems to refer this to the Acts 1:9 ascension. There is adequate evidence to indicate that Christ ascended to heaven prior to the Acts 1:9 ascension, at least once, and probably twice. See the notes on vs. 9 for further discussion.

ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν (*ēchmalōteusen aichmalosian – He led captive a group of captives*)

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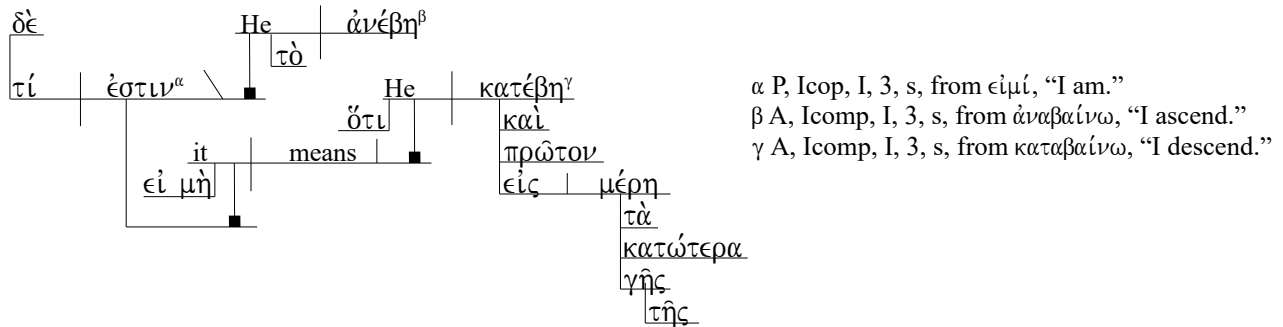
“He” refers to Christ, of course. The traditional translation “He led captivity captive,” is inadequate. The “captivity” is better translated as I have it, “a group of captives.” For that seems to be what Christ did. In this, we agree wholeheartedly with Dr. McGee.

**καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις (*kai edōken domata tois anthropois – and He gave gifts to men*)**

The ultimate point of this particular sentence is found in the fact that Christ gave gifts to men. This is not a reference to giving a specific gift to a specific person. Rather, it refers to the first step in the grace process which entailed entering heaven in a disembodied state, and expressing the fact of giving gifts to men. Note that both gifts and men are plural.

The idea is that spiritual gifts for daily living could not have been given prior to this act of ascension. Old Testament believers, “a group of captives” were not resurrected, entered “into the very presence of God,” as Dr. McGee states. Spiritual gifts became possible when all those Old Testament believers were delivered from the captivity of “paradise.” After that event, spiritual gifts became available to men on earth.<sup>12</sup>

**4:9 τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς;**



*Translation: But what does the phrase “He ascended” mean, unless it means that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?*

Verse 9, which may be seen to begin a new paragraph, is actually a rhetorical question, the answer to which is supplied in the subsequent sentences. As such, I have maintained its relationship to the paragraph which begins in vs. 7. The topic is clearly continued from verses 7 and 8.

***Exegetical Considerations***

**9. τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστὶν (*to de anebē ti estin – But what does the phrase “He ascended” mean*)**

Referring back to the phrase “He ascended” Paul continues his discussion. He asks “what is it?” The rhetorical question is answered by explaining one aspect of its meaning.

**εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς (*ei mē hoti kai katebē prōton eis ta katōtera merē tēs gēs – unless it means that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth*)**

The rhetorical question implies that Christ first descended. One cannot ascend otherwise. Paul bases this statement on the deity of the person of Christ. Some have attempted to make this descent the coming of Christ from heaven at the incarnation. But this descent cannot refer to the incarnation, for that descent did not result in “taking a group of captives captive.” It can only refer to a descent as the result of having redeemed those captives, and having the right to remove them from their captivity.

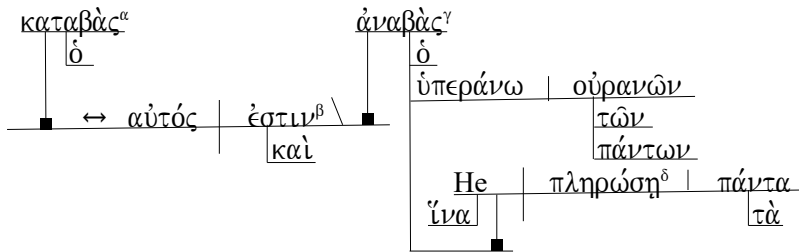
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To make “into the lower parts of the earth” mean simply “to earth” is inadequate. It makes the phrase “of the earth” to be a genitive of apposition, which construction could be paraphrased “the lower parts which consist of the earth.” Those who hold this view generally give no explanation for why the phrase “of the earth” is not a normal genitive of possession, which is the most natural reading.

To make the descent in this sentence refer to the incarnation invalidates the entire logic of the passage, though that is what many have done. Their objection is sometimes based on the false teaching that Christ “went to hell” during the time His body was in the grave. Since they rightly reject that false doctrine, they also object to the idea that Christ descended to *hades* at all, that is, to the place where dead people are kept prior to the resurrection. But it is clear that the believing dead did not descend to a place of suffering, but to “Abraham’s bosom,” as Christ called it. That it is directly associated with *hades* in Christ’s story of Lazarus, is clear. But that it is not a place of suffering is also clear.

There can be no objection to Christ’s descending into “paradise” at the time of His physical death. Otherwise, we have an anomaly. Christ’s death on the cross was with reference to His humanity, not to His deity. The divine person related His action to the nature that He chose to associate with that action. Hence, Christ’s perfect human nature paid the penalty for the sins of mankind. His divine person, in association with that human nature, departed the body and descended into the place reserved for the righteous dead at that time. However, being the divine person, He was not held captive in that place, as its purely human occupants were. So He ascended, accompanied by that group of believing captives, who are no longer kept in “paradise.” Both the divine person, Christ, and the human persons remained disembodied at that time.

**4:10** ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.



α P, Icomp, Part, M, s, N, from καταβαίνω.  
β P, Icop, I, 3<sup>rd</sup>, s, from εἶμι.  
γ P, Icomp, Part, M, s, N, from ἀναβαίνω.  
δ A, TA, S, 3<sup>rd</sup>, s, from πληρόω.

*Translation: The one who descended, He Himself is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, in order that He should fill all things.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

**10. ὁ καταβάς (*ho katabas* – *The one who descended*)**

As noted above, many hold that this participle phrase refers to the incarnation of Christ. However, the next clause does not support that view.

**αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν (*autos estin kai ho anabas huperanō pantōn tōn ouranōn* – *He Himself is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens*)**

This is an emphatic reference (He Himself) to the one who descended. Paul adds this to the above sentences to indicate the uniqueness of the act of descending that the Lord did, after which descent He led captives out of captivity, and gave gifts to men. He did these two things when He “ascended far above all the heavens.”

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This peculiar phrase cannot refer to the ascension of Acts 1:9. The fact that Christ “ascended far above (*huperanō*)<sup>13</sup> all the heavens” is a unique statement, found only here. The ascension of Acts 1:9 is mentioned in Hebrews 10:12-13, where Christ “sat down at the right hand of God,” an act associated with Christ’s *humanity*. God the Father’s residence then, as now, is in the third heaven. As a result of the bodily ascension of Acts 1, Christ entered the throne room of God the Father, and sat down in a position of authority. This is a highly significant event, as it signals the end of His purification ministry. We read in Hebrews 1:3,

*who being the radiance of His glory and the perfect representation of His essence, and bearing up all things by the expression of His power, through His own agency,<sup>14</sup> having produced purification for our sins, sat down at the right side of the Majesty in the high places.... (Shinn)*

*Purification* does not refer to Christ’s redemptive act, but to the fact that Christ’s death also replaced the ineffective Levitical sacrifice, and thereby truly cleansed believers from daily sin. Having finished the purification (not redemptive) work, no repetition was needed. So Christ “sat down” indicating that completion. The contrast is with the Mosaic priests who sacrificed “standing daily” (Hebrews 10:11).

In the ascension of Ephesians 4, Christ “ascended far above all the heavens.” In this act, the Lord left the physical creation, which is an expression of Christ’s *deity*. It is much more likely that He did so in His disembodied state, as it would have been incongruous (though not impossible) for Christ to have left the created universe while in His body.

Dr. H. LaVerne Schafer held that there were four distinct ascensions, three of which were prior to His resurrection. I concur, and reproduce his presentation here, along with a few of my notes:

I. The First Ascension – Ephesians 4:8-10

*Therefore He says, After He ascended into a high place, He led captive a group of captives, and He gave gifts to men.<sup>15</sup> <sup>9</sup> But the “He ascended,” what is it, if it is not that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup> The One Who descended, He Himself is also the One Who ascended far above all the heavens, in order that He should fill<sup>16</sup> all things.(Shinn)*

A. This is associated with the events recorded in 1 Peter 3:17-20.

*For, if the will of God should desire, it is better to suffer while doing good than while doing wrong,<sup>18</sup> because Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous One for unrighteous ones, in order that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other hand being made alive by the Spirit,<sup>19</sup> by Whom also, He made proclamation when He went to the spirits in prison,<sup>20</sup> who, having formerly disobeyed when the longsuffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah when the ark was being prepared, into which a few, this is to say, eight souls, were saved through water.... (Shinn)*

B. It was prior to the resurrection. Christ was in an incorporeal state.

C. Christ ascended “far above all the heavens,” indicating that He departed the physical universe.

II. The Second Ascension – Hebrews 4:14

*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.(NKJV)*

A. This relates to the high priestly ministry of Christ.

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- B. It was prior to the resurrection. Christ was in an incorporeal state.
- C. At this point Christ passed through the heavens, but not beyond them.

III. The Third Ascension – Hebrews 9:24-25

*For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; <sup>25</sup> not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another.... (NKJV)*

- A. This is when Christ took His blood into heaven.
- B. It was subsequent to the resurrection.
- C. It was this ascension to which Christ referred in John 20:17.

*Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father. But go to My brothers and say to them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God. (Shinn)*

IV. The Fourth Ascension – Acts 1:9

*Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (NKJV)*

- A. This is the formal ascension in His body that completes the previous work of Christ on the earth as the sacrificed Lamb of God – Hebrews 10:12-13.

*But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. (NKJV)*

- B. It was subsequent to the resurrection.
- C. Christ sat at the right hand of the Father in His glorified human body. He is still there, waiting until the second coming. (This is not to say that He cannot move around, but that His current residence is at the right side of the Father.)

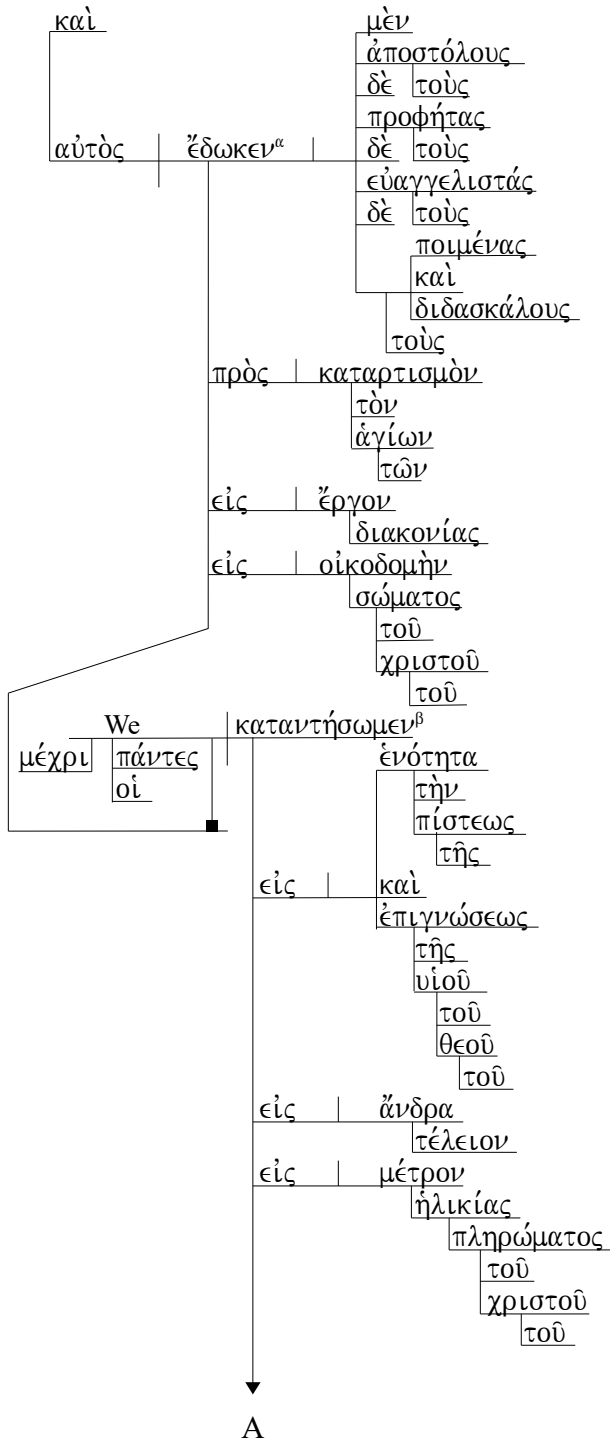
**ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα (*hina plērōsē ta panta – in order that He should fill all things*)**

This purpose clause modifies the participle *anabas*, “ascended.” See the Greek diagram. Christ ascended in order to “fill all things.” The word *fill* here is metaphorical in the same sense as it is used in Ephesians 5:18. It expresses Christ’s control of all things, an act that belongs to God alone. It is a phrase that expresses the deity of Christ with reference to the context of giving gifts to men.

The ultimate point to verses 7-10 is to introduce the topic of spiritual gifts, which begins in vs. 11 and continues in one long sentence through the rest of the paragraph.

**4:11-16** καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους τοὺς δὲ προφῆτας τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους <sup>12</sup> πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ <sup>13</sup> μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ <sup>14</sup> ἵνα μηκέτι ὦμεν νήπιοι κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης <sup>15</sup> ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ χριστός <sup>16</sup> ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

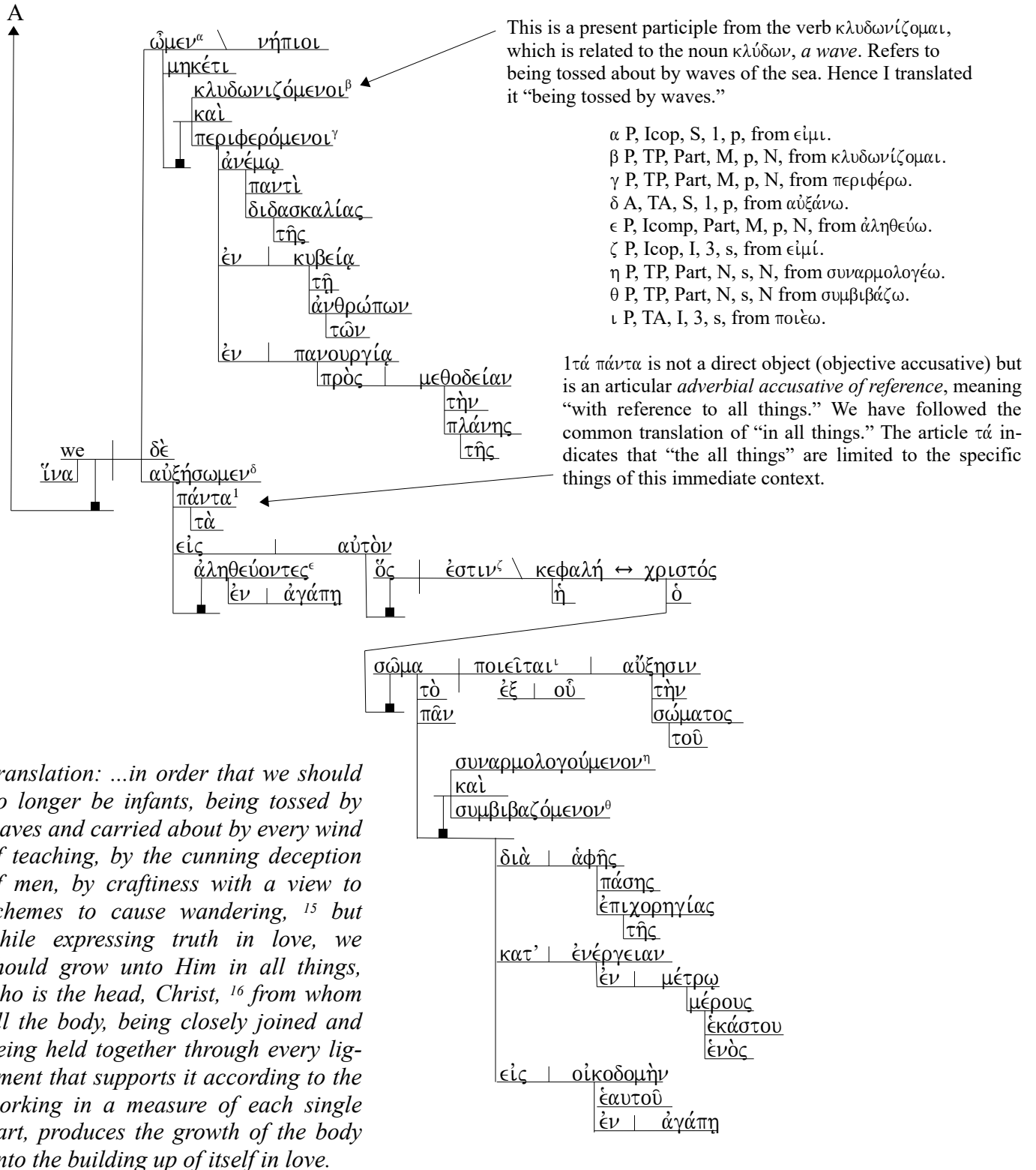
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α A, TA, I, 3, s, from δίδωμι.  
β A, Icomp, S, 1, p, from κατατάω.

*Translation: <sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave first some apostles, then some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the outfitting of the saints unto the work of service for building up of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to a measure of the mature age of the fullness of Christ...*

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**A Brief Introduction to Spiritual Gifts**

The original readers of this epistle would not have read it in abject ignorance. Paul had spent about three years in Proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. He would have done a large amount of teaching, much of which he alluded to when writing to the Ephesians. In scanning other epistles of Paul on this topic we gain much insight into his overall teaching concerning gifts.

It seems wise, therefore, to give some information about gifts that provide the background to Paul's discussion in Ephesians. Specifically, a basic understanding of the nature and definition of gifts in general is required before one considers each gift. What, then, are spiritual gifts?

**Negatively Stated**

*Spiritual Gifts are Not Natural Talents*

Many are born with inherent abilities. Some of those may be called talents, in that their execution takes skill beyond the norm. Some are born with musical ability, for instance, and must discover this ability as they mature. But such is not a spiritual gift, as many unbelievers are greatly talented in music.

A spiritual gift is not a natural, but a supernatural ability which provides ability beyond the natural. The function of a spiritual gift is to be directed to the glory of God. Sometimes spiritual gifts overlap natural abilities, such as the gift of teacher, for example, but this is not always the case.<sup>17</sup>

A natural teacher has the ability to give out information to those who need it in a clear, informative, and interesting way. All who have attended school have had both good and not so good teachers. The good ones have a native ability that generally keeps their students interested. However, such an individual may not be able to teach in the area of spiritual need at all. This writer has personally known Christian teachers who are wonderful in school situations with children, and even some who were college professors who are capable and who students greatly admire. But some of those teachers do not teach Scripture well because their spiritual gift is not their natural gift. Their personal gifted service to God lies in other areas.

Likewise, there are those who are gifted spiritually as teachers, who do not have the inclination to teach otherwise. They have no interest in teaching children to read, or college students history, math, or medicine, even though they may be well educated and capable people. Their interests and abilities lie elsewhere. But their spiritual discernment of Scripture, and their desire to teach others, came on them after they became believers and discovered a love of teaching the Word of God.

*Spiritual Gifts are Not Limitations on Ministry*

Both Peter and Paul indicate that an individual has but one spiritual gift. But that does not mean that the person's service in other areas is necessarily limited. A spiritual gift is an enhancement in only one area of ministry, but any believer can do the function of any of the gifted areas to a certain extent. He or she will possibly not be as effective as a spiritually gifted person in a particular area, but that does not mean that a person should abandon such ministry. It simply means that the Spirit will provide their primary opportunities in a different area. When the opportunity arises, all believers should serve God to the best of their natural ability in the areas where they are not specifically gifted.

*Spiritual Gifts are Not Limited to Certain People*

As we shall see when we discuss the gift of pastor-teacher below, a great disservice is performed when one limits this gift to men alone. The reason for the misunderstanding is rather simple. The word "pastor" is greatly misused today to refer to those who lead local churches. It has been turned into a title,



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which it never was in the New Testament. To use any word as a title automatically distinguishes as to authority a person bearing the title. The fact is, as Paul taught the Corinthians, all gifts are equally valuable, and no distinction in authority applies to them.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it is clear that spiritual gifts accrue to the body of Christ, not to the local church. A person is gifted because he or she is a member of the body, not because of being a member of a local church.<sup>19</sup>

Women can and do have the gift of pastor-teacher. While there is biblical basis for limiting local church leadership to men, this in no way limits the gifts available to women nor their authority to minister to the body of Christ. The vocal gifts are equally provided to women as well as to men.

**Positively Stated**

*Spiritual Gifts are Divinely Given*

*Therefore He says, After He ascended into a high place, He led captive a group of captives, and He gave gifts to men.* Ephesians 4:8

As noted below, this statement refers to the giving of gifts by the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is extremely careful with his wording, indicating that Christ gave gifts (plural) to men (plural). This is a general statement which refers to the single act of giving the collective body of gifts. Paul is not stating that Christ determined who gets which gift, but who determined which gifts would be available to be distributed for whatever purpose the Lord had in mind.

*And He Himself gave first the apostles, then the prophets, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers...* Ephesians 4:11

Ephesians 4:11 refers to four specifically gifted people, followed by a statement of purpose for these four specific gifted men beginning in vs. 12. See the comments under *Exegetical Considerations* below.

*Spiritual Gifts are Divinely Distributed*

*And the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one his own gift, just as He determines. <sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one thing, and has many parts, but all the parts of the one body, being many are one body, so also is the Christ. <sup>13</sup> For also we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all caused to drink into one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For also the body is not one member, but many. 1 Corinthians 12:11-14*

These sentences are in the context of spiritual gifts which Paul found necessary to explain to the believers in Corinth because of their lack of understanding and misuse of spiritual gifts. One error seems to have been that individuals believed they could determine which gift they were to receive. Paul points out that the one who distributes gifts to men is the Holy Spirit. In so doing, he points out that it is the Spirit Himself who “works” the gifts. In other words, gifts are a function of the Holy Spirit through the human agent. The spiritual believer understands that it is the Spirit who is functioning through the gifted person, not the human working independently.

Verses 12-14 indicate that the multiplicity of gifts are “many parts” (gifted persons) that are “one body.” Paul goes on to explain that all these parts of the one body became so because the Holy Spirit “baptized” them (identified through Spirit baptism) into one body, which means that the body is not one member (gifted person) but many.

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It is clear, then, that spiritual gifts are a unifying element, not a divisive one, which is what appears to have happened in the divisive church in Corinth. It is also clear that membership is in the body of Christ, not in the local assembly.

*Spiritual Gifts are Supernatural Abilities*

This leads us to a definition of the supernatural abilities which the Bible calls gifts:

A spiritual gift is a special enabling from God that is received by the individual Christian at the time of his baptism by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, the church, so that the individual saint can minister to the body of Christ with supernatural and unifying results. - Shinn

*Exegetical Considerations*

11. καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους τοὺς δὲ προφῆτας τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστὰς τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους (*kai autos edōken tous men apostolous tous de prophētas tous de euaggelistas tous de poimenas kai didaskalous – And He Himself gave first some apostles, then some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers*)

Paul lists four distinct spiritual gifts. Are these representative of all gifts, or did he have a specific purpose for only listing these gifts?

All together, nineteen spiritual gifts occur in the New Testament, of which three of these four exist in gift lists elsewhere. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 one finds, apostles, prophets, and teachers listed, for instance. Evangelists occur only in this list of gifted individuals.<sup>20</sup>

Paul presents the remainder of the 19 gifts in two other lists of gifts, one found, as noted, in 1 Corinthians 12, and one in Romans 12.

The four gifts listed here are likely used by Paul to indicate those gifts that were specifically provided by Christ for the work mentioned in the next verse. The definitions of each of these four gifts fit well into the rest of the discussion of gifts beginning in verse 12.

*Apostles* and *prophets* were foundational to the establishment of the current household of God, the church, which is likened to a building (Ephesians 2:20). These two gifts were transitional gifts, and did not continue beyond the need to build God's family on that foundation.

The gift of *apostle* was a versatile gift, basic to the transition, as the apostles could perform whatever acts necessary to meet the early needs of believers. Therefore we define the gift of apostle as the ability to perform any spiritual function required to provide a strong foundation to the body of Christ.

The gift of *prophet*, on the other hand, was more limited in function. There appeared to be many New Testament prophets, whose function is not to be confused with that of the Old Testament prophet. For New Testament prophets had the ability to receive direct revelation from God dealing with past, present, or future truth, and to communicate it to the early church for foundational purposes. An apostle could also do this, but was not limited to this express ability, as were the New Testament prophets.

The other two gifted men listed here, *evangelists*, and *pastor-teachers*, were not foundational, and were not transitional, as they continue until today. Both also fit well into the further discussion beginning in vs. 12.

The gift of *evangelist* is not intended to be relegated solely to the giving of the gospel to unbelievers. While it includes that ability, it also includes an ability to provide a basis for spiritual maturity of the believer. Therefore we define an evangelist as a person who has the ability to give the gospel of salva-

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tion to the unsaved so as to bring one to a point of faith, and also to the believer to bring one to a certain level of maturity. Hence, an evangelist can also communicate the facts of the gospel to confirm believers in their faith concerning the death and resurrection of Christ,<sup>21</sup> as well as apply those truths as taught in Romans 6 and elsewhere as a starting point for the victorious Christian life.

The gift of pastor-teacher is unique, in that it is a two-part gift. In the list before us, the word “pastor” has the article “the” followed by the word teacher, which does not have the article. The principal of the governing article tells us that both words refer to the same gifted individual.

The noun “pastor” is actually shepherd, and is used metaphorically in that sense here. A person with the gift of pastor-teacher shepherds believers, who are likened to sheep who need guidance. The means of that guidance is expressed in the word teacher. A teacher is one who explains information of a spiritual character as presented in the Word of God, the Scriptures. One cannot shepherd without teaching, and one cannot teach without shepherding.

Herein is the only place in the New Testament where one reads the word “pastor” with reference to human spiritual ministry. The word pastor, or shepherd, occurs in the New Testament some 18 times. It has three distinct uses: 1) literal shepherds who tend flocks (see Luke 2:8), which are also used in parables and stories by the Lord to express truth concerning the nation Israel and God’s prophetic program for Israelites; 2) of Jesus Christ as a) “the great shepherd” (Hebrews 13:20), and b) as “the shepherd and over-seer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25); and 3) of the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher, the combination of which is found *only in this verse*. The word teacher as a gift is listed elsewhere (Romans 12:7), and some have it as a separate spiritual gift, but this is problematical. It is more likely the same gift as here, but emphasizing the actual means of shepherding, that is, by teaching.

We must not view these four gifts as more important than all the other gifts, but as basic to them. Paul makes it clear to the Corinthians that each gift is equally valuable, and therefore equally important. But some gifts are basic in the sense that other gifts are all the more effective because of them. However, other gifts, while not specific to this class, are also basic, in that they provide the revelation needed to sustain the early church. These gifts ceased to function, along with two of the four listed here, when the basic needs which they supplied were completely met, and therefore were no longer necessary. Such need derives from the beginning of the body of Christ historically, and the very nature of the church as God views it.

Spiritual gifts, as a class, then, belong to the doctrine of the church universal, as they relate the ministry of the individual believer to his membership in the body of Christ. They are specific to the church which is Christ’s body, but are not specific ministries within the local assembly.<sup>22</sup> The biblical doctrine of the local church holds no person in the local assembly to be “the pastor.” This early perversion of the doctrine is the result of the misapprehension by the mind of fallen man, likely under satanic delusion, to make the local assembly into an organization contrary to Scripture.

The New Testament local church, then, has no “CEO” who is called “the pastor.” Nor is the word “pastor” used as a title in the Bible. It is descriptive of the gifted individual, not a position of authority in the local church. New Testament churches are guided by elders (*presbuteroi*) who are also called overseers, (*episcopopoi*).<sup>23</sup>

12. πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ (*pros ton katartismon tōn hagiōn eis ergon diakonias eis oikodomēn tou sōmatos tou christou* – *for the outfitting of the saints unto the work of service for building up of the body of Christ*)

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The reason for gifting these four types of people comes to light in verse twelve by means of three consecutive prepositional phrases: 1) for the outfitting of the saints 2) unto the work of service 3) for building up of the body of Christ. These three phrases taken together indicate the activity of the Spirit for a specific goal.

Each individual saint is “outfitted” by the Spirit’s quartet of gifting. The Greek word for “outfitting” is the noun *katartismos*, and is found only this one time in the Greek New Testament.<sup>24</sup> It seems to be functionally equivalent to another word, *katartisis* (κατάρτισις) which also occurs one time in the New Testament, in 2 Corinthians 13:9, where it appears to mean “strengthened.”<sup>25</sup> Abbott-Smith indicates that it is derived from the verb *katartizo* (κατάρτιζω), which occurs 13 times in the New Testament. It means to equip or furnish completely. One purpose for spiritual gifts, then, is to equip the believer in order to function as God provides.

The second prepositional phrase, “unto the work of service” has produced some difference of opinion. Some relate it back to “outfitting” (a noun of action) indicating why the believer is being outfitted, others relate it back to the verb “gave” as I have diagrammed it. Either will work, and the difference is one of emphasis. Both indicate the result of being gifted, either in the initial giving, or in the outfitting of the believer that the giving of gifts provides. But since adjectival prepositional phrases are rare in the New Testament (even with nouns of action), I have chosen to take it back to the verb. The ultimate conceived result of giving of these specific gifted men is to provide service to God, as well as to other members of the body.

The final prepositional phrase, “for building up of the body of Christ” indicates the ultimate goal for these four gifted believers. The building of the body is the result that the Spirit will produce through these four gifts. This does not refer specifically to the building up of the members of the body, though that should be thought of as a secondary result (see vs. 13 below), since the body consists of individual members, but of the body itself. The likely reason Paul phrases the result this way is to indicate God’s view of the complete body, rather than different parts at different times.

13. μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ (*mechri katantēsōmen hoi pantes eis tēn henotēta tēs pisteōs kai tēs epignōseōs tou huiou tou theou eis andra teleion eis metron hēlikias tou plērōmatos tou christou – until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to a measure of the mature age of the fullness of Christ*)

This part of Paul’s sentence establishes the specific relationship of the building up of the individual members of the body. Since the body must be viewed by God as complete, the individual members of the body must be brought to a level of ultimate maturity. Individual maturity produces the maturity of the body.

The subordinate adverbial conjunction *mechri* is a time word, translated “until.”<sup>26</sup> It indicates a limited process proceeding to an ultimate goal in time. Paul includes himself (“we”) in the process of maturing, which continues so that believers are to “attain to 1) the unity of the faith and a full knowledge of the Son of God, 2) to a mature man, and 3) to a measure of the mature age of the fullness of Christ. The word translated “we attain” (*katantēsōmen*) carries the idea of striving to arrive at a place.<sup>27</sup> The concept here does not seem to be only individual, but collective. It is an expression of the ideal of the body of Christ and its collective spiritual growth through the service to God of these four specific spiritual gifts, rather than a general statement about individual growth. It is the ideal for which believers collec-

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tively are to strive. Indeed, it cannot be primarily individual, and assumes that all believers have the ability to correctly interpret and apply the New Testament teachings.

1. First, believers are, through these gifted men, to attain to “the unity of the faith and a full knowledge of the Son of God.” At the time Paul wrote these words, the New Testament Scriptures were in the process of being written. All four of the gifted men relate their ministry to God through the Word of God, but only apostles and prophets produced that written word.

The phrase “of the faith” refers not to the act of faith by an individual, but to the existence of a body of truth, “the faith,” which is to be understood and believed. Today, the gifted evangelists and pastor/teachers are the primary means of this understanding. That is not to say, however, that only gifted men can provide this service. As noted previously, gifts are not limitations on ministry, and even though not necessarily gifted in these two areas, God can and does use all kinds of gifted believers to produce this unity of the faith.

The ultimate teaching of this phrase “unity of the faith” is that all believers hold to the same truths from Scripture. This unity can only come through a consistent normal interpretation and application of the written Word of God.

The phrase “full knowledge” (*epignōseōs*) carries the idea of complete understanding. The object (objective genitive) of this complete understanding is none other than “the Son of God.” This designation of Christ emphasizes both the deity and Trinitarian relationship of the divine person, ideas which some believers struggle with, but which are basic to Christian maturity. For a complete discussion of the phrase “Son of God” see the discussion in my essay, “The Doctrine of Jesus Christ.”

2. Second, believers are, through these gifted men, to attain “to a mature man.” Again, this refers not simply to the individual believer, but to his relationship to the body of Christ. The word man here is *anēr*, referring to a male. But the male in question is not simply the human male, but the male represented in the concept of the body. In this sense, the mature man includes both men and women.

And again, the apostle is speaking in terms of what is ideal, that for which the believer is to strive through the correct understanding and application of the Scriptures, producing spiritually mature believers.

3. Finally, believers are, through these gifted men, to attain “to a measure of the mature age of the fullness of Christ.” Several ideas and interpretations have been given to this last attainment. Much relies on the relationship between this statement and the second above.

It appears that “to a measure of the mature age” is a description of the nature of “a mature man” of the second phrase. It limits the growth of the believer, not to the perfection of Christ, as some have taught, but to “a measure of mature age.” As the believer matures, it cannot result in being perfect maturity beyond which a believer cannot grow. One strives to attain only a measure of maturity, the goal of such striving being identified by the phrase “of the fullness of Christ.”

The word fullness (*plērōma*) indicates completeness here. “Of Christ” is a possessive genitive, meaning belonging to Christ, “Christ completeness.” This refers certainly to Christ’s character, which is inherent in His nature, which is why a believer can only attain a measured amount. Nevertheless, it is clear in this context, as expressed in the next verse, that such maturity has a specific purpose, a purpose to which believers can attain.

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14. ἵνα μηκέτι ὤμεν νήπιοι κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης (*hina mēketi ōmen nēpioi kludōnizomenoi kai peripheromenoi panti anemō tēs didaskalias en tē kubeia tōn anthropōn en panourgia pros tēn methodeian tēs planēs – in order that we should no longer be infants, being tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching, by the cunning deception of men, by craftiness with a view to schemes to cause wandering*)

Here we have the two-fold final purpose of the striving to attain to the above maturity process. It consists of both a negative and positive purpose, the negative of which is found in vs. 14, and the positive in vs. 15 and following.

God's purpose for the maturing believer is not ultimately perfection in the sense of somehow being sinless, but to a level of maturity beyond the infant stage, a stage which a believer must attain in order for the following results to be true, the result of no longer being tossed about.

Young believers are often in the state of infancy, and many seem to remain there, for they are susceptible to errant winds of teaching. Without spiritual growth through the teaching of gifted men, those who are maturing as the result of the work of Christ through the four spiritual gifts of this context, believers are in danger of remaining infants, with all the consequences of that state.

The potential consequences of such spiritual immaturity is “*being tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching, by the cunning deception of men, by craftiness with a view to schemes to cause wandering.*” Several things are included in these consequences.

1. The specific consequences of immaturity are the believer's being “tossed by waves” and as a result “being carried about by every wind of teaching.” This two-fold metaphor of the angry sea is a picture of spiritual instability. Instability cause by being susceptible to “every wind of teaching.”<sup>28</sup> This reminds one of the wildly unbiblical so-called Christian leaders of today. The airwaves, radio and television, are full of them. They are out for the dollar, and care nothing for the truth of the Word of God arrived at through diligence of study. They are religious hucksters, bringing great harm to immature and easily deceived young in the faith believers.
2. The apostle describes the character and methods of these deceivers. First, the immature are led astray “by the cunning deception of men.” The word translated “cunning” refers to gambling, playing at dice, and by implication, cheating at such play. Many are “conned” by men who sound good to those who have not carefully studied the Word. The contrast is between those gifted men who “express the truth in love” and those false teachers, perhaps not even believers in the biblical sense, but con-artists who have an ability to cause deception by their presentation, often in emotional, and always in self-serving ways.
3. The immature are also led astray “*by craftiness with a view to schemes to cause wandering.*” The word we have translated “craftiness” is “*panourgia*” a word which, in its negative use, carries the idea of skilled in working so as to deceive. In this case the craftiness is expressed in the phrase “*pros tēn methodeian,*” translated “with a view to schemes.”<sup>29</sup> The idea seems to be the deception is to produce schemes. The word “schemes” translates the word “*methodias,*” a word which comes into English as method. But the Greek word, used only twice in the N.T., both here, and later in Ephesians 6:11, carries the negative idea of deception by scheming. The word carries the idea of putting together a plan to deceive,<sup>30</sup> which is what such false teachers have done. The ultimate purpose of this scheming is found in the phrase, “*tēs planēs.*” This is an ob-

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jective genitive referring to the reason for the schemes of the false teacher. It could be translated simply “of wandering,” but the objective genitive can be translated as we have done “to cause wandering.”

The mature believer, then will be one who is stable, who, through diligence in the Word, will not be susceptible to false teachers.

15. ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ χριστός (*alētheuontes de en agapē auxēsōmen eis auton ta panta hos estin hē kephalē ho christos – but by expressing truth in love, we should grow unto Him in all things, who is the head, Christ*)

If the negative purpose of attainment is to be infants no longer, the positive purpose is that believers should grow. The unusual anarthrous participle *alētheuontes* (expressing truth) is from the verb ἀληθεύω (*alētheuō*), used only twice in the N. T., here and in Galatians. Here, the participle appears to indicate the means to growth,<sup>31</sup> indicating that without the expression of truth, one cannot grow. Since the means to spiritual growth is the provision of truth, it is incumbent on the individual believer to attend very carefully to that truth, the truth we now have in God-breathed Scripture.

The phrase “*en agapē*” does not refer to the emotion of love, but to the considered act of love by which truth is expressed without regard for the consequences. Scriptural truth sometimes brings feelings not necessarily positive from a human perspective, since it can contradict closely and emotionally held error. Paul means, then, that love, correctly understood, is to be an attitude of providing the object of love what is best for him or her, and should be both instructive of positive biblical truth and corrective of un-biblical thinking. One must express truth, even if it seems hurtful, for anything less is not true love, but an expression of convenience. Some may withhold truth, or attempt to soften it, either from a misguided attitude of being kind, or even so that the teacher himself might be well-regarded, and hence draw people to himself.

The clause, “*we should grow unto Him in all things*” carries an idea strange to the modern English-speaking mind. The “Him” of course is Christ, being identified by relative clause “*who is the head, Christ.*” Believers, individually and collectively, are to grow “unto Him,” since He is the head of the body. The reason for this, as we shall see, is detailed in vs. 16, which carries the metaphor of Christ as the head of the body to its logical conclusion.

Growth, arrived at by truth expressed, can only be spiritually effective if it is with reference to Christ as the head of the body. For this is the basis for positional truth, truth that causes the believer to see himself not as an individual alone, but in a positional organic relationship to Christ, the head.

The phrase “*in all things*” is literally “*in all the things*” the article indicating the specific things of the context at hand, going all the way back to vs. 12.<sup>32</sup> The wise Christian will consider this context repeatedly, for it deals with the individual elements of spiritual growth the individual experiences as a member of the body of Christ.

16. ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξῆσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ (*ex hou pan to sōma sunarmologoumenon kai symbibazomenon dia pasēs haphēs tēs epi-chorēgias kat’ energeian en metrō henos hekastou merous tēn auxēsīn tou sōmatos poieitai eis oikodomēn heautou en agapē – from whom all the body, being closely joined and being held together through every ligament that supports it according to the working in a measure of each single part, produces the growth of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*)

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Here we have the conclusion to this discussion which began in vs. 12. It deals specifically with the metaphorical reason that one is to grow “unto Him,” Christ, who is the head of the body.

Vs. 16 is somewhat difficult because of its construction. It is a relative clause referring back to Christ in vs. 15 by the phrase “from whom.” The subject of the clause is the first occurrence of the word “body” in the structure “all the body.” However, the predicate comes after a long interruption consisting of participles and a series of prepositional phrases referring back to the word body (see Greek diagram).

The verb itself is *poiētai* (ποιεῖται), translated *produces*, followed in the Greek diagram by the direct object *auxēsin* (αὐξήσιν), translated *growth*. Hence, the main part of the relative clause reads, “**from whom all the body<sup>33</sup> produces the growth of the body unto the building up of itself in love.**”

The interruption, which is technically part of the extended subject of the main clause, begins from the subject of the clause, *body*, to the resumption of the clause beginning with *produces*. The descriptive interruption concerning the word *body* reads, “**being closely joined and being held together through every ligament that supports it according to the working in a measure of each single part.**”

The teaching of the main clause is that the entire body at any given time produces the growth of the body, and that this action is directly “from whom,” that is, from Christ. The growth of the metaphorical body has its source in Christ its head, not in its members. The part that the members of the body play is expressed in the description of the body beginning with the word *being*.

From Christ, then, the body produces the growth of the body, which in turn results in “the building up of itself in love.” The love here is the divine love that comes from Christ, not the human love of the members of the body, except insofar as they express the love of Christ. The believer’s love is the “fruit of the Spirit” love mentioned in Galatians. But Christ’s love is that in which the growth of the body occurs.

The body is described by compound participles *sunarmologoumenon* (*being closely joined*) and *sumbibazomenon* (*being held together*). These two participles introduce the function in time of the various members of the body, who are compared to a ligament (*haphēs*, a fastener or that which joins). Technically, the word can refer to any part of the body which connects to another part, and was used of tendons, ligaments, and joints. The ligaments in turn provide *support*, a word usually translated “supplies.” I translated it “supports” because ligaments does not here seem to refer to such things that supply nourishment to the body, but, because of what they do, support the body in the area of spiritual growth. We say this because the final expression of this reference to the body is “*according to the working in a measure of each single part.*” The idea is that every part, that is, every ligament that joins the body together, does so by its measure of working. Hence, each part provides support for the body, which results in its growth.

In summary, taken as a whole, the idea of the relative clause of which verse 16 consists indicates that the spiritual growth of the body is performed by Christ, and through the spiritual working of the members of the body, the ligaments, that is, the believers that make up the body. The body, then, produces its growth through its head as the source, and its members, its ligaments, as the working parts of the body.

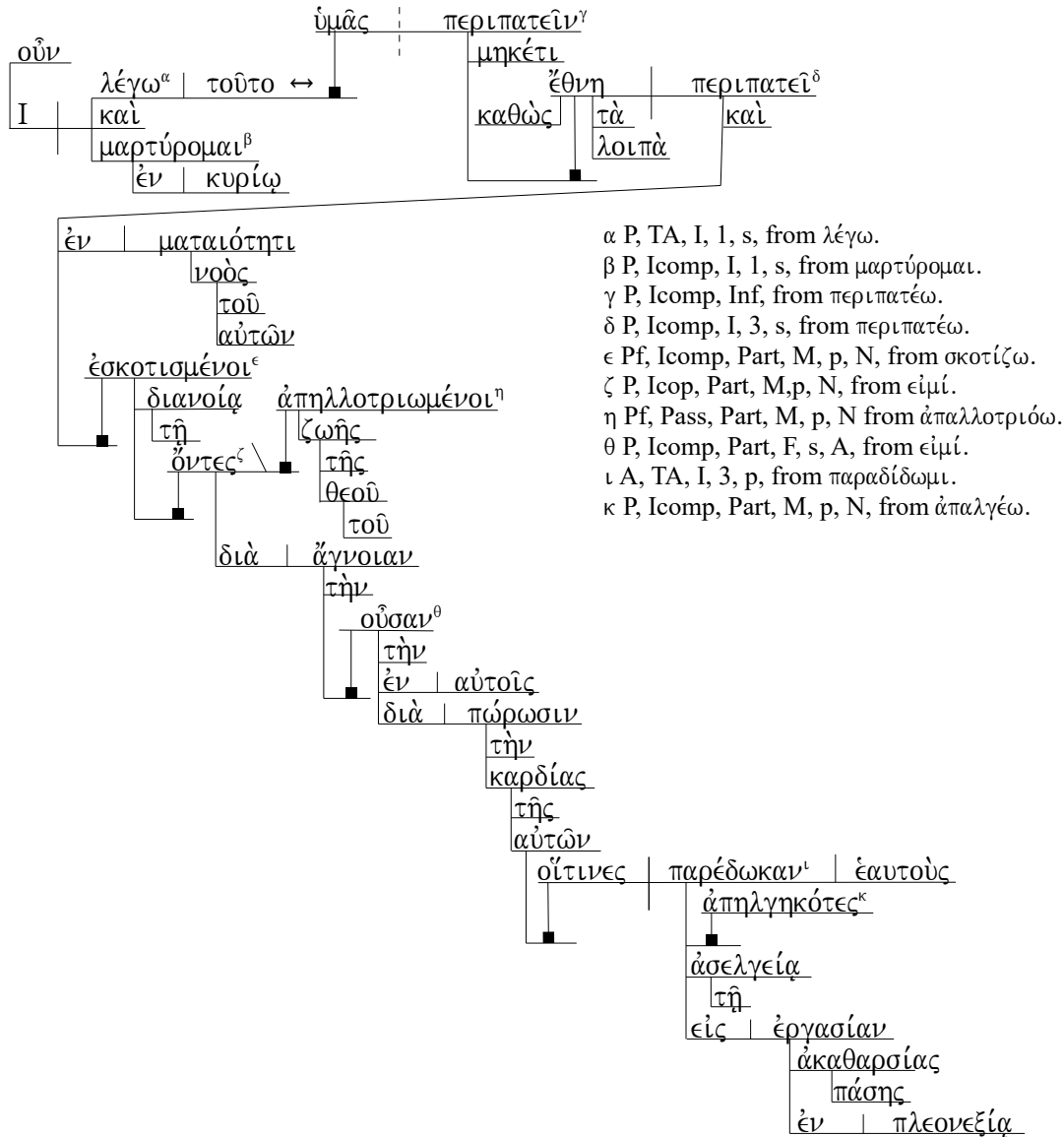
Verse 16 ends Paul’s discussion of the unity of the body of Christ. In 4:17, Paul begins the new topic of the spirituality of the believer, which extends to the end of the epistle.

**4:17-19** τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν <sup>18</sup> ἔσκοτισμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς



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τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν <sup>19</sup> οἵτινες ἀπηληγκότες ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελείᾳ εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ.



*Translation: Therefore I say this and testify in the Lord, that you are no longer to walk just as also the remaining Gentiles walk, in the emptiness of their mind, <sup>18</sup> having been darkened in their understanding, being estranged from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the callousness of their heart, <sup>19</sup> who, having become apathetic, gave themselves over to lasciviousness for working every kind of uncleanness in greediness.*

Paul begins discussing the spirituality of the saint of God beginning in vs. 17. Like all of this epistle, a background is assumed by Paul, a background that he laid in person during the three years of ministry in proconsular Asia. He does not directly discuss, for instance, the method by which a believer becomes

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spiritual, a topic that is covered in both his epistle to the Romans and the Colossians for the simple reason that he had not been to those two assemblies. The discussion in Romans is extended, while the presentation in Colossians is limited, probably because Colosse was close to Ephesus, and the message had been carried to that city by Paul's students.

*Exegetical Considerations*

17. τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν (*touto oun legō kai marturomai en kuriō mēketi humas peripatein kathōs kai ta loipa ethnē peripatei en mataiotēti tou noos autōn – Therefore I say this and testify in the Lord, that you are no longer to walk just as also the remaining Gentiles walk, in the emptiness of their mind*)

The word *therefore* translates *oun*, (lit. *then*), referring back to the discussion of the growth of the believer as associated with Christ as the head of the body, with the Christian as a functioning part of that body. Assumed by Paul is the teaching about how a maturing believer learns to apply the grace positional teaching to enter into a state of spirituality.

Based on his personal authority as an apostle, then, “*I say this and testify in the Lord.*” What follows is the correct approach to the new relationship that the former Gentile believers now could apply in their daily lifestyle, their “walk.” The approach is a negative one in this first sentence (vss. 17-19) of the paragraph. Do not walk one way, because of all the problems with that lifestyle, which Paul begins to describe.

Note that the apostle states that they are “*not to walk just as also the remaining Gentiles walk.*”<sup>34</sup> He means that the Ephesians, who were primarily ethnic Gentiles, were no longer spiritually Gentiles. The “remaining Gentiles” refers to those Gentiles who remain unbelievers, and therefore not part of the body of Christ, and therefore not capable of applying the truth of spiritual growth to themselves.

The first negative element of the Gentile lifestyle, their walk, is that it is performed “*in the emptiness of their mind.*” The word translated emptiness (*mataiotēti*) is often translated “futility,” but it means the mind is futile because it is empty of the correct information by which to live a godly life. That spiritual information, the spiritual ability to use the information, is simply not there.<sup>35</sup>

18. ἐσκοτισμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν (*eskotismenoi tē dianoia ontes apēllotriōmenoi tēs zōēs tou theou dia tēn agnoian tēn ousan en autois dia tēn pōrōsin tēs kardias autōn – having been darkened in their understanding, being estranged from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the callousness of their heart*)

Paul explains what he means by the emptiness of the Gentile mind with the next descriptive statement, “*having been darkened in their understanding.*” This confirms the problem. The Gentile has been darkened in the spiritual sense of not being able to understand, and therefore, not being able to use the spiritual truth that the Ephesians have been taught.

The results of this darkened mind is expressed in the participle clause, “*being estranged from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the callousness of their heart.*” Here is the ultimate point: the Gentile is estranged from the life of God.<sup>36</sup> The word *life* refers to the lifestyle that comes from understanding what God has expressed in Scripture. This is not simply “living a good life,” but living a life using the spiritual information God has provided through the revelation He has made known through the apostles and prophets of the early Christian era. That information has been

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preserved only in Scripture, and is only applicable today through a careful study of Scripture, which study goes beyond the simply academic, and enters into the realm of spiritual understanding.<sup>37</sup>

This estrangement from the lifestyle of God is caused by “*the ignorance that is in them,*” which in turn is caused by “*the callousness of their heart.*” The word ignorance translates *agnoian*, from *ginōskō*, in this case referring to practical knowledge, knowledge that can be used. This inability to use the available spiritual information is caused by a “mental problem.” The word heart (*kardias*) used metaphorically always refers to the seat of the mentality of the individual. This corresponds to 1 Corinthians 2:14, where Paul indicates that “The soulish<sup>38</sup> man,” the unbeliever, “does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are foolishness, and he is not able to recognize *them*, because they are spiritually understood.”

19. οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ – *(hoitines apēlgēkotes heautous paredōkan tē aselgeia eis ergasian akatharsias pasēs en pleonexia – who, having become apathetic, gave themselves over to lasciviousness for working every kind of uncleanness in greediness)*

The first sentence of this paragraph concludes with verse 19. The relative pronoun *who* refers to the unbelieving remainder of the Gentiles. The word *apathetic* (*apēlgēkotes*) is literally without feeling.<sup>39</sup> The physical sense refers to scar tissue which no longer hurts, but metaphorically it came to mean a lack of concern, hence, apathetic in one's attitude. The probable meaning here is that they were no longer concerned with their wrong-doing, the result of which is reflected in the continuation of the relative clause, “*gave themselves over to lasciviousness for working all kinds of uncleanness in greediness.*” Here we find words that contain a meaning of sexual aberration.

The word *lasciviousness* (*aselgeia*) is one of the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 4:19-21, along with three other words that refer to sexual perversion.

*Lasciviousness*, which could be translated licentiousness or debauchery, is an extreme stage in the process of sexual immorality. The word is used 9 times in the New Testament. In Romans 13:13 the word is associated with the noun *koite*, from which the English coitus comes. The literal meaning of *koite* is “bed,” but by metonymy it came to mean sexual intercourse. The word *koite* is used both positively and negatively in secular Greek and in the New Testament, where the writer to the Hebrews uses it of the marriage bed (Hebrews 13:4). In the negative sense, *koite* refers to having sex with someone not one's spouse, which makes it a perfect partner for *aselgeia*.

In the context of the works of the flesh, *lasciviousness* is the next stage after uncleanness toward complete sexual depravity. That truth is expressed here in Ephesians as well. J. B. Lightfoot makes an interesting statement:

A man may be ἀκάθαρτος (*akathartos*, unclean) and hide his sin; he does not become ἀσελγής (*aselges*, lascivious or licentious) until he shocks public decency.<sup>40</sup>

A person who is lascivious enters into public exhibitions of illicit sex, publicly sharing his or her bed with multiple partners. We might believe that this is a rather modern evil, but it has been around at least since the time ancient Sodom, and temple prostitution dates back at least to the Babylonian Empire.<sup>41</sup> It was widespread by the time of the New Testament writings. The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was a center for such practices. According to ISBE:

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The ritual of the temple services consisted of sacrifices and of ceremonial prostitution, a practice which was common to many of the religions of the ancient Orient, and which still exists among some of the obscure tribes of Asia Minor.<sup>42</sup>

Paul, then, was including a regular activity of his time, something that was ancient in its practice. *Lasciviousness* still occurs today, and is becoming more widespread in the popular media and on the internet.

Here, as in Galatians 4, the word *lasciviousness* is linked with *uncleanness* (*akatharsia*), another work of the flesh broader in meaning than *lasciviousness*. In the Galatians passage, for that reason, it is listed before *lasciviousness*, but here the relationship is from the specific to the general. Paul says that *lasciviousness* is for (results in) ***working all kinds of uncleanness in greediness***.

Under the law, *uncleanness* referred either to physical disease or ceremonial impurity. But uncleanness as a work of the flesh goes far beyond the Old Testament figure. It is a term of intense sexual immorality.<sup>43</sup> God considers certain perverted sexual sins as causing impurity in a special sense. Interestingly, uncleanness is linked four times with fornication (Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; Revelation 17:4), while at the same time being distinguished from it. Perhaps they both are considered specific forms of fornication, though this is not explicitly stated. Uncleanness is closely linked with homosexuality in Romans 1:24-26, which gives us a clue as to how it is used in Galatians.

Therefore, *uncleanness* most likely refers to sexual perversion, such as homosexuality, bestiality, and so forth. Such sexual perversions, which are *all kinds of uncleanness*, are to be removed from the life of the spiritual believer by the power of the Spirit.

Furthermore, Paul states that such uncleanness is *in greediness*, probably a reference to the institutional prostitution associated with many such sexual immoral acts. In the pagan temples of the day, evidently anyone could enter and pay to engage in sexual perversion.<sup>44</sup>

Under the law, those who engaged in homosexuality were to be executed (Leviticus 20:13). Without the power of the indwelling Spirit, there was no defense against perverted sexual acts for those so inclined. Homosexuality, for instance, has an ancient history as recounted by Paul in Romans 1:26-27. Since Israel under the Mosaic code was a theocracy, capital punishment was reasonable for sexual perversion. This is no longer true, and the Christian's response today should be the same as with any other act of wrong-doing. The believer should explain that it is contrary to God's character, but at the same time realize that as with all unbelievers only the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation is effective in changing the viewpoint of the individual.

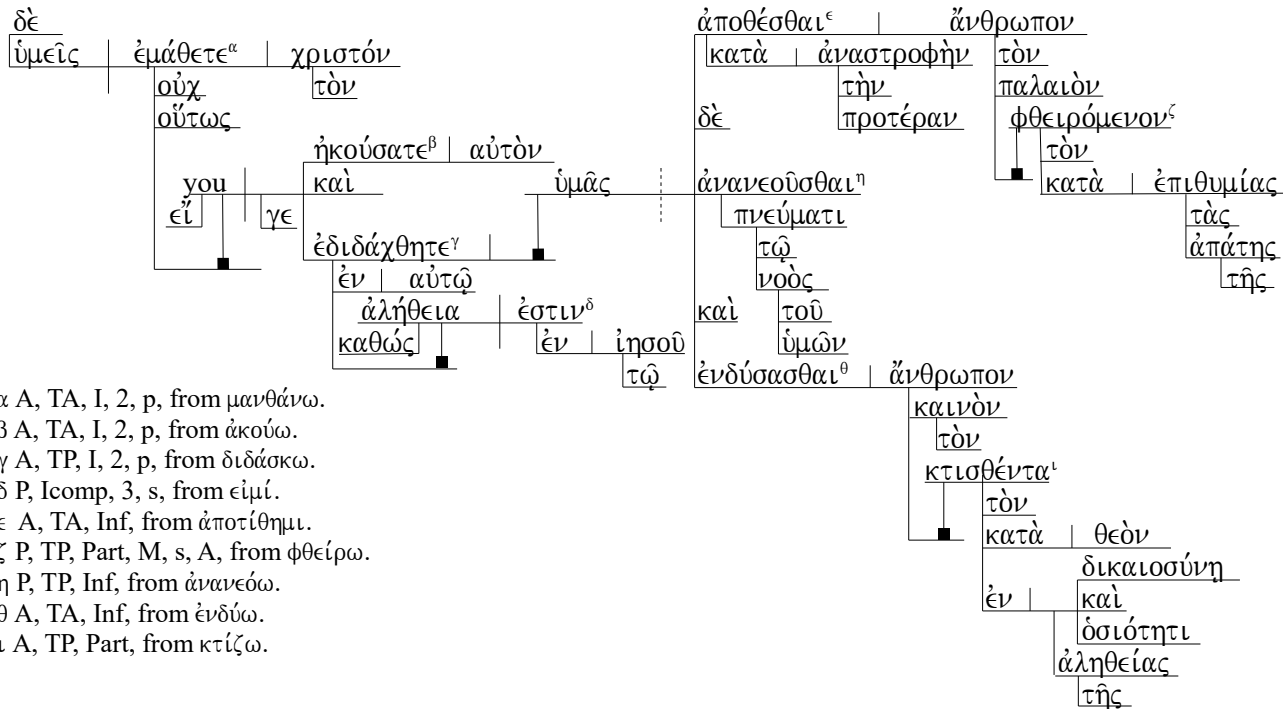
The solution for homosexuality in the unbeliever, then, is faith in the gospel of salvation (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Rather than condemning the homosexual or other sexually immoral persons, biblical Christians should give him or her the gospel, and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. Condemnation should be avoided, as it simply builds a wall between the believer and the unbeliever, making communication of the gospel difficult if not impossible.

Likewise, the Christian must not be daunted by the current political and social opposition to Christian righteous living. Today, one method that the homosexuals use against those of us who disagree with their sexual choice is the ad hominem method of name-calling. They use terms such as "homophobia" to deflect their opponents from identifying their immorality. No Christian should give way under these

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attacks. And for a Christian who is inclined toward homosexuality, and some are, they should be taught to overcome the unrighteous act by using the grace methods available today.

4:20-24 ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν χριστόν <sup>21</sup> εἶγε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ ἰησοῦ <sup>22</sup> ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης <sup>23</sup> ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν <sup>24</sup> καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.



- α A, TA, I, 2, p, from *μανθάνω*.
- β A, TA, I, 2, p, from *ἀκούω*.
- γ A, TP, I, 2, p, from *διδάσκω*.
- δ P, Icomp, 3, s, from *εἰμί*.
- ε A, TA, Inf, from *ἀποτίθημι*.
- ζ P, TP, Part, M, s, A, from *φθείρω*.
- η P, TP, Inf, from *ἀνανεώω*.
- θ A, TA, Inf, from *ἐνδύω*.
- ι A, TP, Part, from *κτίζω*.

*Translation: But you did not thus learn Christ, <sup>21</sup> since, indeed, you heard Him, and in Him you were taught, just as truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> that you put off with reference to your former lifestyle the old man who is corrupted according to the lusts of deceit, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new man which has been created according to God in righteousness and piety of the truth.*

Note: The second sentence in this paragraph is a positive encouragement to believers, as opposed to the negative description of the lifestyle of the unbeliever in the previous sentence. As noted, this sentence is part of a section of the Epistle that is strongly based on Paul's three-year teaching in Ephesus concerning the basics of the Christian life, which basics he does not repeat in this writing. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind the positional truth of the Christian life, else the encouragements that Paul makes could be perverted into a legalistic list of do's and do not's.

**Exegetical Considerations**

20. ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν χριστόν (*humeis de ouch houtōs emathete ton christon – But you did not thus learn Christ*)<sup>45</sup>

This introductory statement distinguishes what the believers in Ephesus learned, as opposed to the Gentile practice. The Ephesians learned a different lifestyle, as they “learned Christ.” The word Christ still

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carries the strong relationship of Christ as head of the body, the basis for positional truth. But it is also a reference to His personal character, indicated by the statements of vs. 21.

21. εἶγε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ ἰησοῦ (*eige auton ēkousate kai en autō edidachthēte kathōs estin alētheia en tō iesou – since, indeed, you heard Him, and in Him you were taught, just as truth is in Jesus*)

Paul indicates that the believers in Ephesus “learned Christ” by having “heard him.” This does not refer to physical hearing, as these Asian believers were not in Galilee or Judea when the Lord on earth. They heard Christ through the teaching of the apostles and prophets. More specifically, they learned Christ primarily through Paul’s ministry.

Likewise, the Ephesian believers “were taught in Him,”<sup>46</sup> through those same apostles and prophets which is based on the fact that “truth is in Jesus.”<sup>47</sup> The force of the statement is that the believers are to recognize their on-going relationship with the resurrected Christ, who is the source of truth for the Christian life, which provides the content of Paul’s teaching in verses 22-24.

22. ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφήν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης (*apothesthai humas kata tēn proteran anastrophēn ton palaion anthrōpon ton phtheiromenon kata tas epithumias tēs apatēs – that you are to put off with reference to your former lifestyle the old man who is corrupted according to the lusts of deceit*)

Beginning here and extending through the rest of the sentence, we have Paul’s explanation of the truth being taught concerning the Christian lifestyle provided for the believer in the current grace program. It consists of three clauses, indicated by the three infinitives “to put off,” “to be renewed,” and “to put on.”<sup>48</sup> The distinction between the “old man” and the “new man” is one of Paul’s favorite ways of expressing the change in the walk of the believer. See both Romans 6:6 and Colossians 3:9.

Paul, in presenting the concept of the “old man/new man” figure, first defines what he means by such terms. His wording is explicit, “*that you are to put off with reference to your former lifestyle the old man.*” Some have misunderstood the “old man” to be man’s fallen nature, but that nature cannot be “put off,” and remains active. The phrase “old man” refers to the previous lifestyle of the individual, the person as he operated prior to salvation. Hence, the “new man” is the same person, but viewed from the perspective of the new lifestyle that is found in the teachings of grace living.<sup>49</sup>

Paul emphasized his intent by describing the old man as one “*who is corrupted according to the lusts of deceit.*” The verb “corrupted” views the internal debasement of the person in his mental thinking and attitudes. Such corruption is “according to the lusts (strong desires) of deceit. Such lusts, in fact, do come out of the old nature, and produce the negative lifestyle of the unbeliever. These lusts are “of deceit,” a phrase that describes the nature of the strong desires themselves.<sup>50</sup> They are lusts that deceive.

23. ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν (*ananeousthai de tō pneumati tou noos humōn – and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind*)

The first step away from the old lifestyle, indicated by the second of the three infinitives, is “to be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” Note that this does not refer to being renewed in the mind. The believer received a new mind at regeneration. Being renewed in the spirit of the mind is the responsibility of the believer, who can now think correctly. The word “spirit” is the key. It refers to the human spirit which has an inherent capability of knowing of what is within the man. Paul does not say that one is to renew his spirit. He says that one is to be renewed “in the spirit” of the mind.

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Paul uses the word *spirit* in a similar way in 1 Corinthians 2:11, “For who among men knows the things of the man except the spirit of the man which is in him?” Since the man knows inherently in his human spirit what is within him, the regenerated man already has the capability of knowing the things of God. But one must “renew” in the area of his human spirit by positive concentration of his thought life with the teachings concerning the Christian life.

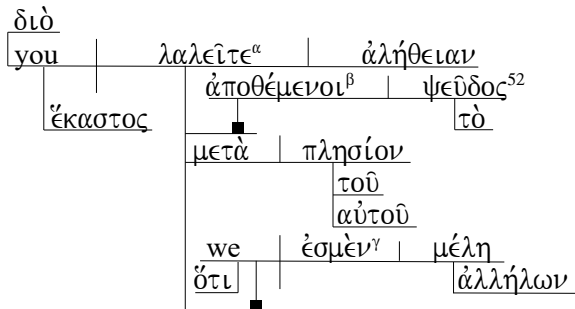
24. καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας (*kai endusasthai ton kainon anthrōpon ton kata theon ktisthenta en dikaiosunē kai ho-siotēti tes alētheias – and to put on the new man which has been created according to God in righteousness and piety of the truth*)

Just as the “old man” is not the Adamic nature, the “new man” is not the new nature which is made clear by the contrast between the two “men.” Both refer to one’s lifestyle, which are an expression of the old or new nature. But the new man is again the person who operates in a particular way.

The fact that the new man “*has been created according to God*”<sup>51</sup> is not a hindrance to this view. The act of creation is figurative, just as the contrast between the old man and the new man is a figure for the change in the daily walk of the Christian. The reason for the statement of creation is because the new man (representing the new walk) did not exist before salvation. The new man is the individual viewed with reference to his saved state (not limited to the new nature) that makes possible the new lifestyle.

Having expressed the above truths, Paul continues by delineating the various areas where this act of putting on the new man will show forth. It is vital that the following passages not be taught apart from the grace process which is taught in other parts of the New Testament, since requirements as follows can be perverted into a legalistic set of do’s and do not’s. Such is not Paul’s intention.

4:25 διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐσμέν ἀλλήλων μέλη.



*Translation: Therefore, having put off the lie, speak each one truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

25. διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ (*dio apothemenoi to pseudos laleite alētheian hekastos meta tou plēsion autou – Therefore, having put off the lie, speak each one truth with his neighbor*)

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“Therefore” translates *dio*, a strong reference to the previous discussion. Paul indicates that one should not approach the discussion of the correct Christian lifestyle from a legalistic perspective.

“*Having put off the lie*” Paul uses the same word for “put off” as in vs. 22. The tense of the participle indicates that the putting off has already occurred, and therefore, the positive is stated: speak each one truth with his neighbor. Paul does not say, “stop lying,” but applies the previous teaching concerning the old man. The imperative is “speak truth.”<sup>53</sup>

The Christian is to represent things as they actually are, not to shade the meaning toward untruth. A lie is no mistake, an honest expression of an untruth because one has misunderstood or been misinformed. Rather, it is a willful act of making a false statement that can be avoided by the simple act of speaking the truth.

The word *neighbor* in this context refers to other Christians, as shown by the next clause. But speaking truth is not exclusive to believers. Certainly a believer should speak truth to unbelievers as well as to believers.

ὅτι ἐσμέν ἀλλήλων μέλη (*hoti esmen allēlōn melē – because we are members of one another*)

The reason for speaking the truth to one’s neighbor is given in body of Christ terms. The word “member” refers to being associated with other “members,” hence “we are members of one another.” When a member of the body lies to another member, the whole body is hurt.

4:26a ὀργίσεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε. 26b-27 ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ τῷ παροργισμῷ ὑμῶν, <sup>27</sup> μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ.

you	καὶ	ὀργίσεσθε <sup>α</sup>	α P, TP, Imp, 2, p, from ὀργίζω. β P, Icomp, Imp, 2, p, from ἁμαρτάνω.
	ἀμαρτάνετε <sup>β</sup>	μὴ	
ἥλιος	ἐπιδυέτω <sup>α</sup>	μὴ	α P, Icomp, Imp, 3, s, from ἐπιδύω. β P, TA, Imp, 2, p, from δίδωμι.
ὁ	ἐπὶ	παροργισμῷ	
μηδὲ	δίδοτε <sup>β</sup>	τόπον	τῷ
you	διαβόλῳ	ὑμῶν	τῷ

*Translation: Be wrathful and do not sin. Let the sun not set on your wrath, <sup>27</sup> nor give place to the devil.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

26a ὀργίσεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε (*orgidzesthe kai mē hamartanete – Be wrathful and do not sin*)

Verse 26a-b is an allusion to Psalm 4:5. It is not a direct quote from the LXX, though the first part (26a) is identical. Vs. 27 has no direct relationship to Psalm 4, or any other OT passage.



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Unfortunately, vs. 26a is often translated “Be angry.” But the word is not “be angry” but “be wrathful.”<sup>54</sup> The two words *do not* mean the same thing. As far as the New Testament Epistles are concerned, it is not possible to be angry without wrong-doing, for anger in Greek expresses (*thumos*) a lack of emotional control, and is therefore listed by Paul as a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19ff. Wrath, on the other hand, can be either wrong-doing, or not, depending on its use. When it is purely emotionally based, it refers to illegitimate striking out against someone for the wrong reason. When it is used otherwise, it refers to a considered act of righteous striking out, something that is necessary to correct a wrong. Both uses of *orgidzō* refer to striking out in some sense, either orally or physically. It is in the sense of striking out to correct a wrong that the word is used here.<sup>55</sup>

The negative “and do not sin” is included to indicate the difference between righteous and unrighteous wrath. The willful striking out at a person for one’s own aggrandizement is an act of sin. But when one strikes out to stop an act against an innocent, an act of clear wrong-doing, that is not a sin.

**26b-27** ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ τῷ παροργισμῷ ὑμῶν, μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ (*ho hēlios mē epiduetō epi tō parorgismō humōn, mēde diote topon tō diabolō* – *Let the sun not set on your wrath, nor give place to the devil*)<sup>27</sup>

The first part of this sentence, which is the second half of vs. 26, uses a somewhat different word for wrath. *Paragismos* is a noun rather than the verb of the first part of vs. 26. It refers to the continued attitude of wrath that accompanies the act of wrath. It is sometimes translated indignation or exasperation. Both words express an attitude or even an emotion which can accompany the act of striking out. Such an act of indignation should not be continued beyond the act of striking out. Paul uses as a terminator of that attitude the setting of the sun, however, such is not to be taken any farther than as an allowed boundary. That is to say, a person should not extend such an attitude or feeling beyond a short time, and certainly not to the next day. Paul’s statement is an encouragement to the believer who must strike out to calm oneself as quickly as possible.

Verse 27 introduces a connected problem. Not giving place to the devil certainly refers to not succumbing to satanic attack. How that relates to wrath is not immediately evident, as emotional excess is generally considered an attack of the flesh by careful students of the Bible.

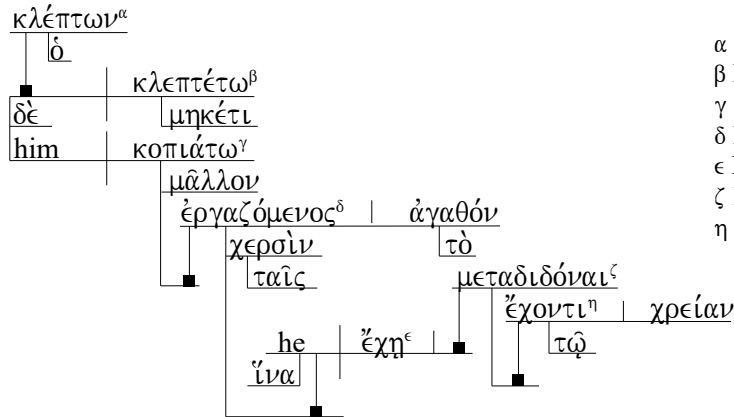
What, then, is the answer here? It has to do with the negative use of the word wrath which is reflected in a positive way with the phrase “the wrath of God.” Official wrath, such as the wrath of God, is also found when dealing with secular governments, but often negatively. Believers should be wary of getting involved with the illegitimate wrath meted out by governments for their own ends. An illustration of this is what the U. S. government sanctioned in the wrathful movement against the native population during the nineteenth century, when they forcibly moved tribes from their land because of the greed of those with government connections. This is not wrath based on emotion but is an act of sanctioned theft, a satanic attack. Such wrath is the result of the energizing by Satan of the world system.

The believer should always remember that the world system is an enemy of the Christian, and as such is capable of great evil, some of which is the misuse of power in a wrathful way. This happens regularly, and most governments are involved in organized theft in one way or another.

The concept of theft as associated with giving place to the devil is probably the basis for the statements in the next sentence.

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**4:28** ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος τὸ ἀγαθὸν ταῖς χερσὶν ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι.



- α P, Icomp, Part, M, s, N, from κλέπτω.
- β P, Icomp, Imp, 3, s, from κλέπτω.
- γ P, Icomp, Imp, 3, s, from κοπιάω.
- δ P, TA, Part, M, s, N, from ἐργάζομαι.
- ε P, TA, S, 3, s, from ἔχω.
- ζ P, Icomp, Inf, from μεταδίδωμι.
- η P, TA, Part, M, s, D, from ἔχω.

*Translation: Let the one who steals no longer steal, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the good thing, in order that he might have something to share with the one who has need.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

28. ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος τὸ ἀγαθὸν ταῖς χερσὶν ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι (*ho kleptōn mēketi kleptetō mallon de kpiatō ergadzomenos to agathon tais chersin hina echē metadidonai to chreian echonti – Let the one who steals no longer steal, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the good thing, in order that he might have something to share with the one who has need*<sup>56</sup>)

The substantival participle “one who steals” expresses a characteristic of the “old man.” Not only do some steal by taking something away, but some steal by the “confidence game,” that is, by tricking someone into giving over their money. Such acts are satanic temptation.

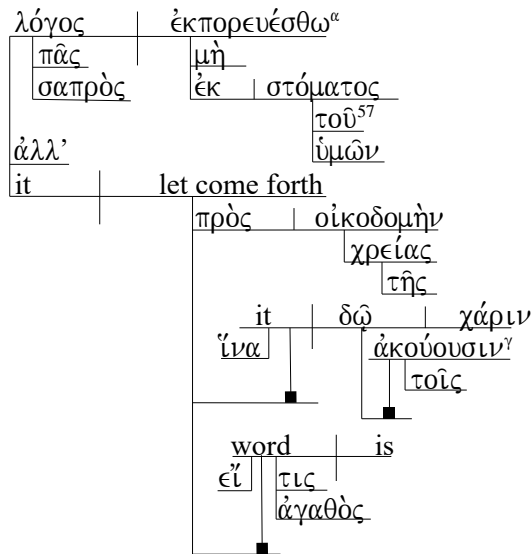
Stealing is related to satanic pride (high-mindedness) because the one who steals thinks himself above working. This is not simply a matter of physical laziness. Some who steal work very hard at it. Rather, the willingness to steal from someone else is based on the idea that the one stealing is somehow superior to his victim, and therefore has the right to take what he wants.

The alternative to stealing is stated, “*rather let him labor, working with his hands the good thing.*” It is either the one or the other. No middle ground is allowed. Even the most unskilled Christian can perform “*the good thing,*” that is, what is beneficial, and thereby express the lifestyle of the new man.

The purpose for working is, “*in order that he might have something to share with the one who has need.*” To help others in need is contrary to the satanic attitude of pride. The one who shares is putting another above himself and so sees himself as subordinate to the mighty hand of God (1 Peter 5:6).

**4:29** πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκπορευέσθω ἀλλ’ εἴ τις ἀγαθὸς πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.

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α P, Icomp, Imp, 3, s, from ἐκπορεύομαι.  
β P, TA, S, 3, s, from δίδωμι.  
γ P, Icomp, Part, M, p, D, from ἀκούω.

*Translation: Do not let any harmful word come forth out of your mouth, but if there is any good word let it come forth for edification of what is necessary in order that it might give grace to the ones who hear.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

29. πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκπορευέσθω ἀλλ' εἴ τις ἀγαθὸς πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν (*pas logos sapros ek tou stomatos humōn mē ekporeuesthō all ei tis agathos pros oikodomēn tēs chreias hina dō charin tois akousousin – Do not let any harmful word come forth out of your mouth, but if there is any good word let it come forth for edification of what is necessary in order that it might give grace to the ones who hear*)

Paul comes to the problems of the spoken word, communications that come *out of the mouth*. Like food that is spoiled, the spoken word can be harmful. The word translated harmful here is *sapros*, the Greek word for rotten, or spoiled. Paul speaks of communication designed to be hurtful. And like rotten food, one can tell that it should not be consumed. Therefore, the hurtful communication is not inadvertent, but planned to harm the recipient.

While the old man may speak that which is harmful, the new man is encouraged to speak a good word for edification, the building up of an individual.

The opposite is a “good word,” intended “*for edification of what is necessary.*” Now, this is a problem, and Paul included the words “*what is necessary*” so that the believer will realize that some necessary words are words that can cause upset. Nevertheless, the truth is necessary, even if it gives offense.

The reason for giving the necessary word is “*in order that it might give grace to the ones who hear.*” Three potential reactions occur when a communication of grace occurs, one positive, one negative, and one non-committal. The positive one is desirable, but the negative or non-committal is what one often receives. In fact, both of the reactions other than positive are negative, though the non-committal leaves some room for the Spirit to work. But the negative one is otherwise, as it is a flat rejection of truth.

How does one “give grace.” It is done through an act of communication, a “word of grace.” (Some believe in the objectifying of grace, and making it something that is bestowed on the believer. This is sometimes called the sacramental view of grace, a view that is not based in Scripture.)

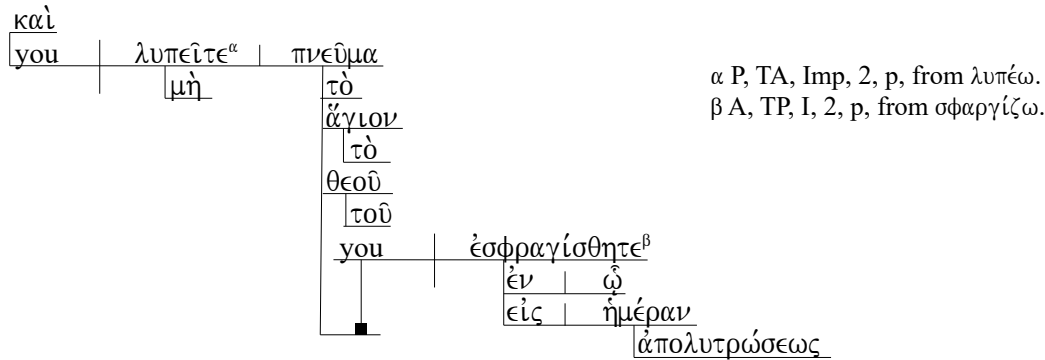
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Some who hear the word of grace, especially the word of grace as dispensed by Paul, reject it. Some reinterpret such grace in words which fit their theological position. Such positions range from the legalistic to the sacramental,<sup>58</sup> which leave no room for consideration of the Scriptures as written. They are based on an interpretation that is not normal (literal historical-grammatical). Some apply allegorical or other abnormal approaches to the text so as to defend a view which the original readers would not have understood.

Others reject the word of grace while appearing to accept it. They “go along” in order to spread their views in a subtle manner. Some even seem to agree, hoping later to convince others of “more important truth.” That is, truth as they see it, which is often blatant error.

Finally, one must admit that the “word of grace” causes problems, and can even bring about division among believers. Nevertheless, it is necessary that it be given, regardless of the outcome.

**4:30** καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως.



*Translation: And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

30. καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως (*kai mē lupeite to pneuma to hagion tou theou en hō esphragisthēte eis hēmeran apolutrōseōs – And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption*)

Paul begins this sentence with a *kai* which continues the discussion, and shifts subtly to a new but related topic. The connection is obvious, as the grieving of the Holy Spirit is brought about, at least in part, by the harmful speaking of the previous sentence. One means of not grieving the Spirit, then, is through the communication of grace.

But in the broader sense, the entire previous context must be understood as the cause of grieving the Spirit by the believer. Neither lying, nor stealing, nor unjustified wrath can be excepted. Indeed, the entirety of the “Gentile lifestyle,” when the Christian does not put off the old man, grieves the Spirit, as such a life is contrary to His nature.

That the Holy Spirit can be grieved identifies Him as a person. But such grief, which is to be identified with sorrow, is not capricious, an uncontrolled emotion. In fact, Paul uses a figure of speech called anthropopathy, the attribution of human emotions to God, who does not have human emotions. It is best to think of grieving as a considered attitude entered into because of the lifestyle of the believer conforms to the old man’s lifestyle. In this case, then, the emotion of human beings is like that which the Holy

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Spirit experiences, without the negative human implications. The Holy Spirit remains holy, and perfectly righteous when He grieves, unlike the human being, whose grief can be taken to unhealthy extremes.

Some have taught that grieving the Spirit somehow makes Him unable to relate personally to the believer, or unable to control the old nature. But this is not true. Grieving the Spirit does not effect the relationship of the believer to God, nor in any way render Him ineffective. Paul makes this clear with the words, “*by whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.*” The person who may be grieved is the person who sealed the believer. Paul previously mentioned the Spirit’s sealing of the believer in Ephesians 1:13. There we found that the Spirit Himself is the seal, that He is a guarantee of the salvation state received by faith. No act of the believer can change that. The act of sealing lasts “unto the day of redemption,” a phrase which corresponds to “the redemption of the possession” in Ephesians 1:14, which see. It is a reference to the resurrection of the believer of this age.

**4:31** πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ’ ὑμῶν σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ.

πικρία				
καὶ				
θυμὸς				
καὶ				
ὀργὴ		ἀρθήτω <sup>α</sup>		
καὶ	πᾶσα	ἀφ’	ὑμῶν	
κραυγὴ		σὺν	κακίᾳ	
καὶ			πάσῃ	
βλασφημία				

α A, TP, Imp, 3, s, from αἴρω.

*Translation: Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and blasphemy be removed from you, together with all malice.*

**Exegetical Considerations**

**31.** πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ’ ὑμῶν σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ (*pasa pikria kai thumos kai orgē kai kraugē kai blasphemēia arthētō aph humōn sun pasē kakia – Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and blasphemy be removed from you, together with all malice*)

This sentence is unusual in that it has a quintet of subjects. Paul uses the passive voice verb “let them be removed,” followed by a prepositional phrase, “together with all malice.”

The first of the five subjects, *pikria*, we have translated *bitterness*. In Greek, as in English, the word refers to a literal taste caused by certain plants, but metaphorically it seems to have come to mean resentment, though some thinks it’s another word for envy. But envy is a more technical word meaning to desire something another person has, whereas *pikria* carries more of the concept of resentment against a person, the feeling that someone is unfair or unjust, that a wrong has been perpetrated on oneself by another person. It is ultimately a word that refers to feelings derived from one’s immaturity. A bitter person will speak ill of some other person because they think that person has deprived them of something they believe should be rightly their own. Bitterness can bring about harsh criticism or another, or even false accusations (*blasphemēia*).

The second word, *thumos*, is the same as the work of the flesh Paul lists in Galatians 5:19-21. The word *thumos* does not refer to the internal feelings that we sometime call anger. It means the outbursts of

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anger, the act of striking out orally or physically against the object with whom the carnal person is angry. Unfortunately, *thumos* is translated *wrath* in some versions, including several times in the KJV, but is not to be confused with *orges*, the actual word for wrath, which is the next word in this list.

Anger refers to loosing one's temper, "flying off the handle," an outburst of anger, and is often excused as an uncontrollable personality trait. According to Barclay, the emphasis of this word is something quick, or of short duration, blazing up and dying down.<sup>59</sup> In its 18 occurrences in the New Testament, it always carries this same idea.

The third word of this compound subject is *orgē*, wrath. It refers to striking out in a violent manner. Here we find the unrighteous use of the word, referring to unwarranted violence against others. See the discussion of *orgē* in verses 26-27 above.

The fourth word is *kraugē*, which we have translated *clamor*. Like *orgē*, wrath, *kraugē* carries both a negative and positive meaning, depending on context. Negatively, it means the act of screaming or shouting loudly, and carries the implication of being out of control. Some refer this to the noise made during a brawl. For instance, Adam Clark says of clamor that it is, "Loud and obstreperous speaking, brawling, railing, boisterous talk, often the offspring of wrath...."<sup>60</sup>

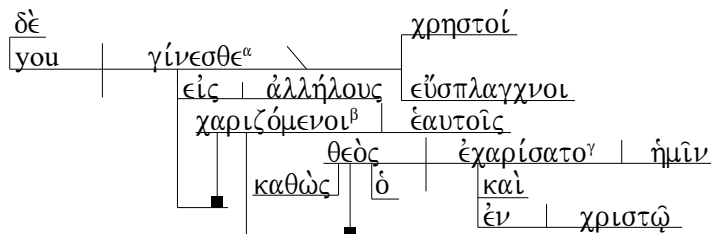
The fifth and final word of this multi-subject is *blasphēmia*, rarely translated into English, but transliterated as *blasphemy*, as we have done. The KJV, however, translates the word here "evil speaking," a translation that is too broad. The actual *negative* translation should be "slander," that is, making false statements about someone, including, but not limited to, making false accusations. There is also a more *positive* meaning, the making of accurate accusations, though it is only used once in the New Testament in this sense, in Jude 1:9.

As noted, the verb, translated "let be removed" is an aorist passive, the passive voice being unusual in these kinds of constructions. Paul uses this form as a way of invoking the grace idea of the solution over the flesh, to which these five subjects seem to relate. We will discuss this more in the notes on Ephesians 5:18.

Added to these five subjects is a prepositional phrase, *together with all malice*. It almost seems to be an after thought, but a better explanation is that malice is of a different character than the words of the five-fold subject. It is more general, referring to any wrong act perpetrated against another. The expression "all malice" is without the article, and should be understood as "all kinds of malice." Paul added it to include any harmful act against another that he has not included in the five-fold subject.

As with many of Paul's admonitions, he begins with the negative, but continues to the positive, which is expressed in the next sentence.

4:32 γίνεσθε δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοὶ εὐσπλαγχνοὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν χριστῷ ἔχαρίσατο ἡμῖν.



α P, Icop, I, 2, p, γίνομαι.

β P, TA, Part, M, p, N, from χαρίζομαι.

γ A, TA, I, 3, s, from χαρίζομαι.

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*Translation: And be kind to one another, compassionate people, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.*

***Exegetical Considerations***

32. γίνεσθε δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοὶ εὐσπλαγχνοὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν χριστῷ ἔχαρίσατο ἡμῖν (*ginesthe de eis allēlous chrēstōi, eusplagchnoi, charizomenoi heautois kathōs kai ho theos en christō echarisato hēmin – And be kind to one another, compassionate people, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*)

Here is Paul's admonition of the positive as opposed to the negative of the previous sentence. The verb, *ginesthe*, is a present imperative emphasizing an on-going state of being. Coupled with the plural *chrēstōi*, *kind*, the idea is that the believers were to be kind *people*. But the adjective *kind* is followed by the word *compassionate*, another plural, the Greek adjective, *eusplagchnoi*.<sup>61</sup> Taken together these two plural adjectives mean "kind, compassionate *people*."

The Greek word *kind* carries virtually the same meaning as the English translation. It refers to a person who is of a sympathetic and helpful nature. It is a more general and less emotionally based word than *compassionate*, which is translated "tenderhearted" in the KJV. The word *kind* (*chrēstōi*) lacks the intensity of *compassion* (*eusplagchnoi*), a word which literally means "having strong internal organs." Physically it can refer to any of the internal organs, but often refers more directly to the stomach and intestines. Metaphorically, it indicates the feeling of strong emotion that one somewhat experiences in the stomach.

In this sentence, the qualities of kindness and compassion are applied to the need for forgiveness. Such people are to be "forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." The word translated *forgiving* and *forgive* here is not the forensic word *aphēmi*, which Paul uses as identifying the act of redemption (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:4), but the more personal word *charidzomai*, related to the Greek word for grace. A human being is unable to forgive in the forensic sense; *aphēmi* type forgiveness belongs to God alone. Such forgiveness removes the consequences of sins and trespasses.

A person who exercises *charidzomai* type forgiveness is being gracious to another, expecting nothing, but withholding nothing, and freely forgiving a personal affront. It is the opposite of holding a grudge, an attitude which harms the grudge-holder at least as much as the one who committed the offense.

## Endnotes

- 1 The relative pronoun ἧς is an accusative which has been attracted to the form of its antecedent, κλήσεως.
- 2 Some have supposed the passage is aimed exclusively toward the elders of the assembly, but this seems unlikely. Paul had dealt directly with the elders in Acts 20, and those instructions still held. This passage in Ephesians is more in line with the teaching of Galatians 6:1-6, directed to “those who are spiritual,” and therefore implying an audience of maturity, which included the elders, but was not limited to them.
- 3 The verb *I encourage* (*parakalō*) is the first word in the sentence, in the position of emphasis. The simple indicative mood, often overlooked in studies, makes a declaration (it is called the declarative indicative by Dana and Mantey). Believers need to be emphatically encouraged in their Christian walk, as Paul does here.
- 4 In Ephesians, *peripateō* occurs 8 times, twice in chapter two, once negatively (2:2), and once positively (2:10); he uses it three times in chapter 4, once positively (4:1) twice negatively (4:17); he uses it three times in chapter 5, all positively (5:2; 8, &15). A complete study of *peripateō* in its various contexts will give the believer a clear understanding of a godly walk.
- 5 W. E. Vine et al. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) s.v. Electronic Edition, E-Sword.
- 6 Both this participle and the next, *spoudazontes*, which introduces vs. 3, are independent nominatives. This has caused grammatical confusion, especially among older grammarians. C. D. F. Moule, for instance, does not seem to know what to do with them grammatically. At one point he calls them “hanging participles,” and in another place says that such nominative use is “difficult to justify grammatically.” See Moule’s *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, pgs. 31 and 105. But independent, or absolute constructions are common in almost all Western languages, and certainly the New Testament has a number of them.
- 7 Stanley Porter, in his *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, is confused about this phrase “the bond of peace.” He seems to think it is either a subjective genitive (the bond produced by peace), or a possessive genitive (the bond belonging to peace.) In fact, it is neither. It is a genitive of apposition, “the bond that consists of peace,” as shown by the whole phrase being the object of the preposition ἐν. It is true that the subjective genitive and the genitive of apposition are close in meaning, but in this case the stronger idea is that peace is the very bond that produces unity.
- 8 This is a noun sentence with the understood state-of-being verb. The singular verb “is” seems correct, as each element of the compound subject occurs independently. The distributive use seems justified by the repeated numerical value of “one” being applied to each of the four individual subjects.
- 9 The article ὁ, sometimes thought to be used as a relative pronoun, is just as likely the article associated with a participle. Therefore, the English participle “being” is supplied.
- 10 These three passages present the incident where the Father says to Jesus, “You are my beloved Son.” We must remember that in the culture of the day, the word Son refers to a position of equality, not one of inferiority. It is not a statement of birth, but of “son placement,” by which the Father indicates that He and the Son share an equality of essence and position.
- 11 See this author’s work, *Notes on Revelation*, pages 262-265.
- 12 The temporal order of events is, 1) the death and burial of Christ’s body, when, 2) the disembodied person of Christ entered into hades and led the Old Testament believers out of captivity, and 3) He provided gifts for men. He did not apply those gifts, as that is the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), but once He established His dominion over death through this ascension when He led captivity captive, He thereby finished His work for Israel. The act of removing the captive believers suspended the Lord’s relationship to the nation Israel, and inaugurated the program for the Body of Christ, the first act of which was the provision of spiritual gifts. The suspension of Christ’s relationship to Israel cannot be terminated until the official end of the current evil age, and the interruption of Israel’s kingdom program is over. This will take place subsequent to the resurrection of the believers of the current age (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- 13 On *huperanō* with the ablative see the note on Ephesians 1:21. There the emphasis of separation is on position, whereas here it is on place. See also Hebrews 9:5 where *huperanō* is used with an ablative of place (αὐτῆς).
- 14 Lit. through himself.



## *Endnotes*

- 15 Psalm 68:18.
- 16 That is, complete all things.
- 17 The author has encountered gifted Bible teachers who were not good teachers in the natural sense, and likewise, very good teachers in secular subjects, who, even though being committed Christians, did not teach the Bible well. In some cases, such individuals were clearly gifted by God in a different area than teaching, such as exhortation, or even gifted with a non-speaking gift, such as showing mercy.
- 18 The word “pastor” was not used in the New Testament to refer to a position in a local assembly. The words used for those positions were bishop (*episkopos*) and elder (*presbuteros*), which terms referred to the same individual. The Bible does indicate that those positions are reserved for men, but not because men are more capable than women. For a full discussion of that issue, see this writer’s work on the doctrine of the church.
- 19 A careful study of the New Testament will show that the word member is never used of the local church in the New Testament, and the local assemblies in New Testament times would not have used such terminology. The New Testament writers knew nothing of “joining a church,” as one would join a club or some kind of lodge. The idea of the local church as a discrete body became popular after the New Testament was written, and men began to lose sight of the primacy of Scripture.
- 20 However, two other uses of *evangelist* occurs in the New Testament: 1) Acts 21:8, where Philip, one of the seven assistants listed in Acts 6:5, is called “the evangelist,” probably because of his work mentioned in Acts 8, and 2) 2 Timothy 4:5, where Paul tells Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist.”
- 21 The classic use of the gospel of salvation in a discussion to confirm the resurrection is in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. This passage is in the context of Paul’s defense of the truth of resurrection as a concept, which some in Corinth had denied. Some have suggested that the Saducees had some influence in Corinth, which resulted in the denial of a bodily resurrection, but that supposition is without evidence in the New Testament.
- 22 Please do not take this statement to mean that spiritual gifts cannot operate during the time the local church meets. They can and do operate during that time. However, gifts are not time limited to, nor do they specifically derive from the existence of, the local assembly, but from the existence of the “church which is His body” (Ephesians 1:22-23), that is, the body of Christ, the church universal, as it is sometimes called.
- 23 The local assembly has no *government* in the normal sense of the word. It has leadership, who are limited as to qualifications and functions by various passages of Scripture. Not, for instance, 1 Peter 5:1-3.
- 24 However, it does occur one time in the Septuagint, as in Isaiah 38:12.
- 25 Abbott-Smith defines *katartisis* as “strengthening, making fit.”
- 26 Usually a preposition, *mechri* here acts as a subordinate conjunction. See the diagram.
- 27 The verb *katantēsōmen* (we attain) is in the subjunctive mood. “The subjunctive is used in temporal clauses (remember *mechri* is a time word, translated until) where the temporal clause is conceived as an indefinite possibility, and its use implies uncertainty as to realization.” Dana and Mantey, pg. 281. Hence we state that Paul is speaking of the ideal, rather than the actual, attainment of which he speaks.
- 28 Marvin Vincent states, “The different teachings of philosophers or of religious quacks are represented as winds, blowing the unstable soul in every direction.” *Vincent’s Word Studies*, under the verse.
- 29 The preposition *pros* has a variety of uses. Its object can be in any one of three forms, each of which have a specific tendency. In this case, its object, *tēn methodeian*, is in the forth form, generally called the accusative. In such cases, the preposition can carry one of a variety of forces, including most commonly motion, position, or time. However, in this case it seems to carry the concept of transference in the sense of *tending toward*, or *with a view to*. See Moule’s *Idiom Book*, pg. 53.
- 30 Again we see that Marvin Vincent is spot on with his observation that, “Μεθοδεία (*methodeia*) means a deliberate planning or system.” *Ibid*.
- 31 Strangely, Dana and Mantey, pg. 70, seem to indicate that this participle is an independent nominative, that is a nominative without relationship to the verb of its clause. Rather, it appears to be a nominative showing the adverbial means of growth. Note the diagram, where we have placed it beneath the verb of the clause, *auxēsōmen*.

## Endnotes

- 32 The phrase *ta panta*, “in all things,” is an *accusative of reference*, rather than a direct object. See the note associated with the Greek diagram.
- 33 I have translated *pan to sōma* with the phrase “all the body.” Some controversy exists as to whether the adjective *pas, pasa, pan*, generally translated *all* or *every*, can be used to refer to the entirety of a thing, or only in the sense of every thing, or every kind of thing. In the singular, it usually means *every*, and at one time it was held by some grammarians that it could never be used in the sense of *whole*, as some translate it here. To translated it “every body” would certainly be misleading in this case, as the word refers to the totality of the metaphorical body of Christ. But the translation *whole* would also be misleading, as the whole body does not exist at any given point in time. It seems disingenuous to teach that the whole body during the entirety of the time the body exists somehow effects the body continuously in its growth, though some have attempted such an explanation. Nevertheless, *pan* here cannot refer to several individual bodies, which the translation “every” would imply. Hence my translation of “all the body.” The best understanding is that the phrase refers not to the whole body, but to the entirety of the body as it exists at any given point in time. Moule has an interesting discussion of this issue on pages 94-95 of his *Idiom Book*.
- 34 Technically, the infinitive clause “not to walk just as also the remaining Gentiles walk” stands in apposition to “this” (*touto*), identifying specifically what Paul is saying. See diagram.
- 35 Paul does not mean that the unbelieving Gentile cannot know the information (or at least know about the information), but that it is impossible for the unbelieving mind to use the spiritual truth. The empty mind is not empty of facts, but empty of ability to use the facts, hence the common translation “futility.”
- 36 See the Greek diagram. The participle translated “estranged” is the predicate complement of the participle translated “being.” Burton, on pg. 52 of *Moods and Tenses*, states concerning this participle construction that “The effect is of a perfect participle clearly marked as one of existing state.” In other words, Gentiles are existing in a state of being estranged from the life of God.
- 37 This is not to denigrate the academic study of the Word of God. Diligent study is necessary for the believer to gain insight into what the Bible actually says, and it is interaction with the written word that provides the basis for God’s enlightenment of the text itself.
- 38 The word *soulish* is a coined word, and is a convenient translation of *psuchikos*, the Greek original.
- 39 The original meaning of *apalgeō* is “to cease to feel pain” (Abbott-Smith). Metaphorically it came to mean either “to despair,” or “to become calloused” in the sense of becoming uncaring, apathetic; “those who have become insensible to truth and honor and shame are called ἀπηλγηκότες (A. V. *past feeling*) in Eph. 4:19 (Thayer).
- 40 Lightfoot, J. B. *The Epistle to the Galatians*, pg. 210.
- 41 Unger, Merrill, ed. *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*. “Harlot, Whore,” pg. 536-7.
- 42 Orr, James, ed. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. “Diana; Artemis,” 1939. Electronic Edition: Bibleworks.
- 43 Other contexts use it in a broader sense, such as Romans 6:19 and 1 Thessalonians 2:3 and 4:7.
- 44 See the note on Ephesians 5:2 for more about greediness.
- 45 Grammatically, verses 20-21 and following are a conditional sentence of the first class. Vs. 21 is the protasis (if clause) of the conditional sentence which is indicated by the subordinate clause indicator *eige* (if indeed, or since indeed). Vs. 20 and following, then is the apodosis of that condition.
- 46 Some have suggested that “in Him” could be “by Him,” as the verb *edidachthēte* is passive voice. This is grammatically possible, though again it would necessarily be considered a metaphorical act of teaching. However, “in Him” seems preferable because of the following statement, “*just as the truth is in Jesus*,” which seems to define the relationship intended. There was literal teaching in Christ by the apostles.
- 47 The anarthrous use of truth (*alētheia*) is not a problem here. Truth is being used in the abstract sense, not of a specific truth, but of truth as an idea, a concept.
- 48 The technical adjective for this use of infinitives is *epexegetic*, from the noun *epexegesis*, referring to further explanation of a topic. These three infinitives explain the things mentioned in the previous part of the sentence.

## Endnotes

- 49 But one might ask, “Is there no relationship between the old man/new man figure and the existence of the old Adamic nature, and the new regenerated nature?” The answer is, “Yes, of course there is a relationship.” It is the fact of regeneration (and other spiritual truths relating to the new state of salvation) that makes possible both the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man.
- As noted, one does not put off the old nature nor put on the new. But what is possible after regeneration is that the lifestyle, having its source in the old nature, is no longer *required*, as it was prior to that regeneration. However, and this is the key, it is still possible for a believer to live a life that is associated with the old nature, because that nature remains in tact, and is just as powerful as it always was. But with the new nature provided, the individual has new abilities that were not available previously, and can go through the process of putting off the old lifestyle, and putting on a new one.
- Paul does not go into detail in Ephesians regarding the process of putting off the old and putting on the new, because it was not necessary. He had spent three years in proconsular Asia teaching those wonderful doctrines. But the two epistles in which he does explain the method for changing the lifestyle, the only other epistles in which the old man/new man figure is repeated, he does deal with the methodology, and both were written to believers in cities in which he had not made even a short appearance. In Romans 6, the apostle goes into great detail in developing the doctrine of no longer living according to the old nature, and includes the statement that the old man has been crucified (Romans 6:6), that is, figuratively put to death (see my notes on that chapter). Likewise, in his epistle to the Colossians, another assembly he had not visited, after having briefly discussed the process of changing one’s lifestyle, he refers to the result of that change with the words “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,” (3:9, NKJV). Again we see that the old man can be put off “with his deeds.” The word for deeds is *πρᾶξις* (*praxis*), a word that means activity or practice.
- 50 I have taken “of deceit” as a descriptive genitive, though one might think it’s an objective genitive, meaning that the act of lusting produces deceit. The ideas are similar.
- 51 The prepositional phrase “according to God, modifying “created,” is a Greek idiom indicating the quality of the act of creation, which confirms figurative use of the verb. Paul does not say that God created the new man, but that the new man was created *in accordance with a quality of God*, which refers to God’s character, the model for the Christian lifestyle. Moule, in his *Idiom Book*, pg. 59, refers to these kinds of uses of *kata* as being “transferred senses,” in this case, the transference of a quality of God to the new man. Qualitative prepositional phrases with anarthrous objects are very common as a Greek idiom.
- 52 The participle structure functions like the protasis of a first class condition, “Since you have put off the lie.” The main clause, “speak the truth,” then, corresponds to the apodosis, “then speak truth.”
- 53 The verb “speak” is a present imperative, indicating a continual action. The idea seems to be that having put off the old man, and therefore having put off the lie, the believer then consistently speaks truth. Note that the word truth (*ἀλήθειαν*) is without the article, which is consistent with the continual speaking of truth in general. No specific truth is in view here.
- 54 Brooks and Winbery list this as an imperative of concession, pgs. 129-139, meaning “Even though you are wrathful, do not sin.” This view somewhat weakens the idea of righteous wrath, unless one thinks of it as “though it is necessary to be wrathful.” Also Brooks and Winbery fall into the common error described in the note below, and translate as *ὀργίζεσθε* “be angry.” (Porter, *Idioms*, on pg. 227 also translates it “be angry,” as do a host of others.) It may be closer to reality to revert to the more general idea of a conditional imperative, “If you are wrathful, do not sin.” (Concessives are a subcategory of conditional expressions.)
- 55 As noted, unfortunately many consider *orgē*, and *orgidzō* to refer to a type of anger, almost as though they think of *orgē* as a subset of *thumos*. Wuest quotes many who use the word *anger* for *orgē*. Much of what they say is good and true, but they insist on calling wrath a “passion” in the emotional sense of the word. It is only such in the negative sense, and not at all in the sense that is used here. In fact, Paul uses it in the same way that the phrase “the wrath of God” is used, as an expression of righteous striking out against evil. An illustration of righteous wrath would be the striking out violently against an individual who is attempting to commit an act of murder or assault. Such an act is not only righteous, it is a required act, something that one does not perform at his own peril.

## *Endnotes*

- 56 In his discussion of the present participle indicating action prior to the main verb, he lists this use as an example, but does so as an after thought, which is found in the section “Notes and Corrections,” pg. 206. This is problematic, as 1) the participle under consideration is articular, and used as a dative of the indirect object, and 2) being a substantival, the one having need may have that need before, during, or after (frequentative use) the one laboring has gained that which he can share. Moule does indicate that the participle action can be frequentative or durative (which is how I originally identified the participle), which seems to eliminate the need to identify it as an action previous to the main verb.
- 57 Article of possession, “out of *your* mouth.”
- 58 I do not get more specific, for this work is not intended to counter point-by-point views that are based on other interpretive systems. The one significant fact is that the word of God must be approached by the individual using normal interpretive methodology. For this reason, no purely human system should be the ultimate authority. The authority to express truth occurs only when an individual approaches the written word of God apart from dogmatics. (*Dogmatics* is derived from the word dogma, which refers to “something held as an established opinion, esp. a definite authoritative tenet [Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition] *Dogmatics*, then, is the presentation of theological ideas from the perspective of an organization or group, be it a denomination or otherwise.)
- 59 Barclay, William, *Flesh and Spirit*, pg. 52.
- 60 Adam Clark, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*, Vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, nd), 457.
- 61 Technically, both χρηστοί and εὐσπλαγχνοὶ are substantival adjectives rather than purely predicate adjectives. Grammatically, the second word, translated compassionate, is in apposition to the first. It more clearly defines the nature of the kindness of which Paul speaks.