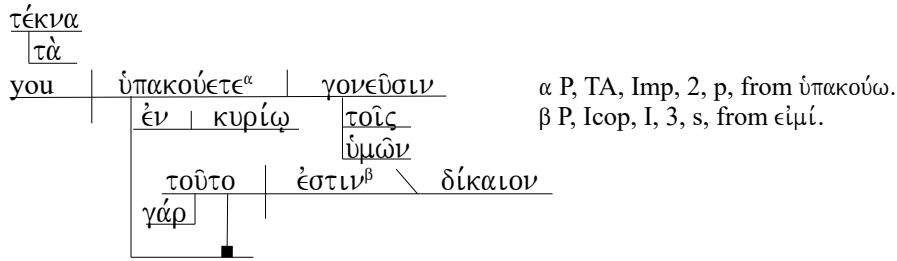


Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

6:1 τὰ τέκνα ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν δίκαιον.



Translation: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Exegetical Considerations

1. τὰ τέκνα ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ, τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν δίκαιον (*ta tekna hupakouete tois goneusin humōn en kuriō, touto gar estin dikaion – Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right*)

Paul addresses the children in this third set of instructions. The verb is second person *plural*. The following implications arise from this direct address:

1. The children addressed are not infants or toddlers, but those who have grown to the point of being able to need instructions concerning obedience. The Greek word for children is in its normal form τέκνα, not the diminutive τεκνία, *little children*.
2. The children addressed in this first of two sentences are still under the authority of their parents. Once children leave their parents for the marriage state, this requirement for obedience no longer holds, as the realms of authority have changed. However, this does not necessarily hold true concerning the second sentence addressed to children in verses 2-3.
3. The object of the obedience is not the “father and mother” (the intimate term) but the parents.¹ The distinction is important, because it implies equality of parental authority. The authority does not flow from the father to the mother as it is viewed in some societies, but in the Spirit-controlled family, both hold authority over their children equally.

Some have held that the phrase “in the Lord” implies that the children have come to faith in the gospel of salvation. However, this is probably not the meaning of the phrase, though it is undoubtedly true that Paul is speaking to the ideal believing family, including the children. Rather, the phrase itself seems to indicate that the obedience is consistent with the ideal Christian family.

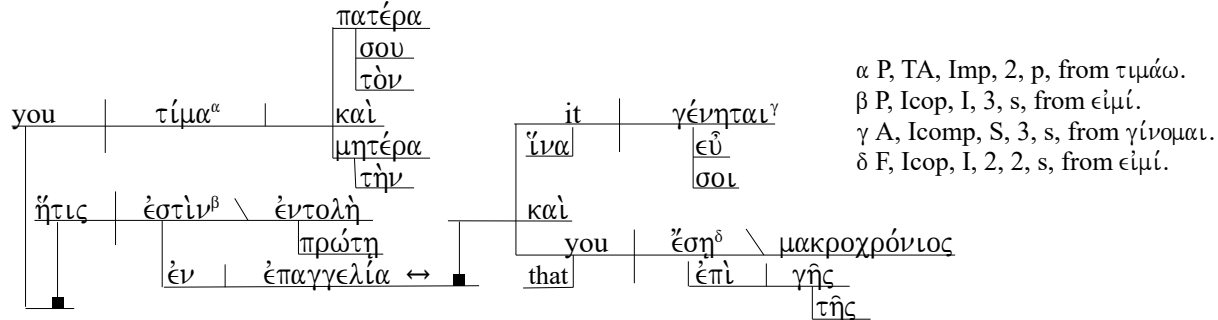
Nor is the obedience a result of legal requirement, as some have it.² Rather, as with the other family instructions, it is based on the ideal of the Christian family with believing children. Paul was well aware that such is not always the case, but the instructions are still being based on the prior teaching of Spirit-filling.

This view is consistent with the next phrase, “for this is right,” explaining the reason for obedience in the Lord. The term *right* must be taken in the Christian sense of conforming to God’s righteousness, not the cultural sense of the word as it was used at that time. Indeed, the word *dikios* carried a wide variety of uses in the first century. For example, it referred to the self-imposed righteous behavior of the Pharisees, who kept their own requirements legalistically. It also was used of maintaining societal

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

norms.³ Some cultural “rightness” was pagan in origin, and was decidedly not right in the sense that Paul means here.⁴

6:2-3 τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐντολὴ πρώτη ἐν ἐπαγγελίᾳ ³ ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται καὶ ἔσῃ μακροχρόνιος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς



Translation: Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise,³ in order that it might be well with you, and that you might be on the earth a long time.⁵

Exegetical Considerations

2. τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα (*tima ton patera sou kai tēn mētera – Honor your father and mother*)

The child is addressed in his singularity here. The more personal second person singular form of the verb *tima* indicates individual responsibility. This is consistent with the Hebrew of the original reference.

The object of the child’s honor is not “your parents” but “your father and mother.” The command to honor is broader than the command to obey. It carries responsibilities beyond the immediate authority of the parents over the children, but is based, as is clear in the rest of the sentence, on the authority of God rather than the parents. Once a child leaves his parents, the authority no longer holds, but the honoring requirement does continue, because the family relationship continues. Each is to be honored by the child because of the individual family relationship.

In its broad sense, the requirement to honor can be disobeyed in a variety of ways. Disrespect, abuse, and neglect⁶ are all possible ways of dishonoring one’s father and mother.

ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐντολὴ πρώτη ἐν ἐπαγγελίᾳ (*hētis estin entolē prōtē en epaggelia – which is the first commandment with a promise*)

This reference to Exodus 20:12 is not to put the child under law, but to express the fact that this is a universal requirement, not limited to the current grace program, but flowing directly from the nature of God’s plan for the family.

The phrase “with a promise” (*en epaggelia*) means with a promise attached. What is meant by first?⁷ Several have pointed out that Exodus 20:5-6 state “You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them, for I *Yaweh* your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them who hate me,⁶ and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.” Is this not also a promise, especially vs. 6? If so, how can Paul say that the fifth commandment is the first with promise attached?

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

The answer seems straightforward. The statement in vs. 6 is primarily a statement of judgment and mercy, not a promise in the sense that Paul used the word. Verse 6 specifically cannot be removed from the judgment scenario, as it is clearly used as a contrast, the act of withholding judgment, rather than a positive statement of rewards promised.

3. ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται καὶ ἔσῃ μακροχρόνιος⁸ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (*hina eu soi genētai kai esē makrochronois epi tēs gēs – in order that it might be well with you, and that you might be on the earth a long time*)

Paul presents the promise of Genesis 20:12 as a purpose clause (*hina* – in order that). This is consistent with both the LXX and the Masoretic (Hebrew) text.

The original meaning of the Hebrew text carries the idea of promise, not that of judgment. Commonly the promise is applied nationally, rather than personally. If the nation as a whole maintains the law, all will be well, and Israel will continue in the land.⁹ However, some problems arise with this view.

1. This interpretation assumes that the Decalogue was primarily national because it assumes the “constitutional view” of the entirety of the law of Moses. At the time it was given, however, Israel was not yet a nation. It was a family that had been taken collectively out of Egypt. The national consciousness did not occur until the end of the wilderness wanderings, and is first reflected in the book of Deuteronomy, where Moses added a new concept to the original law in his final oration (Deuteronomy 29-30). But even then, the actual national existence of Israel was yet in the future.
2. Each commandment is directed to the individual rather than to the nation. The second person singular form for each verb is used. One would expect that if the commandments were intended at this point for a national application, that the verbs would be in the second person plural.
3. Each commandment can only be obeyed by individuals. The fifth through tenth commandments especially are highly personal and cannot be viewed collectively without doing damage to the intent of the law.
4. While it is true that in Deuteronomy, collective punishment is applied to the nascent nation, at the time the Decalogue was produced, this cannot be maintained. The normal view of the grammar of the Hebrew text indicates that the ten laws were to be applied to the individual by the individual. The original penalties could only be applied to individuals.
5. The application most often given to Paul’s statement is the “natural consequences” view. It states that one who honors his father and mother has learned the basic lesson of respect and is likely to not be troubled by negative acts that can bring about the consequences illness or death. This is an attempt to avoid applying the national view of the Decalogue to the church, which may very well be the intent of the original Hebrew phraseology as well.

The interpretation that the Decalogue has a national basis seems to be stretching the point. While the national meaning cannot apply to believers today, is it legitimate to reinterpret the phrase from a grace perspective? Is there actually any reason to do so?

It seems best to take Paul’s references to the Old Testament in the normal sense as they were originally understood and applied. It is not necessary to apply the specifics to the individual believer today, as none of the commandments with their penalties attached can be applied to members of the current household. Consequently, Paul’s Old Testament references are best understood to teach that the ideas found in them are based on universal morality, rather than attempting to apply the command directly to

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

the believer today. The command “Honor your father and mother” carries a meaning that is universal. Paul’s quote from the Decalogue reinforces that fact without attempting to apply the commandments out of their original historical/grammatical context. It is not the specific promise that is being applied here, but the idea of promise inherent in the principle behind the command.

So, then, each commandment requiring morality is based on universal truth. That truth is that morality is a “package deal” and one cannot be selectively moral. It is often stated that nine of the ten commandments are repeated in the New Testament, the exception being the requirement to keep the Sabbath. The point of this can easily be missed. The New Testament writers did not apply the Old Testament law to anyone other than the sons of Israel, nor should Christians. But God’s moral righteousness has not changed, and that morality is the correct morality for believers today.

6:4 καὶ οἱ πατέρες μὴ παροργίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἀλλ’ ἐκτρέφετε αὐτὰ ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νουθεσίᾳ κυρίου.



α P, TA, Imp, 2, p, from παροργίζω.

β P, TA, Imp, 2, p, from ἐκτρέφω.

Translation: And fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but nourish them in the child-training and admonition of the Lord.

Exegetical Considerations

4. καὶ οἱ πατέρες μὴ παροργίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν (*kai hoi pateres mē parorgizete ta tekna humōn – And fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath*)

Addressed specifically to the fathers, who need a specific prohibition in child raising. Provocation to wrath¹⁰ of children by their fathers is forbidden. The idea is that the father should not deal with his children in such a way as to cause them to get angry to the point of striking out, turning violent. Some fathers can fall into the overbearing process of constant unwarranted criticism, which can lead, in some children, to a violent reaction. Children, who often have not yet developed control of their emotions, can be brought to a point of striking out by such actions.

ἀλλ’ ἐκτρέφετε αὐτὰ ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νουθεσίᾳ κυρίου (*all’ ektrephete auta en paideia kai nouthesia kuriou – but nourish them in the child-training and admonition of the Lord*)

The word translated *nourish* does not actually mean to raise children, though it is often so translated. It means to feed someone, and the only other time it occurs in the New Testament is Ephesians 5:29, where it should be translated “feeds.”

Fathers are to feed their children, though in this context the food is not physical, but consists of two spiritual areas expressed in the prepositional phrase “*in the child-training and admonition of the Lord.*”

Child-training (παιδεία) refers to education so as to bring children toward mental and spiritual maturity. Thayer states concerning the word, “the whole training and education of children which relates to the

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose, now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment.” The word *paideia* emphasizes the growth and discipline of the child. John uses a diminutive form of the word (*paidion*) to emphasize the spiritual growth of the believer in 1 John 2:13.

Admonition (νουθεσία) is a stronger word than child-training. Trench says this word, “is a training by word - by the word of encouragement, when that is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required, as set over against the training by act and discipline which is *paideia*.” Such nouthetic admonishment can lead to actual punishment, which is not considered with the word *paideia*.

The key to both these words, however, is found in the limiting phrase, “in the Lord.” It expresses the area of responsibility that the father has in his relationship to his children. It is their spiritual well-fare that is laid upon him, not just the meeting of physical or even intellectual needs.

One must, however, not take this too far. Some have used this verse to teach that God guarantees that a Christian father who meets these requirements will produce Christian children. This is simply not so. It is only God Himself, through His Son and by His Spirit, that produces the circumstances of salvation, not simply the teaching of the human father. To say that a father whose children reject Christ has failed in his responsibility is not the teaching of this verse. It should never be used to produce unwarranted guilt in fathers whose children rebel against the truth.

6:5-8 οἱ δοῦλοι ὑπακούετε τοῖς κυρίοις κατὰ σάρκα μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐν ἀπλότῃ τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς τῷ χριστῷ ⁶ μὴ κατ’ ὀφθαλμοδουλείαν ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι ἀλλ’ ὡς δοῦλοι τοῦ χριστοῦ ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ ψυχῆς ⁷ μετ’ εὐνοίας δουλεύοντες ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις ⁸ εἰδότες ὅτι ὃ ἐάν τι ἕκαστος ποιήσῃ ἀγαθόν τοῦτο κομιεῖται παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου εἴτε δούλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος

Now we come to one of the most controversial topics in the New Testament, that of slavery. Some have attempted to soften Paul’s acceptance of the slavery condition by calling it servitude, rather than what it was, abject slavery.¹¹ As we shall see, Paul was not condoning slavery, nor was he encouraging it. But he did indicate that the situation of slavery needed to be dealt with, but only for Christians caught up in that condition.

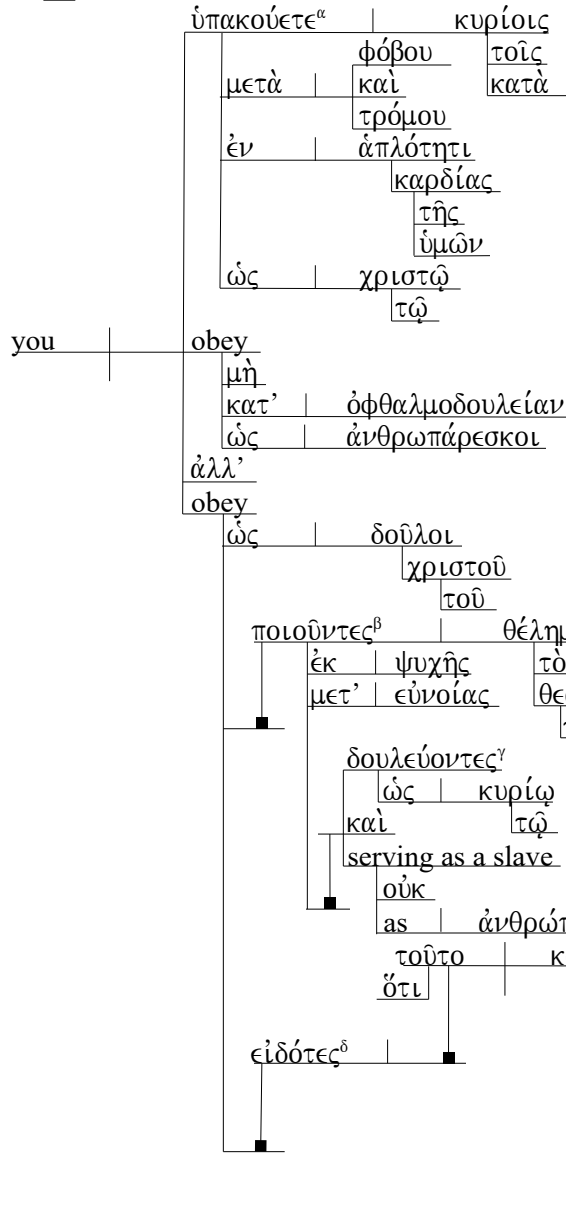
Paul expresses a general truth here about social conditions with reference to the Christian. The teaching in this section of Scripture should never be used by Christians to discourage standing for what is right. Nor should it be applied to unbelievers in *any sense*. Paul is addressing only Christian slaves in the Roman system, and not slaves in general. His teaching is about the Christian situation, not the condition of society.

Did Paul not understand, then, the evils of the Roman system? He most certainly did, but his admonishment to the Christian is to understand that it, as part of the world system, is passing away, and is therefore an unstable system. While believers are allowed to use the world system, they are not to abuse it (1 Corinthians 7:31). When Paul addresses the Christian slave masters, he does not tell them to give up their slaves, but to treat them correctly, that is, in a biblical Christian manner, and not to abuse the system in which both he and his slaves reside.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

δοῦλοι
οἱ

α P, TA, Imp, 2, p, from ὑπακούω.
β P, TA, Part, M, p, N, from ποιέω.
γ P, Icomp, Part, M, p, N, from δουλεύω.
δ Pf, TA, Part, M, p, N from οἶδα.
ε F, TA, I, 3, s, from κομίζω.
ζ A, TA, S, 3, s, from ποιέω.



Translation: Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as to Christ, ⁶ not according to eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, performing the will of God from the soul ⁷ with a good attitude, serving as slaves to the Lord and not to men, ⁸ knowing that if each person does anything good, he will receive it back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Exegetical Considerations

5. οἱ δοῦλοι ὑπακούετε τοῖς κυρίοις κατὰ σάρκα μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐν ἀπλότῃ τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς τῷ χριστῷ (*hoi douloi hupakouete tois kuriois kata sarka meta phobou kai tromou en haplotēti ēs kardias humōn hōs tō kristō – Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as to Christ*)

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

As noted in the introduction above, this section is addressed to Christian slaves only, and not to non-Christian slaves. Furthermore, it is, like the previous sections, addressed to slaves who understand their spiritual relationships, and have learned to be filled by the Spirit. Passages such as these confirm that faith is not dependent on circumstance, and the Christian life can thrive in the worst of situations.

The specific point of the passage is that Christians, no matter what their situation, can live the Christian life, and thereby honor God. One's social circumstance is not nearly as important as one's spiritual condition. That being the case, Paul indicates that slaves should be the best Christians they can, and thereby represent the Lord before their masters, whether they be believing masters or not.

The apostle begins his address by pointing out that Christian slaves are to obey their masters "according to the flesh," which phrase distinguishes their human master with their true master, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the master of all, whether slave or free. It is not that Paul is unconcerned with their slavery situation, but he understands that Christian service is not limited by anyone's station in life. The service of a slave in obedience to his master is, in God's thinking, service to Him as well. It opens opportunities for God to work. To the unbelieving master, the Christian slave provides a basis for witness to the saving power of Christ. To the believing master, as to all believers, the Christian slave provides a basis for encouraging Christian behavior by his conduct.

Christian slaves undoubtedly often had pagan masters, which they were to obey "in fear and trembling." That same phrase occurs three other times in the New Testament,¹² and seems to have carried the idea of having great concern to fulfill one's obligations. To fulfill one's situational obligations is God's desire for everyone, as it speaks of a recognition that God can be exalted by those in the lowliest situations in life. The Christian slave can be just as effective while enslaved as the highest born believer.

The phrase translated "in singleness of your heart" carries the idea of maintaining one's mental focus, to be mentally balanced and not flighty, but keeping one's mind on his work. The word *heart* in the New Testament refers to the seat of the mentality, and does not carry the emotional baggage as the term does in modern English. The concept of singularity of mind is an idiomatic way of saying that one needs to keep their mind on the job at hand.

Furthermore, the obligations of the slave were not primarily to their human masters, but to Christ, as is expressed in the next verse.

6. μή κατ' ὀφθαλμοδουλείαν ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι ἀλλ' ὡς δοῦλοι τοῦ χριστοῦ ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ ψυχῆς (*mē kat' ophthalmodouleian hōs anthropareskoi all' hōs douloi tou christou poiountes to thelēma tou theu ek psuchēs – not according to eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, performing the will of God from the soul*)

Two words, "eye-service" and "men-pleasers" show that the obligation of the slave's service is not primarily directed to his master. Paul is not saying that the Christian slave should not serve to please his master, but that such is not his *primary purpose* for service, which is to please Christ, his ultimate master.

The phrase "As slaves of Christ" indicates that the Christian slave has two masters, one who is superior to the other. Indeed, all Christians owe Christ honor as though His slave. This phrase, then, speaks of metaphorical slavery, that is no less legitimate than actual earthly slavery. It speaks of the believers ultimate obligation.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

The Christian slave's ultimate obligation, then, is to perform "the will of God from the soul." The phrase "will of God" takes us back to the concept of God's desirous will, that will which is, for us today, found solely in Scripture, but for the Christian of the first century, slave or free, God's will was found in the teaching of the apostles, whether written (Scripture) or spoken. Paul's concept of the will of God was not something which a person was to seek through circumstances, but that which was revealed and taught. Like all Christians, the Christian slave was to seek to do the will of God *as he had been instructed*.

The phrase "from the soul" is often wrongly translated "from the heart," which seems to make it relevant to the modern audience from an emotional perspective. Indeed, the emotional view is one which is regularly taught concerning this passage, since the word *soul* seems to be of the seat of human emotions. But is that the correct view here? Other possibilities exist.

Another view is that *soul* refers to the basic Christian character of the slave. And yet another is that it refers to mental concentration, another use of the word *soul* which seems unlikely here, as that idea is carried in "singleness of heart." Another view is that since the word *soul* is also used of the principle of physical life, the phrase refers to performing with all one's ability.

It is likely that Paul intended for the phrase to indicate this last idea, that the slave would put his whole effort into performing to the best of his ability, since that is most consistent with the context of this passage. This also seems to be consistent with the instructions in the next verse.

7. μετ' εὐνοίας δουλεύοντες ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις (*met' eunoias douleuontes hōs tō kuriō kai ouk anthropois – with a good attitude, serving as slaves to the Lord and not to men*)

The phrase "with a good attitude" goes with "performing the will of God." The word *attitude* translates *eunoias*, which almost all versions translate *good will* in this verse. It only occurs twice in the NT, here and in 1 Corinthians 7:3 where "good will" makes no sense. It is translated in various versions *benevolence, affection, duty, due*, and in the *Revised Standard Version, conjugal rights*. First Corinthians 7:3 is speaking of a husband's sexual responsibility to his wife, and hers to him. In both cases the noun means having the right mental perspective regarding a specific situation, that is, having a good attitude in the modern English vernacular.¹³

Having a good attitude is specifically applicable to slaves in this context, because Paul is concerned with their well-being both physically and spiritually. He recognized that slavery is not conducive to a good perspective concerning one's life prospects. The slave who is a maturing Christian can maintain a good attitude, a correct perspective. If one's mind is right, having a good attitude will consist in the next expression, "*serving as slaves to the Lord and not to men.*" The object of a Christian's service, as a slave or otherwise, is never man alone, but always God.

8. εἰδότες ὅτι ὃ ἕαν τι ἕκαστος ποιήσῃ ἀγαθόν τούτο κομιέται παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου εἴτε δούλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος (*eidotes hoti ho ean ti hekatos poiēsē agathon touto komieitai para tou kurious eite doulos eite eleutheros – knowing that if each person does anything good, he will receive it back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free*)

The Christian knows something of a certainty, something that no unbeliever can understand. In fact, the attitude of the believer throughout every situation in life is based on a forward perspective that is basic to the Christian lifestyle. There is an ultimate good to be received by any Christian as a reward for any good act he performs. No unbeliever gives credence to this truth.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

controlling someone else through oppression, and that the master/slave relationship is ultimately untenable.

The solution to that tension is found in these few words, “Masters, do the same things to them...” It is not the job of the Christian master to control his slaves, but to minister to them as fellow subjects of the true master, Jesus Christ!

ἀνιέντες τὴν ἀπειλήν (*anientes tēn apeilēn – ceasing the threatening*)

As noted above, control is basic to the slave/master relationship. The natural tendency is to keep applying the pressure of threats until compliance is achieved.

It is common for people in power to despise those not in power. The fallen human nature tends to want to dominate others, and when one is raised to a position of power, attitudes of superiority often emerge. The great danger in a slave society is that the slave owner often becomes corrupted in his view of himself. He begins to look down on, to despise his slaves, and thereby to use illegitimate means to ensure compliance. Hence the requirement that Christian masters cease threatening their slaves.

The implication of the word *cease* is that the masters were engaged in threatening their slaves and needed to stop doing so. It is not to be unexpected that the common relationship between masters and slaves is one of oppression from the top down. In the culture of the Roman Empire, threatening was probably a common way of ensuring compliance.

But the relationship of a Christian slave owner to his slaves was to be of a different character. The Christian attitude was to prevail in all situations and with all subordinates, remembering that such subordination was temporary, and that the Christian master had his own master.

εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς (*eidotes hoti kai humōn autōn ho kurios esten en ouranois – knowing that also your own master is in heaven*)

The ultimate doctrinal point is quite practical. Masters, you have your own master, and that master is in heaven. To the spiritually educated believer, this is a basic relationship to God. One's earthly situation is subordinate to the one who is in heaven. God's heavenly position is far superior to an earthly slave owner than the slave owner's position over his slaves. The true authority is heavenly, not earthly; that being the case, heavenly principles should prevail in the Christian life.

καὶ προσωποληψία οὐκ ἔστιν παρ' αὐτῷ (*kai prosōpolēpsia ouk estin par' autō – and there is no partiality with Him*)

Christ's impartiality is a sobering thought. The stations of life are irrelevant to the Lord, and therefore should be correctly understood by the maturing Christian. Authority over another in this life is a small thing compared to the fact that the Lord views all believers equally. His lack of partiality should be the determining factor in how Christians see others.

To summarize then, consider the following:

As with the slaves, Paul's address is only to Christian masters. It is clear from the wording (*do the same things*) that he expects the masters to have previously read what he wrote to the slaves. The basic truth is applicable to both groups of people, because it is their spiritual relationship that is to be foremost in their lives, not the temporary situation they experience one earth.

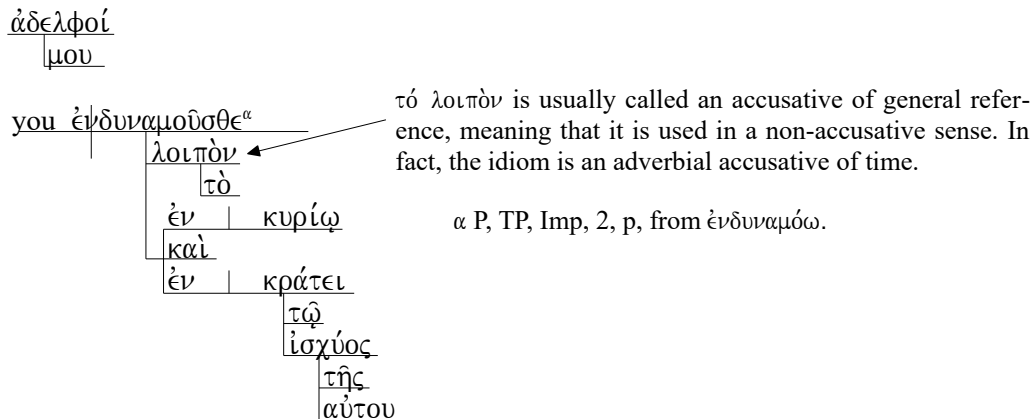
Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

If one takes the words of Paul at face value, he is clearly saying that in the spiritual sense slaves and masters are on an equal plane. From God's perspective, and therefore from a personal spiritual perspective, there is no slave nor free. Masters are to recognize that in Christ all are without distinction, for the perspective is of the one living a resurrected type of life in which all earthly relationships have ceased to exist.

This does not mean, however, that the societal norms can be completely ignored. Christian masters are not told to cease being masters, but to redefine what it means to be a master from a heavenly perspective. Likewise, Christian slaves are to see themselves as honoring their heavenly position by serving their masters well.

6:10 τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐνδυναμοῦσθε ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ κράτει τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ.

Beginning in vs. 10 and going through vs. 20, Paul addresses the issue of spirituality in light of satanic attacks. This is the major teaching in the New Testament about overcoming the specifics of demonic interference in the life of the Christian.



Translation: Finally, my brothers, be powerful in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Exegetical Considerations

10. τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐνδυναμοῦσθε ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ κράτει τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ (*to loipon, adelphoi mou, endunamousthe en kuriō kai en tō kratei tēs ischuos autou – Finally, my brothers, be powerful in the Lord and in the might of His strength*)

The word *finally* here introduces the last paragraph on Paul's teaching concerning spirituality in the life of the Christian. Again, the modern reader is to understand that this teaching is a summary of that which the apostle taught during his time in Ephesus. It does not concern every aspect of satanic involvement in the world,¹⁴ only those aspects of satanic activity that concern direct attacks of Satan through his spiritual minions.

The question of victory over satanic attack is power. Paul states, "Be powerful in *the* Lord..." The word power refers to ability, the power to produce results. This, of course, is not physical ability, but spiritual ability. Paul identifies the "in the Lord" idea further by the phrase, "in the might of His strength."¹⁵

The broader word is *might*, a word which speaks to the very nature of God. Many speak of God's omnipotence, which identifies God's power, as though it were the attribute of God's nature that is most

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

basic. But it is not. In fact, power comes out of God's almighty nature. *Almighty* is the correct term for God's attribute, rather than *omnipotent*.

The phrase, "of His strength" is an objective genitive. It refers to the fact that God's strength is based on His might. Strength is that aspect of God's might by which He can produce whatever results He determines. Think of strength as power held in reserve. Strength, in turn, is active through God's power, for power is the relative application of God's strength. Power is strength in action.

An illustration might help. Modern tools, such as electric drills, have variable power. They do not need to use all their strength each time they are used. One can use an amount of power to insert a screw in wood that is different than drilling a hole in metal. The power varies with the situation.

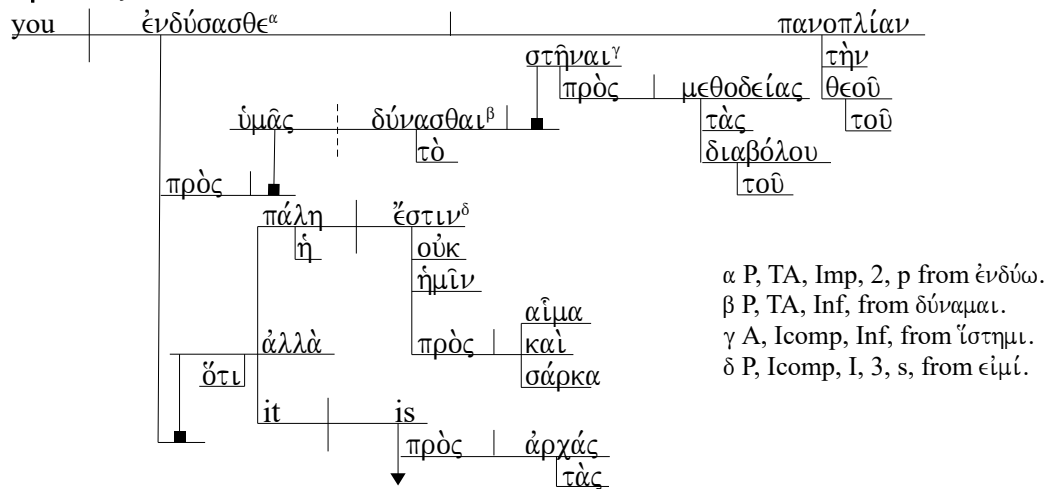
Such is true of God's power. He uses precisely the correct amount of power to apply the strength that results from His might. He never uses too much or too little power. He is precise in His actions and always produces exactly the results He intends.

It is God's might that produces strength that is regulated by power that allows the believer to overcome Satan's attacks. God commands the believer to be powerful in *the* Lord. The question is, How does one apply such power to overcome the attacks of the devil?

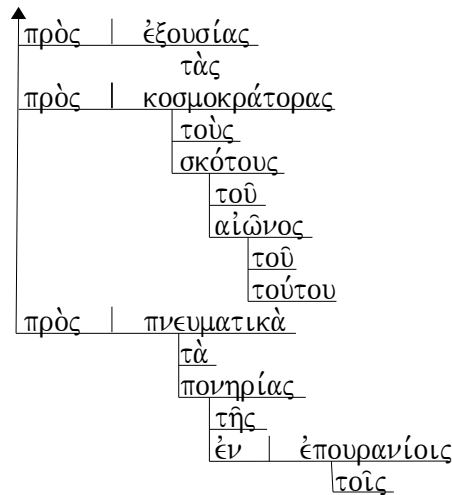
The question is answered by the rest of this paragraph. The short answer is, the power of God is applicable through correct thinking about Satanic attack, and having the right attitude concerning it. The old saying, "Knowledge is power" is applicable here. What one knows produces the mental attitude ability to overcome Satan. The more one knows and applies the truth of Scripture in this area, the more effective one becomes in being victorious.

Verses 11 and 12 introduce the information needed to overcome the attacks of Satan. However, Paul leaves something out here. As noted, he is reminding the Ephesians of that which he taught while with them. But he does not, in this place, identify the specific attacks of Satan. For that information, one must study the entirety of the Word of God to determine what they are.¹⁶

6:11-12 ἐνδύσασθε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στήναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου, ¹² ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἢ πάλῃ πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις.



Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six



Translation: Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the craftiness of the devil,¹² because our fight is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual beings of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Exegetical Considerations

11. ἐνδύσασθε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στήναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου, (*endunasthe tēn panoplīan tou theou pros to dunasthai humas stēnai pros tas methodeias tou diabolou – Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the craftiness of the devil*)

Paul’s application of God’s power consists in the metaphor of Roman armor. “Put on the whole armor...,” indicating God’s grace provision for protecting against satanic attack.

In this passage Paul presents the specific mental techniques required to resist Satan, and to defeat his nefarious purposes in the life of the individual Christian. These mental techniques are only available by grace in the current age, for nowhere else in Scripture is this kind of resistance taught. Since this is the only passage in the Bible that presents such truth, Christians ignore it at their peril. We therefore conclude that such resistance is grace-based resistance, because God Himself is the only source for the new mind that He provided for the believers of this age. God’s power is applied through correct thinking.

The purpose for putting on the whole armor is “that you may be able to stand against the craftiness of the devil.”¹⁷ The verb “stand” refers to resistance, taking a stand. This is done mentally. See the comments on vs. 13 below.

The word *craftiness* is translated wiles in the KJV. It is the Greek *methodias*, and carries the idea of crafty deceit. Satan’s attacks are not easy to spot, as he attempts to deceive the believer’s thinking. The nature of Satan’s attacks must be studied carefully.¹⁸

The reason that God’s armor, and it alone, can deal with satanic attack is identified in vs. 12.

12. ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

ἐπουρανίους (*hoti ouk estin hēmin hē palē pros haima kai sarka alla pros tas archas pros tas exousias pros tous kosmokratoras tou skoutous tou aiōnos toutou pros ta pneumatika tēs ponērias pros epouraniois – because our fight is not against¹⁹ blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual beings of wickedness in the heavenly places.*)

The reason the believer's defense is limited to putting on God's complete armor is identified both negatively and positively. Negatively, the whole armor is required "because our fight is not against blood and flesh." It is vital that the believer not attempt to overcome the human agents of Satan (blood and flesh) in overcoming satanic attack, for they are only the purveyors of a greater threat. It is the activity of spirit beings behind the human agents that are the true danger.

Unlike Paul's teaching on indwelling sin, he presents the believer's struggle with Satan as a fight, *palē* (πάλη), a wrestling match. It was a common word in secular Greek, but used only here in the New Testament. Perhaps the reason for Paul's use of *palē* is that unlike the flesh, which is an internal enemy, with the struggle basic to the human nature, Satanic attack is external, and the believer must be aware of not only that which is occurring around him, but his responsibility to enter the battle directly. Again unlike the flesh, Satan's attacks are not constant, for actual beings must bring the attack to the believer, and they come and go. Satan himself does not attack, but he works through other spirit beings.

Paul thus identifies the spirit being problem. He describes Satan's minions with reference to their rank, *rulers* and *authorities*, and then supplies two descriptions, 1) the world rulers of the darkness of this age and 2) the spiritual beings of wickedness in the heavenly places. In order to understand the specific statement concerning rulers and authorities, one must have a background in the ranks of spirit beings as presented by Paul and Peter.²⁰

Ranks of Spirit Beings

If one studies the two main passages in the New Testament where spirit beings are ranked, it becomes clear that these rankings are based on the Greek words expressing the ranks of human officials. The two complete lists, however, are not in the same order. The list in Ephesians 1:21 reverses the order occurring in Colossians 1:16 where the logical ranking is according to the meaning of the Greek words. That list is as follows:

1. Thrones, *thronoi* (θρόνοι)
2. Lordships, *kuriotētes* (κυριότητες)
3. Rulers, *archai* (ἀρχαί)
4. Authorities, *exousiai* (ἐξουσίαι)

The list in Ephesians 1:21 places *rulers* and *authorities* first and second, and substitutes powers, *dunameōs* (δυνάμεις), for *thrones*. Why, then, does Paul change the order in Ephesians 1:21? The answer is found in this verse, 6:12. Here he lists rulers and authorities as the spirit beings who directly attack believers as minions of Satan. In Ephesians, where victory over Satan is emphasized, Paul desired also to emphasize the *rulers* and *authorities* as the direct satanic threats to the believer, and so lists them first in 1:21.

It seems clear from 6:12 that the first two ranks of spirit beings, *thrones* and *lordships*, do not interact with believers, at least not directly. Apparently they have different activities with reference to the earth.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

An interesting passage in this regard is Daniel 10:11-13 where a spirit being comes to explain God's revelation to Daniel, but was hindered by another spirit being, designated "prince of the kingdom of Persia," who withstood him twenty-one days. "Michael, one of the chief princes," came to help this spirit being against the prince of Persia. Daniel thus speaks of a conflict in the spirit realm, where spirit beings are ranked. The higher ranks are evidently involved in this warfare.

So, it appears that the ranks of spirit beings against which Christians battle are the two lower ranks. That is not to say that they are not powerful, for clearly they are as will be evident in the descriptions which follow. However, the informed Christian must realize that more is occurring in the spirit realm than what is experienced directly by human beings. The conflict in the spirit realms engages the higher ranking spirits. Evidently, only the lower ranks of *rulers* and *authorities* are specified to attack Christians during the current age.

Descriptions of Rulers and Authorities

These two descriptive phrases are clearly not extra ranks of beings. Rather, they describe the *rulers* and *authorities* with a view to their character and location of activity. The descriptions indicate a very powerful and malignant set of enemies who attempt to bring the believer under Satan's control.

The descriptions of rulers and authorities are as follows:

1. The world rulers of the darkness of this age.

The words *world rulers* translate a single Greek noun, *kosmokratōras* (κοσμοκράτορας), a form of the word *kosmokratōr* (κοσμοκράτωρ). It is a compound word made up of κόσμος (*kosmos*)²¹ and a noun form of the verb κρατέω (*krateō*)²². *Kosmos* refers to the world of mankind in this case (it has several other uses). *Krateō* means to exercise absolute rule over. Originally, the word referred to the pagan deities, Zeus, Helios, etc. The word *kosmokratōr* was also used of the Emperor Caracalla in Egyptian inscriptions.²³ It speaks of tyrannical rule of the most vicious kind. This type of rule is exercised by *rulers* and *authorities* in the spiritual realms over the earth. As agents of Satan, they operate to influence the world of men and will stop at no evil act to gain their goals.

The battle of the believer in the current age against Satan is but one of many that have been going on throughout the ages. We see glimpses of it throughout Scripture, going back to Genesis. Fallen spirit beings have been warring against both other spirit beings and mankind from the beginning. Beginning from the serpent in the garden, through the incursion of spirit beings attempting to pervert the human race in Genesis 6, the accusations against Job, the heavenly battles mentioned by Gabriel in Daniel 10, the demonic activity in the Gospels, the temptation of Christ by Satan, to the various revelations in the Epistles and the Revelation, one finds much information on the activity of Satan and the nature of his attacks.

It is important to realize that Satan is limited in his ability to attack believers. The Book of Job speaks of the devil's requirement to get permission from God to attack, and that God limits Satan's area of attack. That is still going on today, and Satan is only allowed to attack the believer in certain areas in the present evil age.

Therefore, one must limit one's search for Satanic influences *in this age* to the Epistles intended for Christian living, and avoid both the Old Testament and the Gospel accounts for determining how Satan is allowed to operate; for only the grace epistles contain that information. Satan, though quite powerful, is very limited today, and can only attack in certain ways.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

The phrase “of the darkness of this age” specifies the unrighteousness of these world rulers. The word *age* (it is missing in some ancient manuscripts, and the critical text leaves it out), refers to the present evil age (Galatians 1:4). Satan is the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4, Greek).

2. The spiritual beings of wickedness in the heavenly places.

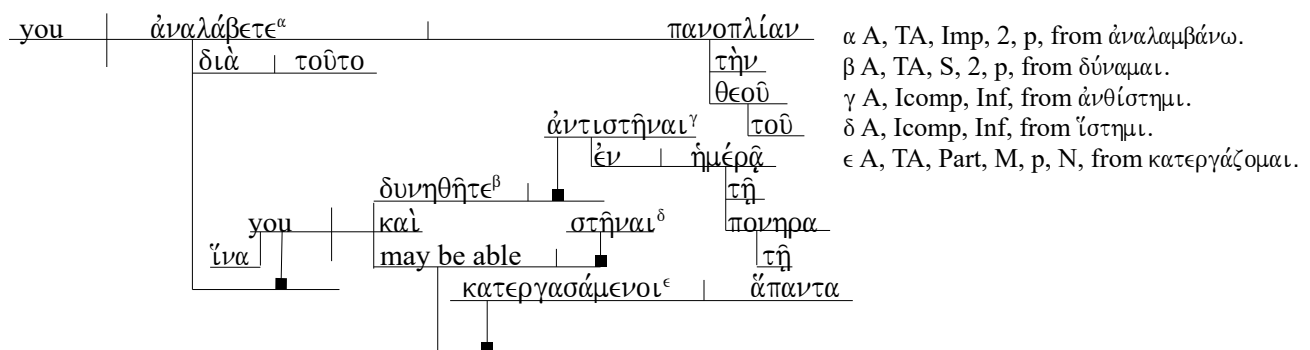
The word translated *spiritual beings* is the plural neuter adjective πνευματικά (*pneumatika*). Some, who emphasize the neuter plural form, understand it as *spiritual forces* rather than as *beings*. However, in this context about spirit beings, it seems more likely that it is a word referring to the beings themselves. The phrase “of wickedness” is a descriptive genitive of the noun *ponēria* (πονηρία), describing the character of the spiritual beings. It carries the idea of malice, the spreading of harmful evil.

The prepositional phrase “in heavenly places,” refers to the location of these spirit beings. Earlier in Ephesians Paul called Satan “the prince of the power of the air.” The conclusion is that spirit beings occupy places in the atmospheric heaven, and by implication, can travel anywhere they desire.

These two descriptions of Satan’s spiritual agents indicate active, malicious, and dangerous enemies to the believer. They are not just influencing the world of men in general, but are specifically directed toward the defeat of the spiritual condition of the believer to establish control.

Note: It was the view of H. Laverne Schafer, late Professor of Theology at San Francisco Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, that Satan was taken by surprise when Adam and Eve succumbed to the temptation in the garden. He believed that Satan did not realize the strength of the principle of indwelling sin, and therefore took steps to curb the excesses of the fallen human nature, which he could not control. Therefore, he set in motion two sets of activities. One was the establishment of the world system, with its attempts to keep the sin principle under control through societal, economic and legal means. The second was the ordering of certain ranks of spirit beings, designated *rulers* and *authorities*, to tempt believers, so as also to bring them under Satanic control. This two-pronged attack, using fallen spirit beings, has been quite successful, though Satan himself rarely participates in its implementation. His primary activity is in heaven, where he is the accuser of the brethren.

6:13 διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα δυνηθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πονηρᾷ καὶ ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι στήναι



Translation: Therefore, take up the whole armor of God in order that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having made all things ready, to stand.

Exegetical Considerations

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

13. διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ (*dia touto analabete tēn panoplian tou theou – Therefore, take up the whole armor of God*)

Twice the apostle mentions “whole armor,” the *panoply* of God. The armor cannot be applied piecemeal. One must be wearing the entire *panoply* of God, or else he can make no adequate defense. In other words, the *set* of mental attitudes presented here must be a regular part of the way the believer thinks.

The teaching does not seem to be a defense against individual attacks by the application of individual pieces of armor. Rather, it appears that Satan rarely attacks only in one area at a time. Consequently, one must “Put on the whole armor of God in order to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The whole panoply of God is available to the believer for each attack. The Christian must use the totality of these mental attitudes to ward off each attack of Satan.

The emphasis on the armor of God is often misunderstood. The important things are not the *physical significance* of the various pieces of armor, such as the helmet or the breastplate, which are often said to protect the head (intellect) and heart (emotions). This is clearly *not* the reason Paul chose the metaphor of armor.

Rather, the emphasis is on the *spiritual and mental attitudes* represented by the pieces of armor. For instance, the girdle of truth emphasizes truth, not a girdle.

When one puts on the armor, then, he is putting on an entire set of mental attitudes. The success which one has against Satanic incursions is directly related to his ability to understand and apply these mental attitudes consistently.

The metaphor of armor presents the Satanic problem in terms of conflict. Satan is an active enemy, an enemy who attacks as though a soldier in war. Therefore, the believer is viewed as a soldier wearing a set of armor, defending against each incursion of Satanic warfare.

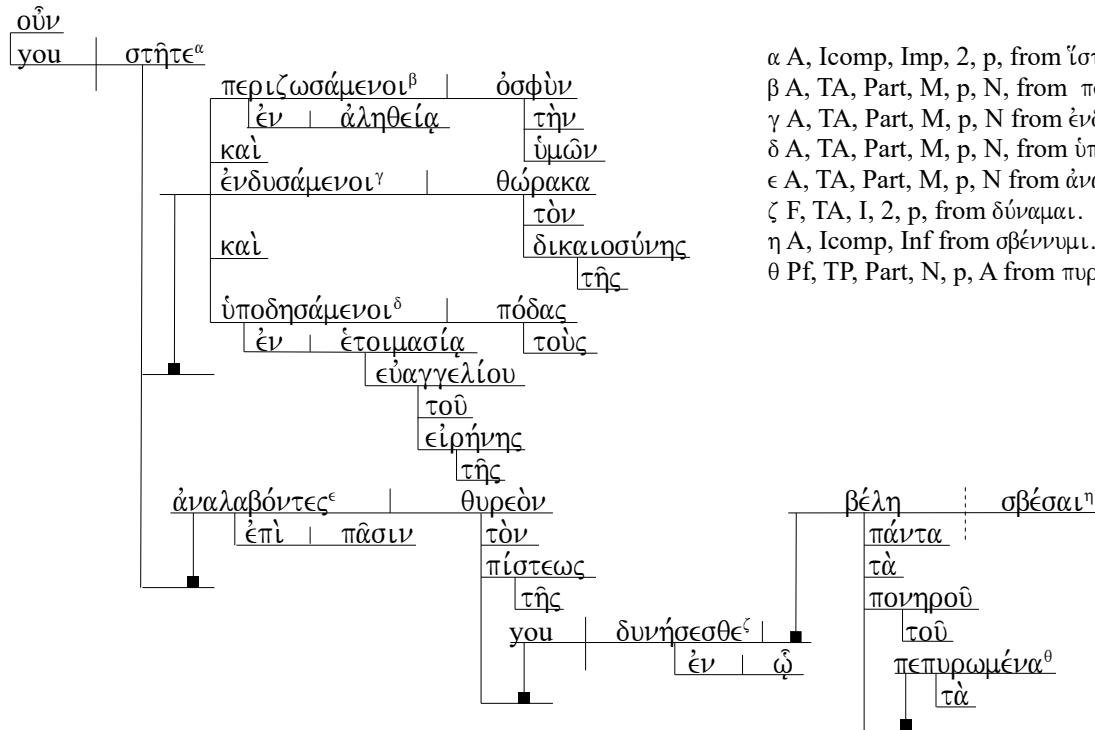
ἵνα δυναθῆτε ἀντιστῆναι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ πονηρᾷ καὶ ἅπαντα κατεργασάμενοι στῆναι (*hina dunēthēte en tē hēmera tē ponēra kai hapanta katergasmenoi stēnai – in order that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having made ready all things, to stand.*)

The purpose for applying the “whole armor” is *to stand*. The word *stand* is used in the same way in this passage as when we use it in phrases like “to take a stand.” It is Paul’s term for resistance against Satanic influence. Peter likewise indicates that we are to resist the devil (1 Peter 5:8,9). James echos this truth in James 4:7, “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*” The word “*resist*” in both passages also means “to stand against.”

The general grace method, then, for overcoming Satanic attack is resistance. Paul’s command, “Stand, therefore...” is based on the fact that God does not require believers to perform acts that He has not given them the grace to perform. A. T. Robertson is correct when he says that the imperative here means, “take your stand.”²⁴ Satan will flee from the believer who takes his stand biblically. He is powerless against the correct application of God’s gracious defense, for it is the means of being, “*powerful in the Lord and in the might of His strength*” (6:10).

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

6:14-16 **στήτε** οὖν περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ¹⁵ καὶ ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἐτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης ¹⁶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἀναλαβόντες τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως ἐν ᾧ δυνήσεσθε πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ τὰ πεπυρωμένα σβέσαι·



- α A, Icomp, Imp, 2, p, from ἵστημι.
- β A, TA, Part, M, p, N, from περιζώννυμι.
- γ A, TA, Part, M, p, N from ἐνδύω.
- δ A, TA, Part, M, p, N, from ὑποδέω.
- ε A, TA, Part, M, p, N from ἀναλαμβάνω.
- ζ F, TA, I, 2, p, from δύναμαι.
- η A, Icomp, Inf from σβέννυμι.
- θ Pf, TP, Part, N, p, A from πυρόω.

Translation: Stand, therefore, having girded about your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in all things having taken up the shield of the faith with which you will be able to quench all the arrows of the evil one which have been set aflame.

Exegetical Considerations

14. *στήτε οὖν περιζωσάμενοι τὴν ὀσφὺν ὑμῶν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν θώρακα τῆς δικαιοσύνης (stēte oun peridzōsamenoī tēn osphun humōn en alētheia kai endusamenoī ton thōraka tēs dikaiosunēs – Stand, therefore, having girded about your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness)*

The Girdle of Truth

Again Paul’s emphasis is on the believer’s taking a stand. Each of the elements of the armor indicate a mental attitude of standing.

The first element of armor is stated using a participle form, “having girded about your waist with truth,” which emphasizes the word *truth* over the idea of a piece of armor. This emphasis on the spiritual concept rather than physical armor must be observed through the passage.

The word *truth* is anarthrous, that is, it does not have the word *the* before it, which told the original readers that no specific truth is in view, but rather anything that has the quality of truth. Satan is a liar,

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

and is in the business of deceiving believers in as many areas as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, the truth of Scripture.

Truth consists of seeing things, such as events or circumstances, as they actually are. It is necessary to view situations of life through the revealed truth of God's word in order to have an accurate grasp of reality. While God's word is definitely "the truth," and Christ is truth personified (John 14:6; 17:7), the girdle of truth is not limited to the truth found in Scripture or in Christ. While these indeed form the basis for all truth, Satan may attack in any area in which the individual lacks a clear-cut understanding of truth.

Sometimes Christians believe things without adequate support for their position. These things could be in almost any field of activity, such as interpersonal relations (we seem always to be ready to believe an untruth concerning someone we don't really like), cultural attachments, political views, etc.

Satan can attack the mind of the believer to both believe a perversion of the truth of Scripture, and also to willfully misrepresent the truth for personal reasons.

Satan desires believers to have a wrong attitude toward God and His program. In fact, any place where Satan can pervert truth as it is applied to daily living is related to ensnarement, including the misinterpretation of Scripture, or the misapplication of Scripture to specific situations in life. Pride, which seems basic to all areas of satanic involvement, itself is based on a lack of seeing one's self and one's position as they actually are.

The Christian who is successfully resisting Satan will not willfully misrepresent truth, but will strive to be truthful, and to seek truth throughout all the circumstances of life. Now, this is not to say that God requires a believer to always *know* the truth. Such a thing is not possible. But God does require a believer to have an outlook that strives toward truth, and that striving is not for self-gratification, nor any other selfish ambition, but in order to overcome Satanic attack in a God honoring way.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

An expanded translation is "...and putting on *like a garment* the breastplate *that consists* of righteousness."²⁵

Righteousness is applied to the Christian at the moment one believes the gospel. This is called justification by faith in the New Testament. It occurred when Abraham believed God in Genesis 15, and occurs today when an unbeliever becomes a believer. This is often referred to as an aspect of positional truth.

Satan attacks the believer to act unrighteously. The breastplate that consists of righteousness provides for the resisting of Satan and therefore doing the right thing. It includes having right mental attitudes as well as acting right. This is based on positional justification, the act of God declaring the believer righteous, as the result of which the believer has become "the righteousness of God in Him (Christ)" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore the basis for *acting right* is grounded in a correct perception and recognition of our being declared righteous, and of our identification with Christ in His righteousness.

The concept of righteousness is often ridiculed in modern society. Persons who strive for righteousness are often mocked with savage sarcasm in the world. The making light of right living is based on a twisting of righteousness, to make it seem to be not right. Accusations of having a "holier than thou" attitude abound in such an atmosphere. Piety is degraded into a hypocritical piety that does not care about

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

people. Those who uphold righteousness are said to be uncaring, because they desire individuals to be responsible. And so the attacks go on, and on.

It is not easy to live righteously in an unrighteous world, perhaps because an individual believer may be susceptible to thinking of himself in a personally righteous way. The believer must understand that self-righteousness is not God's righteousness. A believer is not "better" than an unbeliever in God's sight, except from the limited perspective of imputed righteousness, for which a human being has no responsibility to attain. All is of God, all is of grace. A believer's view of himself must be based on this Christian doctrine found in Scripture. Such a view is the basis for the mental attitude of applying the breastplate of righteousness.

15. καὶ ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἐτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης (*kai hupodēsamenoi tous podas en hetoimasia tou euaggeliou tēs eirēnēs – and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*)

The Gospel of Peace Shoes

An expanded translation is, "...and having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel that consists of the peace."

Since the word "gospel" occurs here, many have thought that this refers to giving the gospel of salvation to unbelievers. In other words, some teach that if a believer is faithful in giving the gospel of salvation he will be successful over Satanic influences. Yet one searches in vain for verification that evangelism is a solution to personal victory over Satan. Even Rushton, in his discussion of this piece of armor, incorrectly states "Many times opportunities are lost for bringing the gospel to others because Satan has brought a temptation to be cowardly in spiritual things (2 Timothy. 1:8)." While this may be generally true, it does not speak directly to the nature of the gospel here, which does not refer to the gospel of salvation, nor is giving the salvation gospel adequate for overcoming attacks of Satan. The key is an understanding of the nature of peace, rather than an assumption that just because the word "gospel" is used that this must somehow refer to evangelism.

Note that in the expanded translation above we have placed before *peace* the article *the*. The corrected form "the peace" here indicates a specific peace, something intended to be identified specifically. A short consideration of the word is therefore in order.

The word *peace* when applied to the Christian life generally falls into one of two categories, either inward peace, or external peace, that is, peace between individuals and groups. (The word is also used of peace with God, which was accomplished by God through Christ, when he reconciled the world to Himself.) External peace is that which is expressed in the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. It is peace between individuals, a lack of strife between people. Internal peace is a lack of turmoil in the mind of the individual. It is a lack of mental conflict.

Exegetically, the gospel here *consists of peace*. In the context of Satanic attack, this certainly refers to an *inward mental peace* brought about by being grounded in the truth of God's word. Philippians 4:6-7 speaks of this in the context of anxiety, which is of Satan. Verse 7 specifically says, "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Such inward peace consists of a lack of mental agitation, a lack of worry about circumstances over which the individual has no control. The more one knows from Scripture about who God is and how He

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

sovereignly operates, the better one can correctly apply that Scripture to the Satanic attack of pride. For mental anxiety is based on pride, the idea that we, the individual, should be in control in every situation, and discount, therefore, the fact that only God is sovereign in the universe.

The best understanding, then, of the “preparation of the gospel that consists of the peace” is that peace of mind is available to the believer who applies the armor of God against the mental attacks of the evil one. Then the believer can gain this inward peace by submitting to the mighty hand of God (1 Peter 5:6-8). The more one understands God, the more inward peace one will have.

16 ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἀναλαβόντες τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως ἐν ᾧ δυνήσεσθε πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ τὰ πεπυρωμένα σβέσαι· (*epi pasin analabontes ton thureon tes pisteos en ho eunēsethe panta ta belē tou ponērou ta pepurōmena sbesai – in all things having taken up the shield of the faith with which you will be able to quench all the arrows of the evil one which have been set aflame.*)

The Shield of the Faith

An expanded translation is, “...in all situations taking up the shield of the faith, by which you will be able to render ineffective all the arrows of the evil one, which have been equipped with fire.” This is the first of three pieces of armor that emphasize the Scriptural understanding of the victorious Christian.

The word faith here *does not* refer to the act of faith, but to all *the body of truth that is believed*, revealed in God’s word, including what Christians must believe concerning grace living and victory. If one does not have a firm grasp of “the faith” he will be unable to successfully counter Satanic attack.

The ability to “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3) is dependent on the believer’s knowing and believing the large body of Bible doctrine. Also the Christian must be at home in the word of God sufficiently to identify untruth when he hears it. The shield that consists of the faith relates to “having the word of God abide in you” which is said to the “young men” of 1 John 2. These young men (spiritually maturing believers) are overcoming Satanic attack, and the implication of 1 John 2:14 is that they could not do so if they were not intimately familiar with and relying upon the communication of God found in the Bible.

Besides grace living, such doctrinal areas as the facts of the Trinity, the nature, attributes and essence of God, the nature of justification and salvation, the person and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the nature of and distinctions between sin and unrighteousness, the doctrine of the church local and universal, and even the prophetic truths of the future millennial state and the coming rapture of the living believer at the time of the resurrection are included in the term “the faith.”

It is popular to denigrate such an understanding in the modern “evangelical church.” While lip service is sometimes given to these truths, rarely are the great doctrines of Scripture proclaimed in the regular meetings of the assembly. “Dry, dull, boring” we are told they are. Yet they are essential to correct Christian living. In the rush to build large congregations, the proclamation of the word of God has been “dumbed down” to the point where spiritual strength and victory are all but impossible. Is it any wonder that Satan is running rampant throughout the so-called Bible-believing churches of today?

How can a Christian “be powerful in *the* Lord and in the might of His strength” if he doesn’t even know what the words mean? But such power is an absolute requirement if one is “to quench all the fiery arrows of the wicked one.” The image is one of Satan shooting flaming arrows at the believer, which represent specific attacks against specific doctrines, and can only be understood and deflected by the doc-

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

trinally informed Christian. But again we ask, “How can the believer deflect these attacks against the faith if he is ignorant of its very truths?” Of course he cannot.

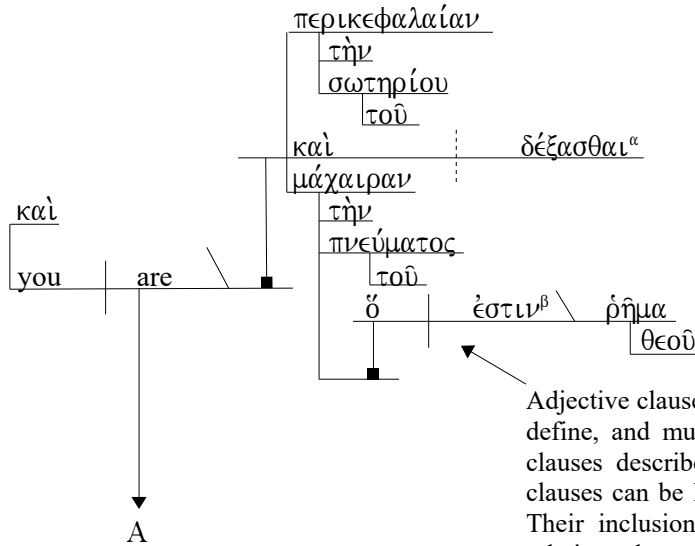
That the metaphor of arrows represent attacks of Satan is clear. Why, though, does Paul say that these arrows have been equipped with fire? One must take care with metaphors such as these. One possible reason is that in the warfare of the time the New Testament was written, a flaming arrow was much more effective than one without fire. It potentially spread destruction beyond where the arrow hit. Satan’s attacks, likewise, have that effect. The word evil, *ponēros*, carries the idea malignancy, the spreading of evil by the “evil one.” It is likely that this is the meaning behind the idea of fiery arrows.

The word *quench* (σβέννυμι) is appropriate as referring to flaming arrows. Seven of the eight times it occurs in Scripture, it is associated with fire. Only 1 Thessalonians 5:19 uses it metaphorically of the quenching of the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), where it means to render the Spirit ineffective.

The shield of the faith renders the attacks of Satan ineffective. Satan attacks in the area of Scriptural truth, attempting to pervert the doctrines of the New Testament. Only a vigilant and consistent application of correct interpretation and application of those doctrines can prevent that.

The next sentence in this paragraph, which continues from verse 17 through verse 20, provides further discussion of the elements of the Christian’s armor against the devil.

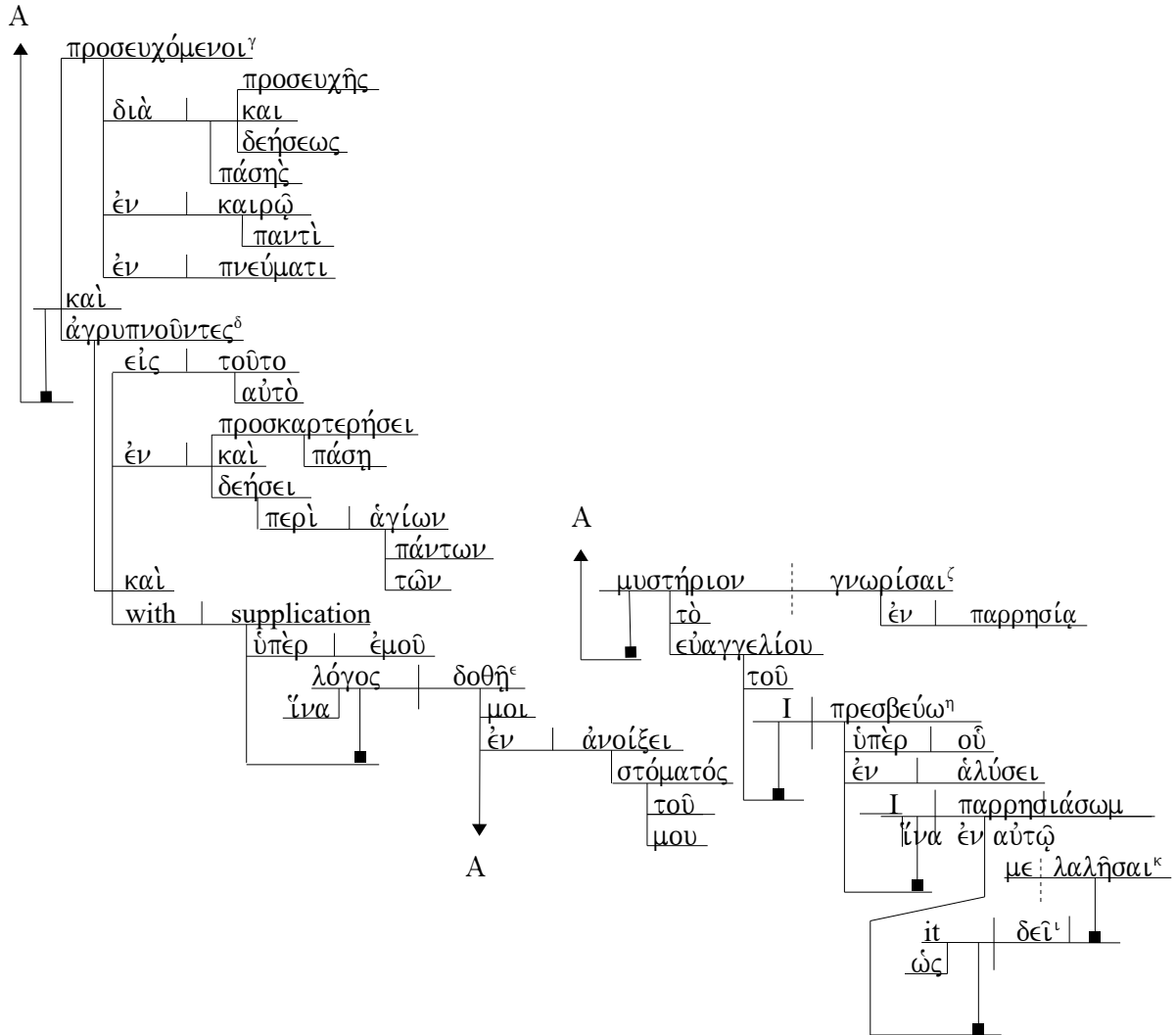
6:17-20 καὶ τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθαι καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος ὃ ἐστὶν ῥῆμα θεοῦ ¹⁸ διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀγρυπνοῦντες ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερῆσαι καὶ δεῆσαι περὶ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων ¹⁹ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ ἵνα μοι δοθῇ λόγος ἐν ἀνοίξει τοῦ στόματός μου ἐν παρρησίᾳ γνωρίσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ²⁰ ὑπὲρ οὗ πρεσβεύω ἐν ἀλύσει ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ παρρησιάσωμαι ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι.



- α A, Icomp, Inf, from δέχομαι.
- β P, Icomp, I, 3, s, from εἰμί.
- γ P, Icomp, Part, M, p, N, from προσεύομαι.
- δ P, Icomp, Part, M, P, N, from ἀγρυπνέω.
- ε A, P, S, 3, s, from δίδωμι.
- ζ A, Icomp, Inf, from γνωρίζω.
- η P, Icomp, I, 1, s, from πρεσβεύω.
- θ A, Icomp, S, 1, s, from παρρησιάζομαι.
- ι P, TA, I, 3, s, from δέω.
- κ A, Icomp, Inf, from λαλέω.

Adjective clauses are either restrictive or explanatory. Restrictive clauses define, and must be included in the text to make sense. Explanatory clauses describe, and are sometimes called descriptive clauses. Such clauses can be left out grammatically, and the sentence is still sensible. Their inclusion gives more information about their head noun. The relative clause here, ὃ ἐστὶν ῥῆμα θεοῦ, is clearly descriptive of μάχαιραν, sword.

**Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six**



Translation: And you are to take the helmet of the means of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the statement of God,¹⁸ praying through every prayer and supplication in every season in the Spirit, and watching for this same thing with all perseverance and supplication concerning all the saints,¹⁹ and on behalf of me, in order that to me might be given speech by the opening of my mouth with boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ on behalf of which I serve as an ambassador bound with a chain, in order that in Him I may be bold as it is necessary for me to speak.

Exegetical Considerations

17. καὶ τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθαι καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος ὃ ἔστιν ῥῆμα θεοῦ (*kai tēn perikephalian tou sōtēriou dexasthai kai tēn machairan tou pneumatos ho estin hrema theou – And you are to take the helmet of the means of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the statement of God*)

The Helmet of Salvation

The expanded translation is, “And take the helmet that consists of the means of salvation.” This is the second of the elements of armor that emphasize the Scriptural knowledge of the believer. However, the

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians Chapter Six

traditional translation, “the helmet of salvation” is incorrect, for the word *salvation* is not the noun σωτηρία (*sōtēria*), but the adjective σωτήριος (*sōtērios*). As we will see, the distinction is significant.

The adjective generally translated salvation, σωτηρίος (*sōtērios*), means something different than is often assumed by Christians because of its common translation. It does not speak of becoming saved; rather it speaks to the means of salvation, that is, the grace provision for applying deliverance from attacks of Satan.

The means of salvation consists of all the truths that can be applied to the saved believer *after* initial salvation. For this reason, σωτηρίος refers to the content of salvation. It starts with the fact (not the act) of being saved, but includes all the truth concerning the state of salvation that was revealed through the New Testament apostles concerning the spiritual relationship that the believer today has with the Trinitarian Godhead. It also includes the content of regeneration and sanctification, as well as the practical truth of the priesthood of the believer. Furthermore, it includes the various current ministries of the Holy Spirit as well as High Priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, nothing can be left out of the positional and practical truth concerning the state of salvation which Christians enjoy if one is to apply this element of the armor diligently.

Rushton states that the word salvation here includes “the salient features of the content of salvation a believer receives.... First Thessalonians 5:8 uses the terms ‘helmet, the hope of salvation’ with reference to the church being saved from wrath.”²⁶ We agree with Mr. Rushton concerning the word *salvation* here referring to the content of salvation, but his statement seems to indicate an identity between the statement in First Thessalonians with the one in Ephesians. This is unfortunate, as the two are not equivalent.

Salvation in First Thessalonians is the genitive form of *sōtēria* (*salvation*) with the word *hope*. The phrase is correctly translated, “the hope of salvation.” It looks forward with longing to the future tense salvation that the believer will receive in the resurrection and rapture of the saints of this age. This is not so here in Ephesians, where the idea is not forward looking, except with reference to the current life the believer experiences daily. As noted, it is not so much salvation in view in Ephesians, but *the means of salvation* in the sense of deliverance from attacks by Satan.

The more one studies the state of salvation as taught in Scripture, the stronger one becomes in overcoming Satanic attack.

The Sword of the Spirit

“And take the sword of the Spirit, which is God’s utterance.” Here we find the third element of the armor that relates the believer to the revealed word of God.

The “word of God” here is not a reference to the Scripture, *per se*. The Greek word is not *logos*²⁷ but rather *hrema*, which refers to an utterance on a specific subject. The element of armor here is actually the application of specific statements of God found in Scripture as defense against specific attacks against the truth of the Word. It is this procedure that we see exemplified by the Lord Jesus when He accurately quoted Scripture to defeat Satan’s attacks in the wilderness.

When Satan attacks a believer to reject a particular truth, the believer should be able to express that truth from the specific utterance of Scripture that makes it. It is not enough to have a general knowledge of Scripture. The believer must be grounded in what the Bible factually says about each element of doc-

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

trine taught in the Bible. This is not to be confused with the common “memorizing of Scripture” that often takes place. Such a practice, while potentially helpful, is actually counter productive unless the one memorizing actually *understands* what the statement being memorized *means*.

To memorize Scripture with a misunderstanding of the meaning of the text can give false hope to the believer. Christians who regularly misuse Scripture to support a false viewpoint will find no help in overcoming Satanic oppression. The implication of this element of armor is that the believer can know precisely the meaning of the text he memorizes. Ultimately it is more important to know the meaning of Scripture than to simply memorize it.²⁸

It is clear from all that has been said, that a thorough, comprehensive understanding of all Scripture, with specific understanding of “the faith” and “utterances” on particular truths is necessary for consistent victory over Satanic attack. Spiritual laziness in studying Scripture is one of the major devices of Satan to thwart Christian victory over his advances.²⁹

As previously mentioned, it is this element of armor that Jesus was using when Satan attacked Him. Each time Satan perverted a statement of God, Christ countered with an accurately quoted passage from Scripture. Rushton’s point is well taken, “He [Jesus] was not quoting Scripture to ‘scare off’ Satan, but rather he was reinforcing His own human nature in this time of testing. Christians should use the Scriptures in a similar way when undergoing [Satanic] temptation.”³⁰

The believer must have a correct view of Scripture as God’s communication of truth to man. By using normal principles of interpretation and application a Christian becomes equipped with the truth of Scripture.

To apply the armor of God one must, with his renewed mind study Scripture, especially those portions of the New Testament dealing with God and His current program. And in so doing, he will develop an understanding of prayer and supplication which, while not a defense against Satanic attack, provides a basis for an on-going and intimate relationship to God.

18. διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀγρυπνοῦντες ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει καὶ δεήσει περὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων³¹ (*dia pasēs proseuchēs kai deēseōs proseuchomenoi en panti kairo en pneumati kai eis auto touto agrupnountes en pasē proskarterēsei kai deēsei peri pantōn tōn hagiōn – praying through every prayer and supplication in every season in the Spirit, and watching for this same thing with all perseverance and supplication concerning all the saints*)

The above verse is connected directly with the list of the armor of God by which the believer overcomes Satan. Prayer, however, is *not* an element of the armor. Rather, prayer and supplication are to accompany the successful defense against Satanic attack, but they are *not* rightly to be considered a piece of armor to be used in defense. While the believer, recognizing his weakness before Satanic attack, may evoke God’s power (prayer) and ask for help (supplication) in order to rightly apply the armor, it is the application of the armor itself that is the defense. Rushton states,

The purpose of prayer in regard to Satanic temptation is not because of the little poem, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”³²

The idea that prayer is a defense against Satan has caused immeasurable spiritual harm to believers. They pray and pray, and yet are unsuccessful. Often this is because they assign to Satan the works of

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

the flesh, or even worldliness, thinking that prayer will overcome any weakness tending toward wrong doing. Such confusion has led to even further confusion in applying the armor of God.

In fact, prayer does not stop Satan's attacks nor render them ineffective. It may actually encourage him to redouble his efforts, as he is offended by the close dependence of the believer on God. But the grace provision of the armor, rightly applied while depending on God, is sufficient to overcome Satanic and demonic influence.

Prayer and supplication (asking for help) then accompany the mental attitudes and understanding supplied by the armor. Prayer, as an act of worship, holds God in highest esteem, and focuses the mind, not simply on Satan, but on the one who, through His grace, has provided the armor as the powerful means of protection against Satan's influences.

Prayer and supplication are to be performed "concerning all the saints." Paul is not referring to saints in general, but to all the saints associated with the assembly to which he is writing. In other words, prayer and supplication are specific to the situation in which each believer finds himself, not general, which is impossible in any significant way, since one's understanding of the saint's needs is limited.

Spiritual Sobriety and Age Conformity

For the sake of completeness, it is necessary to present other aspects of the mentality of the believer. This is necessary, for the Scripture teaches that Satan is subtle in his temptations. It is not uncommon in dealing with Satan to overlook spiritual sobriety and age conformity. For one cannot apply the armor if one does not recognize the attack. The following passages indicate the importance of these doctrines.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Peter commands a two-fold act for those who would recognize the attacks of the devil. "Be sober" means simply to be serious in one's thinking concerning Satanic influences. He is not to be taken lightly. "Be vigilant" refers to alertness or watchfulness. The believer must be able to see Satanic attack coming before he can rightly apply the armor. This implies that he knows what attacks come from the devil so that he can rightly defend himself.

2 Timothy. 1:7

For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sober mind.

Here the term "sober" is the same Greek root as the word "sober" above. A sober mind has the ability to understand things accurately, soberly, and therefore not experience a spirit of fear. While Satan is not directly named in this context, elsewhere fear is associated with him.

The spirit of fear which God did not give the believer refers to spiritual cowardice, a problem that plagues many believers. A Christian who is a spiritual coward is a Christian under Satanic influence.

Note that the spirit, or attitude, that the believer did receive from God consists of three elements:

1. It is a spirit that consists of love. One area that Satan would interrupt in the spiritual Christian is his ministry of love to others. This is the problem that Timothy had. He was afraid to minister, and thereby was not exhibiting God's love.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

2. It is a spirit that consists of power. The believer has received the inherent mental power from God necessary to overcome Satan and his agents. This is part of the grace provision that God made available to correctly apply the armor.
3. It is a spirit that consists of a sober mind. A sober mind is actually a provision of God so that the believer is able to think accurately and seriously concerning not only the attacks of the devil, but also all areas of spiritual understanding.

Romans 12:3

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Age conformity is an attack of Satan. Basic to this and all other attacks, is the problem of high-mindedness. This is a special form of pride whereby the believer thinks that he should occupy a higher position in ministry that he actually has. The counter to this is to apply sober thinking. This ability, given by God will allow the believer to see himself accurately.

Thinking soberly is associated with a measure, or proportion, of faith. The word faith here refers to faith in God to apply the biblical rather than human solutions to the Satanic problem. In other words, the Christian must believe that God's way works, and each one has been given just enough faith to accomplish that act of faith. The believer then, is assured that he can, indeed, think soberly.

Titus 2:6

Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded...

We include this reference of a more general sort concerning sober mindedness for two reasons: 1) young men have a need to learn to be serious in their mental functions; 2) it is legitimate to encourage young men to be so. This may seem obvious, but in practice we find many afraid to express the need for sober mindedness on the young. This is applicable in the area of biblical understanding, and does not preclude enjoyment or even entertainment. But it does indicate that the young need to concentrate their thinking in biblical and spiritual understanding.

The context deals with Paul's instruction to Titus on how to deal with various categories of people. The very categories he uses are instructive:

1. Old men, verse 2;
2. Old women, verse 3;
3. Young women, verse 4;
4. Young men, verse 6;
5. Slaves, verse 9.

The fact that the encouragement to be sober minded is given to the young men indicates their special need in this area. This is not to say that the other categories do not need to be sober minded, but that this area is not the primary focus of their need.

Some have suggested that this was a local problem, and that Paul was only referring to those Christians living in Crete. Perhaps, they say, the problem was culturally conditioned, and that only the young men

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

in Crete needed this particular instruction. This seems unlikely. Rather, it seems to be a general situation that he is addressing, as it is with the other categories of believers addressed.

Prayer, supplication, and sober mindedness are basic to Christian living. While prayer is not a universal deterrent to any attacks of the enemies of the believer, it is basic to the correct attitude when confronting temptation. It is not the length of time spent in prayer that is properly the issue at hand, but the constant attitude of prayer, remaining mentally in the presence of God while holding Him in the highest esteem.

Supplication, which consists of asking for help when one feels lacking, is a comforting act for the sincere believer. By studying Scripture, and seeking God's help in understanding through illumination, the Christian is applying the correct mental approach to victory. And sober minded alertness to the attacks of Satan will keep the believer ready to respond to the enemy's attempts to lead the sincere Christian away from God and His program into an intolerable attitude of independence from God.

19. καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ ἵνα μοι δοθῆ λόγος ἐν ἀνοιξεί τοῦ στόματός μου ἐν παρρησίᾳ γνωρίσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (*kai huper emou hina moi dothē logos en anoixei tou stomatos mou en parrēsia gnorisai to mustērion tou euaggeliou – and on behalf of me, in order that to me might be given speech by the opening of my mouth with boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel*)

Paul's personal request to the Ephesians seems to be directly associated with supplication rather than with prayer directly.³³ Paul desires that the Ephesians ask on his behalf for God's help in his current circumstance. He is a prisoner of Rome, and as such has limited but real opportunities to present his message. He needs boldness to open his mouth in those circumstances.

The content of his messages is the making known "the mystery of the gospel." The word *mystery* takes its normal meaning of *previously unrevealed, but now revealed*. By this Paul means making known the change from the legal standards of the Mosaic system to the grace provision of the new, for it was because of his unyielding faithfulness to the new message of liberty from the law that resulted in Paul's imprisonment. While in chains in Rome, Paul presented the mystery gospel to Jews who would come to him. He did so by explaining the postponement of the kingdom of God to Jews, some of whom believed his message, and others who did not. The general view among those Jews was negative. See Acts 28:17-31.

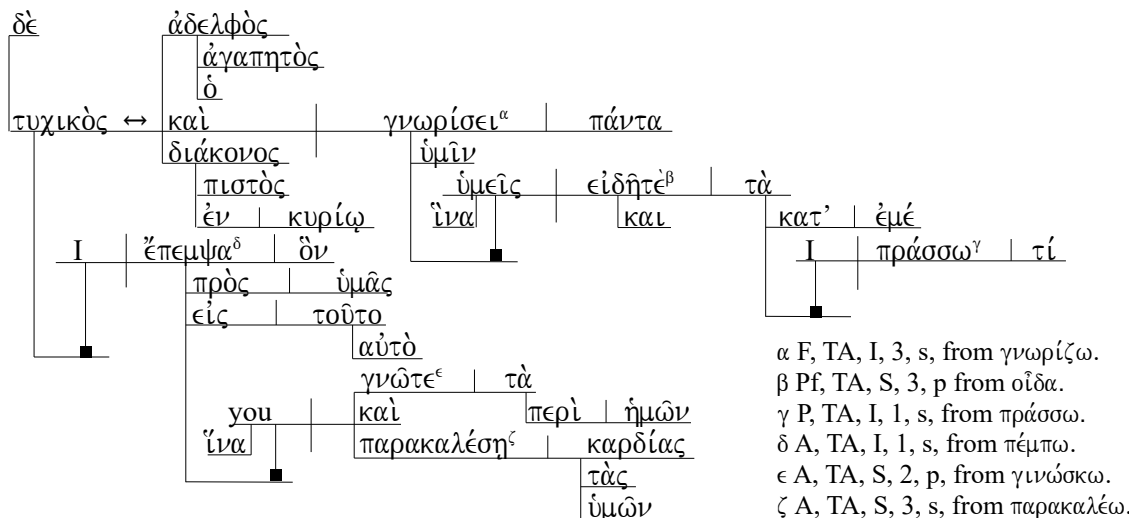
20. ὑπὲρ οὗ πρεσβεύω ἐν ἀλύσει ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ παρρησιάσωμαι ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι (*huper hou presbeuō en halusei hina en autō parrēsiasōmai hōs dei me lalēsai – on behalf of which I serve as an ambassador bound with a chain, in order that in Him I may be bold as it is necessary for me to speak*)

Paul served as Christ's ambassador (*presbeuō*), that is, his official representative, while presenting the mystery gospel. The apostle specifies his condition (bound with a chain), and again identifies the necessity of boldness to speak. Indeed, Paul was in a dangerous position. It is likely that the Jews who instigated his situation would have held that Paul was founding a new religion, something which Rome frowned on. It appears that when Rome took over an area, the religions in that area were accepted, but new ones were not allowed. If it were found that Paul was starting something new, it would have been a serious offense, and it may well have been for that reason that Paul was eventually killed.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

6:21-22 ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ κατ' ἐμέ τί πράσσω πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσει τυχικός ὁ ἀγαπητός ἀδελφός καὶ πιστός διάκονος ἐν κυρίῳ ὃν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέση τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six



Translation: And so that you may also know the things concerning me, what I am accomplishing, Tychicus,³⁴ my beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all things,²² whom I sent you for this same reason, in order that you might know the things about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Exegetical Considerations

21-22. ἵνα δὲ εἰδήτε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ κατ' ἐμέ τί πράσσω πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσει τυχικός ὁ ἀγαπητός ἀδελφός καὶ πιστός διάκονος ἐν κυρίῳ ὄν ἐπέμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἵνα γινώτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέση τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν (*hina de eidēte kai humeis ta kat eme ti prassō panta humin gnōrisei tuchikos ho agapētos adelphos kai pistos diakonos en kuriō hon epempsa pros humas eis auto touto hina gnōte ta peri hēmōn kai parakalesē tas kardias humōn* – **And so that you may also know the things concerning me, what I am accomplishing, Tychicus, my beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all things whom I sent you for this same reason, in order that you might know the things about us, and that he may comfort your hearts**)

Tychicus was a native of proconsular Asia, along with Trophimus. He was probably a gentile convert. He was one of seven companions mentioned in Acts 20:4 who accompanied Paul into Asia, and evidently went with him to Jerusalem. From there, he seems to have gone with Paul to Rome, from where the apostle dispatched him to both Ephesus and Colossae (Colossians 4:7). He also intended to send either him or Artemus to Titus.

Paul commends Tychicus to both the Ephesians and Colossians, calling him “my beloved brother” and “faithful servant in the Lord,” which explains his reliance on him. He was probably the one who carried both letters, and was trusted to give an account of Paul’s situation and activities in both cases.

Paul wanted the Ephesians to know all about what he personally was accomplishing (vs. 21), as well as how things were going with him and his companions; so more broadly, in vs. 22, Paul’s two-fold reason for sending Tychicus is stated:

1. *“In order that you might know the things about us.”* Tychicus was close to Paul, highly trusted by him, and entrusted with delicate matters. Paul desired the Ephesians to know all that was going on in Paul’s life as he was imprisoned in Rome, and also he desired the believers to know

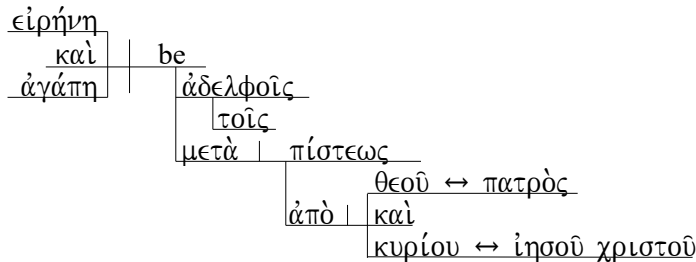
Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

how well his associates were faring. Tychicus was just the trusted person to relay that information.

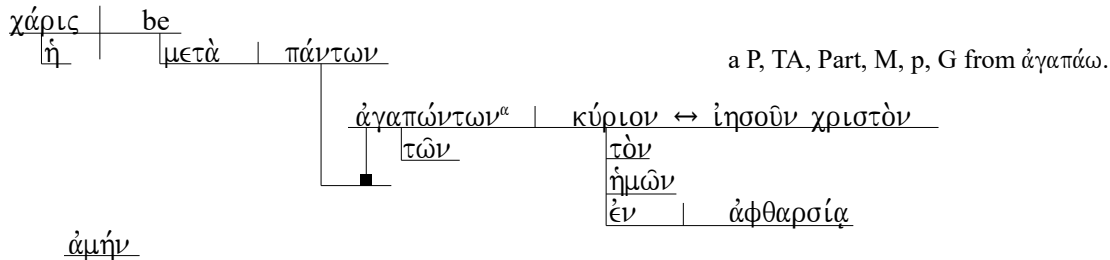
2. “*And that he may comfort your hearts.*” Paul also trusted Tychicus to use wisdom in relaying the information concerning him and his companions, and to produce comfort in the minds of the Ephesians rather than anxiety. Paul desired the Ephesians to rest in the knowledge that Paul was fulfilling God’s program, and was not in dire straits.

6:23-24 εἰρήνη τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ἀγάπη μετὰ πίστεως ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ. ²⁴ ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἰησοῦν χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. ἀμήν.

6:23



6:24



Translation: Peace and love be to the brothers with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all the ones who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruption. Amen.

Exegetical Considerations

23-24. εἰρήνη τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ἀγάπη μετὰ πίστεως ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ. ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἰησοῦν χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. ἀμήν. (*eirēnē tois adelphois kai agapē meta pisteōs apo theou patros kai kurious iēsou christou. hē charis meta pantōn tōn agapōntōn ton kurion hēmōn iēsoun christon en aphtharsia. amēn. Peace and love be to the brothers with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all the ones who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruption. Amen.*)

Verses 23-24 contain Paul’s conclusion to his letter. He begins with the expression, “Peace and love be to the brothers.” The original word order is of interest “Peace to the brothers and love,” indicating a particular emphasis on peace to the brothers. This is the only place in Paul’s writings where this specific expression is so framed. It is possible that Paul had some concern about how some were getting along with others, so he emphasizes peace. But the emphasis is not so large as to cause other comment and so he includes love as part of his conclusion.

Paul speaks here of faith from both the Father and the Son. That the persons of the Trinity are the source for faith cannot be denied. See notes on Ephesians 2:8-9. This is the fourth time in this epistle

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Chapter Six

where similar expressions which include “God the Father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” occur (1:2-3; 1:17; 5:20).

Paul ends his epistle the way he began it, with grace. This is the great theme of the New Testament, and the grace life infuses all of Paul's writings. The theme of Ephesians is thus repeated in Paul's signature sentence, referring to God's provision of ability to live the Christian life.

The object of Paul's gracious desire is “*all the ones who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruption.*” For Paul, the love for the Lord should be pure, without any corruption, which can only be divine love. This kind of love is the kind that lasts, the kind that does not diminish with time. For the spiritual believer, this love is available only through the fruit of the Spirit, which is the result of being filled by the Spirit, with the resultant walking by the Spirit.

Endnotes

- 1 The joint parental authority is in contrast to the requirement to honor both father and mother, where each is distinguished. It is because of the blood relationship to each parent that the honoring is to take place, not because of their joint authority over their children.
- 2 See Salmon's comments in *Expositor's Greek New Testament* on this verse (pg. 375), for example. He states that the righteousness is "required by law," a nonsensical theological statement. The overall grace teaching of the New Testament is in view here, not the requirements of law, neither Mosaic nor secular.
- 3 Strangely, this seems to be the view of the word *right* expressed by the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* on this verse, "The reason for this is that it is right (*dikaion*); it is a proper course to follow in society." This view is contradicted by Paul's next statement, wherein He refers to the Old Testament Scripture to express God's view of this obedience. The quote is to support the basic godly morality of the statement, not to apply law to it.
- 4 Colossians 3:20 says, τούτο γὰρ ἐστὶν εὐάρεστόν ἐν κυρίῳ (...for this is well-pleasing in the Lord). The two phrases are not contradictory, as well-pleasing speaks to the broader aspect of God's attitude toward right doing.
- 5 Exodus 20:12; SA Deuteronomy 5:16. It is generally thought that this is a quote from the LXX, but it does not follow the LXX. In the LXX there are two ἵνα clauses, instead of the compound clause in this sentence, and in the second clause the verb is in a different form. The LXX has the aorist subjunctive γένη, rather than the future indicative ἔσῃ, as here. Perhaps Paul did his own translation from the Hebrew, though there is a resemblance to the LXX. If he used the LXX, at best, Paul provided a different version of Exodus 20:12, which appears to be a combining of that verse with Deuteronomy 5:16 in the LXX.
- 6 The word *honor* carries the idea of taking care of one. In a society like that of the first century, and still in many situations today, once the elderly can no longer take care of themselves, it becomes the child's responsibility to take care of their needs. Even today, the word *honor* carries a fiduciary aspect.
- 7 The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* on this verse states,

The parenthetical clause states that this is the first commandment with a promise. But this is actually the second command with a promise (cf. Exo 20:6). Some say Paul meant that this is the first command that children need to learn. But the first, not the fifth, of the Ten Commandments should really be learned first. More likely, Paul meant that this is "first" in the sense of being "a primary commandment," that is, of primary importance for children and it also has a promise.

However, others disagree. Albert Barnes states,

It is not to be supposed that the observance of the four first commandments would not be attended with a blessing, but no particular blessing is promised. It is true, indeed, that there is a "general declaration" annexed to the second commandment, that God would show mercy to thousands of generations of them that loved him and that kept his commandments. But that is rather a declaration in regard to all the commands of God than a promise annexed to that specific commandment. It is an assurance that obedience to the law of God would be followed with blessings to a thousand generations, and is given in view of the first and second commandments together, because they related particularly to the honor that was due to God. But the promise in the fifth commandment is a "special promise." It does not relate to obedience to God in general, but it is a particular assurance that they who honor their parents shall have a particular blessing as the result of that obedience.

Of the two views, the second seems most likely.
- 8 The adjective μακροχρόνιος (*makrochronios*) occurs only here in the New Testament. However, it also occurs in the Greek translation (the LXX) of Genesis 20:12, from which this reference is taken.
- 9 *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, *Barnes' Notes*, and Keil and Delitzsch all take this view.
- 10 The Greek is *proorgizo* (παροργίζω). Often the *-izo* ending in Greek is causative, *do not cause to be wrathful*. The translation "do not provoke your children to anger," (RSV, NASB) is too weak. The word *proorgizo* comes from the preposition *para-* plus *-orgizo*, related to the noun correctly translated wrath *orge* (ὀργή). It is not simple anger that is forbidden, but intense anger that tends toward violence.
- 11 The King James Version, for instance, translates the word *douloi* as servants, not slaves.
- 12 See 1 Corinthians 2:3, 2 Corinthians 7:15, and Philippians 2:12.

Endnotes

- 13 Greek lexicons generally follow the translation “good will” as their basic meaning, which is at best only close to its actual meaning, being somewhat weak. The best description of the word which this author has been able to find is that of the *Louw-Nida Lexicon*, which states that it is, “a state of zeal based on a desire to be involved in some activity or state.”
- Εὐνοίας is, in fact, a mental word, expressing the right mental viewpoint when entering into an activity. It refers to doing something with the right perspective or viewpoint.
- The noun has a verb associated with it, εὐνοέω, which is used only once in the New Testament in Matthew 5:25, where the KJV translates it *agree*, which is generally followed in other translations. The RSV translates it “make friends,” as does the NASB. It probably means neither of these, and Moulton and Milligan in their *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, state, “There seems no good warrant for the transl(ation) ‘agree with’ in M(at)t(hew),” which they hold because the verb occurs more than once in the papyri in the sense of being “well disposed” toward someone, in one instance a wife being well-disposed towards her husband. They would probably recommend “well disposed” as the best translation, and they have a point. However, we have an even better phrase in modern English to express this idea, and it also connotes a mental state.
- Taking all the evidence together, it seems to me that the best general translation for the noun is “a good attitude” and for the verb as it is used in Matthew to be translated “have a good attitude.”
- 14 To see a discussion the New Testament doctrine of the *world* in its fullness, see this author’s work, *Grace and the Enemies of the Believer*, Chapters Fifteen through Eighteen.
- 15 Lexicographers are inconsistent on the translation of the nouns κράτος and ἰσχύς, which I have translated *might* and *strength* respectively. The word κράτος should be translated *mighty* to be consistent. Consider the fact that the compound word παντοκράτωρ, made up of παν, *all*, and κράτωρ, *mighty*, occurs 10 times in the New Testament, and is consistently translated *almighty*. Only nine of these uses are absolute, all found in the Revelation. One is in 2 Corinthians 6:18, a quote from the LXX translation of 2 Samuel 7:8.
- The word κράτωρ, like the word κράτος is derived from the verb κρατέω, which carries the idea of ruling. To be consistent, all the noun forms from the verb κρατέω, meaning *to rule*, should be translated by some form of *rule*, *might*, or *mighty*.
- The noun ἰσχύς, *strength*, however, is related to the verb ἰσχύω, meaning *to be strong in body* (Thayer). But like κράτος it is sometimes translated *to be powerful*, *to exercise power*, etc. The variety of translation has resulted in confusion, so that often no distinctions are made between δυνάμις, κράτος, and ἰσχύς.
- 16 For a thorough discussion of the various attacks of the devil, see this author’s work, *Grace and the Enemies of the Believer*, Chapter Twelve.
- 17 The most common function of πρὸς with the articular infinitive, as here, is to indicate purpose. According to Burton, “it is occasionally used with the sense, *with reference to*. (Moods and Tenses, page 162.) It is actually an example of the accusative of disadvantage. See the note on vs. 12 concerning the Accusative of Relationship per Brooks and Winbery.
- 18 See “The Nature of Satanic Attack” in the appendix to this work.
- 19 The repetition of *against* translates the preposition πρὸς with the accusative each time, which are, in this case, examples of the *accusative of disadvantage*, which is listed as a function of something called the “Accusative of Relationship” by Brooks and Winbery, a rather inelegant title. In fact, the relationship is always one of advantage or disadvantage, similar to the dative use. See Brooks and Winbery, *Syntax*, pg. 63.
- 20 See the chart entitled “Ranks of Spirit Beings” in the appendix to this work. Nine passages refer to these ranks, but only two Colossians 1:16 and Ephesians 1:21 contain complete lists. The correct order from top to bottom is the Colossians 1:16 list.
- 21 The root idea of κόσμος is orderliness, arrangement. It refers to adornment, the arranging of hair, from which use the word *cosmetic* comes. It also refers to the orderliness of creation, and refers to the universal arrangement heavenly bodies. The Russians use it as part of the word *cosmonaut*, a voyager through the universe. It refers to the world of people, and separately, the world of organized systems, usually called the world system, one of the three enemies of the believer. In the word κοσμοκράτωρ it refers to the world of people.

Endnotes

- 22 The verb κρατέω has a variety of uses. Often it means to be strong, to rule, but can also mean to possess or to obtain something. Finally, it can mean to hold on to something. In the word κοσμοκράτωρ it refers to rule, and contextually to tyrannical rule. It refers to rule by virtue of being mighty. See the note on verse 10.
- 23 Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, pg 356. Caracalla, who ruled Rome from 198 to 217 AD, was one of the Empire's most tyrannical rulers. At first, he co-ruled with his brother Geta from 209 to 211, who Caracalla had killed by loyal members of the praetorian guard. Subsequently Caracalla had approximately 20,000 Romans killed who were supporters of Geta. Therefore, we conclude that the word κοσμοκράτωρ and its cognates had a strong negative connotation. For more on Caracalla, see Goldsworthy, Adrian. *How Rome Fell: Death of a Superpower*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). 70–71.
- 24 Robertson's *Word Pictures* on Ephesians 6:14. Robertson calls the imperative "stand" here an "ingressive aorist," which contemplates the beginning of an action. "Start taking a stand" seems to be the idea.
- 25 The Greek words are correctly translated "of the righteousness" and are a genitive of apposition, indicating that the breastplate *consists* of righteousness. This is a common use of the genitive case, and shows that the word *righteousness* is the more specific term. In the metaphor, then, *righteousness* is being emphasized over the word *breastplate*. The specific nature of this righteousness is often ignored. It must refer to the righteousness that the Christian has as a position in Christ and an ability to act right that comes from God. This cannot be, therefore, simply an attempt to do right from one's own ability. The righteousness here is absolute, and any failure to do right when under Satanic attack indicates that the whole armor is not being applied.
- 26 Rushton, *Enemies*, pg. 76.
- 27 *Logos* has a variety of meanings in Scripture, not the least of which is *communication*. It is this broad truth that is being emphasized in the phrase "the word (*logos*) of God." God has communicated accurately the truths that He wants mankind to know. The Scriptures then are the *logos* of God. But they also contain the *utterances* (*hrema*) of God on specific topics.
- 28 The author gave up memorizing Scripture years ago. He has found that constant daily study of the Word is more beneficial than the artificial practice of memorizing. Indeed, as a result of continual daily study, the author knows and remembers more Scripture now than he did when, as a college student, he memorized literally hundreds of texts. Those were retained in memory only a relatively short time, as the truth they represented was not fully understood. But now that the Scriptures are understood and applied regularly, the statements themselves have become indelibly inscribed on his mind. He recommends that the believer study the meaning of the text of Scripture, and then, when time allows, memorize the text subsequently to understanding its meaning. He will find that, after diligent study, very little memorization is necessary.
- 29 Throughout the discussion of the armor of God the concept of truth as revealed in God's word comes forth. In the modern (or post-modern) world, the concept of truth has been scrapped for relativism. No longer are Christians told that they can know for sure what Scripture teaches. Truth, they are told, is relative, and one should accommodate the beliefs of other religions, and not be judgmental. Since there is no such thing as absolute truth, a legitimate approach to God, we are told, is found in all religions. Tolerance has been re-defined as meaning that no dogmatism must be allowed. We are not to desire to debunk other religions, but to bring those people into the fold through love and approbation.
- One wonders what the apostles think of the modern church, so-called. Would Paul, who called the Corinthians to account, who confronted Peter and Barnabas with their error, who stood against and condemned the legalists of his day, recognize the modern "evangelical church" in America? We think not.
- 30 Rushton, *Enemies*, pg. 77.
- 31 περὶ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων is identified by Brooks and Winbery in *Syntax*, pg. 18 as a genitive of advantage. This is a normal sub-function of the Genitive of Relationship. It is analogous to the Dative of Advantage, though always expressed with a preposition, rather than absolutely.
- 32 Rushton, *Enemies*, pg. 77.
- 33 This is a difficult association. Many who exegete Scripture have struggled with how the simple prepositional phrase *huper emou* ("on behalf of me") is associated with the previous sentence. Salmond in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says simply that it is adjunctive (something added but not grammatically related). With this, John Eadie in his work *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* seems to agree, saying it has "an intensive or climactic signification" (pg. 476). T. K. Abbott in the *International Critical Commentary* simply ignores the issue. It seems to me that the adjunctive

Endnotes

view is the correct one.

The reason I have taken it back to an understood noun supplied from the previous phrase is two-fold: 1) *Supplication* is correctly defined as asking for help, which is what Paul is doing, and 2) the noun δέησις (supplication) is a noun of action which can take adverbial modifiers, and, indeed it does in the Greek diagram above. The inclusion of the English with supplication in the diagram indicates the adjunctive idea, as the word cannot be directly related back to the actual Greek word δέησει modified by περί πάντων τῶν ἁγίων (“concerning all the saints”). However, the phrase *hyper emou* undoubtedly is another example of what Brooks and Winbery identify as the Genitive of Advantage, as they do with the phrase περί πάντων τῶν ἁγίων. See Brooks and Winbery, *Syntax*, pgs. 18-19.

- 34 Paul mentions Tychicus five times in his writings: Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12.