**THE ECONOMY OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES**

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***ONE:*  INTRODUCTION**

One may ask why another study of the Pastoral Epistles is needed, when so many others are available. This treatment of the epistles is different in that it is neither a verse by verse exposition, nor a handbook on how to personally apply their teachings. Instead this study will have a narrow objective: to examine which economy, or dispensation, Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus belong. For the reader unfamiliar with the dispensational principle of interpretation I pause to offer a word of explanation. The dispensational approach to Bible study recognizes that God's "purpose of the ages" needs to be "rightly divided" among several differing administrations (Gk. *oikonomia*, from which derives the English "economy"). Each of these administrations, or "dispensations", has been marked by special promises to a favored group of people within God's household. Additionally the stewards of each dispensation have received special house-rules to govern their stewardships. If the reader finds himself on unsure ground in these matters, he would do well to undertake some preliminary reading before attempting the present study. **1**

Among "consistent dispensationalists" **2**, who recognize a fundamen­tal difference between Israel and the post-Acts "Gentile" church **3**, there are basically two schools of thought on the Pastoral Epistles. One holds that they form part of the legacy of the Mystery Epistles for the church today; the other believes that they were written prior to the revelation of the Mystery. If written before the heavenly Mys­tery was revealed to the Apostle Paul, then only their foundational doctrines apply to us. Anything in them of a distinctive, dispensational nature would be inappropriate for us today.

Depending upon which school of thought he favors, one may be tempted to gloss over difficulties in the epistles and dismiss all opposing viewpoints offhandedly. But difficulties are to be found in these books, and they should be faced honestly without rushing to judgment. When the Pastoral Epistles are read with a view to "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" the following points present themselves in two conflicting groups, A and B:

**A. Acts Period Similarities.**

1. Christ is portrayed as "King of kings" in 1 Timothy 6:15, as He is in Revelation 17:14 and 19:16. This title of Christ seems to have more an earthly than a heavenly bearing to it, and blessings in the earth belong to Israel's stewardship (Gen.12:1-3).

2. The Holy Spirit's choice of the word "Mediator" to describe Christ in 1 Timothy 2:5 tends to draw our attention to covenant Scriptures like Galatians 3:19-20 and Hebrews 8:6. Although the principle of mediation also applies to the non­-covenant body of Christ, the word "Mediator" is not used in Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12, which teach us about our "access" to the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ (the mediation principle).

3. We find the "church of God" mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:5 and the similar sounding "church of the living God" in 1 Timothy 3:15. Many Acts 28 dispensationalists are accustomed to iden­tifying these expressions with the Acts period church, which was Israel with her "Gentile" graft (1 Cor.1:2).

4. The widow's register of 1 Timothy 5:3-10 shows a similar degree of church organization to that of Acts 6:1-2. Similarly, we find references to "bishops", "deacons" and "elders" (1 Tim.3:1-13; 5:17-18; Titus 1;5-9), which indicate a spir­itual hierarchy resembling that of the Acts period (cp. 1 Cor.12:28-30). This appears to stand in contrast with the sense of equality conveyed by the Mystery Epistles in Ephesians 3:6; 4:2 and 16; 5:21 and Colossians 3:16.

5. The apostolic authority to deliver a backslidden believer over to Satan is found in only two texts -1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:19-20. 1 Corinthians is unquestionably an Acts period Epistle, with the Jew foremost in the ministry of Pau1. **4**

6. The witness of the church "before angels" alluded to in 1 Timothy 5:21 and 3:16 compares agreeably with the Acts period teaching of 1 Peter 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 4:9. The word "angel" (*angelos*) has reference to a "messenger " (cp. Mat. 11:7-10), and the angelic couriers have all been affiliated with Israel and God's earthly program. God is not using these ministers of the covenants (Acts 7:53; Gal.3:19; Heb.1:7) during the present dispensation of His grace. The church today provides its demonstration of divine grace not to angels, as ministers of that grace, but "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places". In 1 Timothy the use of "angels" is suggestive of a doctrinal tie with Israel and the Acts period.

**B. Acts Period Dissimilarities.**

1. Paul's advice to Timothy to take a little wine for his fre­quent illnesses (1 Tim.5:23) indicates that the Pentecostal gift of healing had ceased. Otherwise, we should have expect­ed Paul to enclose a healing handkerchief with his letter to a beloved fellow-laborer (Acts 19:11-12). Paul was exercising his healing gift until the very close of the book of Acts, the last time for Gentile benefit (28:8-9). In view of these facts and other indications of poor health among Paul's comrades afterwards (2 Tim. 4:20; Phi.2:25-30), we should be wary of reading a Daniel-like preservation into 1 Timothy 2:15. Being "saved through childbearing" may apply to all believing women who have been blessed with a husband and children. These women are to work out their salvation through the rearing of children.

2. One of the six parts of "the mystery of godliness" in 1 Timothy 3:16 states that this mystery was "preached (*kerusso*, proclaimed) among the nations". This statement of "Gentile" blessing stands without any reference to the house of Israel at all. Therefore, 1 Timothy seems to have been written post-Acts 28, for the axe appears to have been laid to the root as John the Baptist threatened (Mat.3:10). Also of note is a complementary remark in 2 Timothy 4:17 concerning Paul's proclamation (*kerugma*) to all nations during his trial.

3. God's gift of grace and promise of hope "before the world began" (literally "before age-times" 2 Tim.1:9; Titus 1:2) suggest an association with His election of the heavenly church "**before** the foundation of the world" (Eph.1:3-4). Israel's kingdom, on the other hand, has been prepared "**since** the foundation of the world" (Mat.25:34).

**Transitions**

On many points the dispensational elements outlined above are out of harmony with one another. The attempt to reconcile them has led some to propose that the Pastoral Epistles, along with Philippians, belong to an inter-dispensational transition period. This period is then identified with Paul's two year house arrest at Rome and an interval of freedom afterward of unspecified length. During his house arrest we know that Paul preached the kingdom of God without hindrance to all who came to hear him (Acts 28:30-31). In this ministry there appears no longer to have been that distinction which put the Jew first. Luke does not elaborate on the specifics of Paul's message at that time, and he gives little indication that the "salvation of God sent to the nations" might have been altered from the former "gospel of the uncircumcision". In the former preaching, some believers from other nations were made secondary partakers of Israel's earthly blessings. But after a dispensational turning point, all people had an equal share in the promise of heavenly blessings (Eph.3:6). The narrative of the end of Acts almost leaves one hanging, to ponder what came next; and we must fill the void by dividing the Pauline Epistles according to their historical and doctrinal contexts.

Some expositors, particularly those who put the current church's dispensa­tional boundary at Acts 9 or Acts 13, have seen the features of a transitional period throughout the book of Acts. They believe that during the course of the Acts period (roughly 29 to 61 A.D.) Israel faded out of God's plan and the "Gentile" church was phased in. Humanly speaking, the Acts period does resemble a dispensational transition on account of the apostleship of Paul. At first Paul was like the majority of his countrymen, an enemy of the gospel. After his conversion he preached Christianity to Jews only. When the Holy Spirit appointed him "the apostle of the nations" (Acts 13:2-4; Rom.11:13; Gal.2:7), Paul ministered to the Jew first and also the Greek (Rom.1:161. But the Greek had no right of his own by heritage and was, by the grace of God, grafted into the blessings of Israel (Rom.11:17-18). Then after the final crisis of the Jews at Acts 28:23-­29, the salvation of God was sent to the nations without restrictions (Israel would afterward cease to exist nationally). Later Paul began to call himself "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph.3:1). These facts may tend to give the Acts a transitional hue.

The introduction of the "Gentile" graft into the divine strategy toward Israel possibly served a dual purpose. Its primary objective was to provoke Israel to jealousy, so that more of them would respond to the gospel (Rom.11:11-14). But it may also have been God's merci­ful provision for Jewish Pentecostal believers **5** , to reduce the stress of being wrenched from one dispensation into another after the Acts period. The axe being laid to Israel's root was sure to produce a devastating shock. Certainly no one but God foreknew what He had in store next for Israel nationally (the greater, anti­typical "Lo-ammi" period) and for "Gentile" believers (a salvation hope of their own in the heavenly places). That Israel might fail had been the warning of the prophets, but a separate blessing for the nations came as a complete surprise. It is only retrospectively, then, that we are able to discern in the book of Acts this transition to a non-covenant church.

Some have proposed that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles even earlier than the time of his house arrest in Rome. But it seems far­fetched that the three epistles, and 2 Timothy in particular, could belong to the period leading up to and including Paul's two year imprisonment at Caesarea (Acts 24:27). The cessation of Paul's heal­ing gift does not fit the times (Pentecost was still in operation as late as Acts 28:3-9), and neither do many other historical details (see Sections Five and Six for a more thorough treatment of these). The Apostle looked forward in Acts 20:24 to finishing his course. For him finishing the course meant the highest act of sacrifice; hence he did not count his life as dear to himself. As far as Paul knew he would meet his end in Jerusalem, **6** toward which he hastened in order to celebrate Pentecost. Like the first mention of Pentecost in Acts, this feast marked a turning point. From that time Jerusalem ceased to be the center of Paul's world (final judgment against the Jews was pronounced not in Jerusalem, but Rome). For Paul a new phase of ministry was beginning - a prison ministry. This prison ministry was divided into two parts: the early portion covering the close of the covenant dispensation, and the later portion opening the Mystery dispensation. What Paul did not yet foresee in Acts 20:24, concerning the fulfillment of his course, would begin to be shown him in the Caesarean prison house (Acts 23:11; 26:16). More service seemed to be required of him, but the end of it was still unclear. The final crisis with the Roman Jews and the ensuing dispensational change probably came unexpectedly. However, circumstances must have shaped Paul for his new evangel. The forced inactivity of the Caesarean prison cell probably heightened his spiritual introspec­tion, as he wondered with anticipation how his magnified office of "Apostle of the Uncircumcision" would continue to fit into the divine plan for mankind. His heart and mind would have been filled with many thoughts and questions in those days, as the prospect of converting Israel grew bleaker.

From a human perspective we could say that the finish of Paul's course was deferred for several years (3 to 6) after Acts 28:28. Before Caesarea, he seems to have expected his end without any great delay. By the time he wrote 2 Timothy, however, Paul had completed the founding and nurturing of the new church, and he could say with finality "I have finished the course". There was no doubt any longer that the bloody end he had long anticipated was near.

In dealing with the various viewpoints on where to place the Pastoral Epistles historically, I hope to demonstrate that a transition period of greater significance for us today is evident in the Mystery Epistles. The evidence here includes the Pastoral Epistles as a distinct group within the overall Mystery Epistles. The transition that I call attention to was needed by the former covenant churches of the dispersion, in order to smooth the way for the newly revealed dispensation. This change was implemented by means of a "foundation" ministry of "apostles and prophets" (Eph.2:20). The old modes of church organization and administration continued with little change, as evinced in Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, Timothy and Titus. The foundation period lasted only a few years, and it was soon overtaken by a decadent faith which favored Judaistic fables over the pure doctrine of our risen, seated and glorified Head.

My personal belief regarding the Pastoral Epistles and Philippians is that they form part of the ecclesiastical charter for the body of Christ. The case presented in this study is certainly not the last word on the interpretation of Pastoral Epistle teaching. But I offer these thoughts to the reader in the desire that it will open up a deeper dialogue on the relevance of the Pastoral Epistles to the present day church. By communicating with one another our thoughts on the Scriptures, and hopefully they will be Spirit-led thoughts, we in the church may look forward to arriving a little closer to the unity of the faith (Eph.4:13). With that goal in view we may even be found measuring up to the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The church order apparent in the Pastoral books is obviously not to be found in today's divided Christianity. Only within the microcosm of a denomination might the hierarchy of authority seem to fit the pattern of the epistles. But the various denominations seldom recognize one another's authority, so the resemblance to Scripture remains far from perfect.

Because the foundation generation of the body of Christ became so soon entangled in earthly religion, it has been difficult even to recognize the Scriptural church in the 1,900 years of Christendom that followed. During the earliest period of the grace age, when the conscience could be freely exercised, there appeared many "winds of doctrine" and rampant sectarianism. These conditions did little to glorify the one Lord and Head of the church. In reaction to an abundance of "heresies", many of which denied fundamental truths, there evolved an authoritarian church structure under the control of a series of bishops and popes. But this regime, despite the potential blessings of organization, tended to put the commandments of men above the truth of Scripture in some important matters.

Later, with the advent of the Reformation came a return to the exercise of individual conscience and a regaining of some lost truth. Along with this great blessing has come again the evil of sectarian­ism, which is often associated with denominationalism. This feature of Christendom has never been worse than it is today.

Sectarianism is often more pronounced in churches possessing greater doctrinal light, and here I include those which apply "right division" as a rigorous principle for Bible interpretation. Many of these churches are accustomed to search the Scriptures with great zeal. But the light of Christ is shown by a balanced walk, one that is both circumspect in doctrine and outworked in love (Eph.5:2,8,15). When doctrine is held with a fierce uncompromising independence, without a corresponding love that seeks the good of the other, it betokens a spirit not altogether of Christ. But the good of others should be our concern, whether our love is reciprocated or not. Many who are blessed with the riches of enlightenment in the mysteries of Christ could learn rich lessons of love from the doctrinal Samari­tans whom they occasionally look down upon. Those who have been engraced to understand the Great Secret in some of its fulness should at least seek after like-mindedness with other Christians (Phi.3:15-17). For a church having one mind on the fundamentals, and willing to continue seeking the Lord on divisive issues, a closer-knit organization would naturally follow. A company so developed in the spiritual treasures of Christ would be better able to fulfill the Pauline commission, enlightening all men as to the dispensation of the Mystery (Eph.3:8­-9).

***TWO:* THE FOUNDATION**

The key to fitting the Pastoral Epistles into the Scriptures of the Mystery will be found in the recognition that this dispensation began with a special transition period. This period began not unlike the finish of the previous dispensation, with much of the church order still intact. However, it ended quite differently, with ordinary faithful men taking up the burden of truth previously borne by Christ-appointed apostles and evangelists (2 Tim.2:2).

In Ephesians Paul speaks of the heavenly household being "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph.2:19-20). These apostles and prophets must be of a different order than Acts period apostles and prophets, else this household of God cannot be distinguished from Israel. By revelation the Mystery had been committed to Paul, even as it was "now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph.3:5). Like Paul, some who had preached the gospel of Israel's kingdom during Acts were recommissioned to fulfill a heavenly stewardship afterward. Although not specifically mentioned in Ephesians and Colossians, such a recommissioning would have been a logical outcome of the change of gospel message. Without it, who could tell whether­ this new Mystery was the truth of God or only the great lie in new garb. As great an apostle as we perceive Paul to have been, even he admitted that it was possible for him to stumble and fall spiritually (1 Cor.9:27). Therefore the founding of this new church, along with the establishment of its ministers, must have been a public event in the church. After the spiritual reality of the new dispensation had settled in, there would be no doubt as to what God's will was and who His appointed spokesmen were.

Although Paul crossed over the dispensational boundary with many acquaintances, not many laborers of Jewish background were associated with his post-Acts 28 prison ministry. Colossians 4:10-11 mentions a few of them and Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos also continued with Paul. As for the pillars of Israel, the Twelve Apostles are forever associated with the foundation of Israel's hope in the earth-bound New Jerusalem (Rev.21:14). The apostles and prophets of Ephesians, on the other hand, had just received the revelation of the Mystery and were sent to edify the international, heaven-bound church (Eph.3:2-6).

Further on in Ephesians Paul expands upon the makeup of the church's human foundation to include not only "some apostles, and some prophets", but also "some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers" (Eph.4:11). These servants were given as instruments of the Lord to endow the church with His fulness ...

"... for the adjusting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come into the unity of the faith, even of the recognition of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph.4:12-13

An adjustment (*katartismos*) into the body of Christ was required for believers coming out of the Pentecostal dispensation. Older dispensa­tional truths had given way to the Mystery truth. A period of intense edification was required, if the new truth was to be established.

The gifts for the new household of God consisted of a body of ministers for the collective edification of the body of Christ. By contrast, the former spiritual gifts for the body of Pentecostal believers were individual endowments of power; each one received a gift suited to his role in the church (1 Cor.12:4-11). The gifts of both dispensations were for the edification of the saints, but the individualized Pentecostal gifts were more prone to abuse (1 Cor.l:7; 3:1-3 and ch.14).

Although no individual spiritual endowments are specified in Ephesians, some individual "gifts" are implied there. Because every believer "is **given** grace according to the measure of the **gift** of Christ" (Eph.4:7), those who were selected for foundation ministry must have received a special measure of the "gifts of grace". Incidentally, "gift of grace" is the sense of the Greek *charisma* (from *charis*, "grace"), often associated with the miraculous gifts of Pentecost. Special *charisma* gifts were needed in order to exercise the demanding offices of foundation ministry during the period of adjustment.

To appoint the leaders of an infant church (Eph.4:14) without some outward proof of their authority would not have been beneficial "for the adjusting of the saints". Thus the hands that were laid upon Timothy at his appointment to the foundation ministry, along with the accompanying prophecies, became a public testimony of his credentials (1 Tim.4:14; 2 Tim.1:6). Note how the Pastoral Epistles complement Ephesians by adding informative details on the founding of the church. What Ephesians portrays in broad strokes is amplified by the personal detail of the Pastorals.

Later when the church had become more firmly founded in the faith, the evangelist Timothy was choosing the overseers (called "bishops" or "elders" in the KJV) of some local churches by laying on hands (1 Tim.5:22). However, there is no record of any prophetic gifts being imparted to the elders Timothy ordained.

Laying on hands as a method to confirm authority was shared by both Old and New Covenants (Deu.31:7; 34:9; Acts 6:3-6; 13:2-3). But this is no more an objection against its use during the transition period than the fact that both an earthly and a heavenly church are called "body of Christ" (cp. 1 Cor.12:27 with Eph.4:12). Rather, the continuance of laying on hands shows us God's graciousness in not casting unnecessary impediments in the path of these reoriented Pentecostal saints. Thus they might become conditioned quickly to the heavenly things of their high calling.

An open confirmation of authority was also necessary so that insubordinate or rebellious believers would have no excuse for their sin. Against the teaching of God's chosen apostles and prophets, the folly of rebels and pretenders would be manifest to all (2 Tim.3:9). Soon the authority of the foundation ministry would be undercut by a growing desire in many Christians for ear-tickling myths (2 Tim.4:3-4). It was needful, therefore, to establish their authority beyond dispute. Through all the vicissitudes of doctrine that followed the foundation period, at least the apostolic authority of Paul in all his epistles has stood the test of time (as evidenced by their manuscript continuity).

The cessation of the universal evidential gifts at the end of Acts must have been a wrenching experience for many. The radically differ­ent hope of a homeland in heavenly places would have heightened the disorientation of those saints called into the new church. God's great desire was for them to believe without hindrance the latest message of His ministers. Paul had once warned many of these same believers to be wary of other gospels (Gal.1:6-9; 2 Cor.11:3-4), and now he had a new revelation to put forward. Seeing that the apostle­ship of the uncircumcision had stirred up such violent controversy among the Jews, the prison ministry for the nations at large might infuriate them further. To validate the new gospel, spiritual though it was, required its ministers to receive an outward sign as proof of authority. Besides hand-laying, specific gifts and prophe­cies were also provided. The foundation ministry was limited to just these quasi-Pentecostal provisions, however. The remaining covenant signs and shadows, whether of Mosaic Law or of Acts period ordinance (e.g., sabbath keeping, water baptism, tongues speaking and the Lord's supper), have been swept away as so many "earthly things" to be avoided (Phi.3:18-20; Col.3:1-2).

This explanation of the hierarchy of authority and accompanying transitional gifts may not satisfy the ardent anti-formalist. But one ought not to forget the pragmatic need for a degree of continuity in the old institutions, on account of our weak humanity. God is not without understanding or patience when it comes to accommodating our less than perfect nature.

**Prophets**

Where gifts are concerned, the emphasis in Ephesians is decidedly upon gifts for the collective edification of the church (Eph.4:12-­16). But individualized gifts were also present to some degree. For example, those given to the church as prophets must have received for themselves a gift of prophecy. Certainly Paul shared in this gift, as his prophecies of the "latter times" and "last days" of this dispensa­tion show (1 Tim.4:1-3; 2 Tim.3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4). Prophecy in its root Scriptural sense is not restricted to futuristic things like these, however. A prophet is one who speaks for God on any matter.

The prophecies that accompanied Timothy's appointment to preach the Mystery seem to have been personal words of comfort from the Lord, for by them he was to be strengthened for spiritual warfare (1 Tim.1:18; 4:14). An enablement such as this was needed to carry the foundation ministry, particularly its younger members, through the darkness of "latter times". The season called "latter times" would be characterized by heaps of teachers promoting "every wind of doctrine". These times were soon to fall upon the recently called-out Church, and perhaps as few as 3 years from the founding of the church the winds of schism and apostasy were already blowing hard (2 Tim.1:8, 13­-15; 2:16-18; 4:14-15). Not only did Demas turn his back on the apostle in chains, but even Paul's spiritual son Titus appears to have abandoned him (Titus 1:4; 2 Tim.4:10). It is impossible for us to second guess how long the foundation period might have lasted, had all its ministers remained true. The period appears to have been very short, indeed, and subsequent church history shows how much truth was lost within so brief a span. Stuart Allen makes the following comment on Clement's letter to the Corinthian church (ca. 95 A.D.): **7**

"Salvation, according to this writer, can only be had by obeying God, keeping humble, and doing His will. When we bear in mind that all this was written within some 40 years of the good deposit of Truth being made known through the Apostle Paul, we can surely see

how quickly the fundamental Truths were lost."

A reading of any of the "Apostolic Fathers" will demonstrate how rapidly a works based legalism supplanted the gospel of grace.

Timothy was reminded in his first letter not to neglect the gift of grace (*charisma*) which came to him by means of prophecy (1 Tim.4:14). By the time of his second letter, however, he was exhorted to rekindle it, implying that his zeal had cooled (2 Tim.1:6). The explanation for this turn of affairs seems to be that the Holy Spirit lit the fire, but it was up to men to keep it burning. The fact that 2 Timothy mentions only Paul's confirming hands, omitting the elders' hands that 1 Timothy 4:14 includes, suggests the crushing loneliness Paul experienced as he made his last defense of the faith. Probably Paul and the elders had acted together in ordaining Timothy as an evangelist of the Mystery faith.**8** Some students of Scripture have mistakenly understood Timothy's gift to be a Pentecostal energiz­ing - that is, a "falling" of holy spirit upon him (as in Acts 11:15). But *charisma* at its root means simply a gift of grace, and its appli­cation is wider than the endowments outlined in 1 Corinthians 12. The same word is also used of the gifts of righteousness and eternal life in Christ (Rom.5:15-16; 6:23). Paul's reminder in 2 Timothy 1:6 for Timothy to rekindle his gift echoes the spirit of power, love and sound-mindedness in verse 7. But this spirit is Christ's general gift to all the saints, with perhaps a greater measure admini­stered via prophecy to men like Timothy, who were called to fulfill special ministries (2 Tim.4:5).

**Apostles**

An apostle (*apostolos*) was one sent (*apostellō*) with the power to represent another. Concerning apostleship we need to recognize the marvelous authority exercised by those whom the Lord sent to represent Him. The abili­ty for men to loose and to bind upon earth began even before Calvary, with the calling of the Twelve (Mat.18:18). They learned to wield this authority immediately as emissaries of Christ, preaching and healing and exorcising demons (Mat.10:5-8). Later their power was extended to levy judgments as well (Acts 5:1-12; 13:7-11). In this same vein Paul was able to deliver rebellious saints over to the power of Satan for the chastising of their flesh (1 Cor.5:1-5). Such power was apostolic but not specifically Pentecostal in nature, for Paul exercised this same discipline upon Hymenaeus and Alexander after Acts 28 (1 Tim.1:20). The founding of a new church was an extraordinary task calling for extraordinary measures like apostolic judgments. The insubordinate saint was also a potential enemy who might undermine the church if not severely disciplined. Unhappily, Hymenaeus and Alexander became such antagonists by the time Paul wrote his second Epistle to Timothy (2:17; 4:14). Furthermore, such a "giving over" to Satan may be understood in the passive sense that applies in Romans 1:24-28, where God gave over the rebellious to their own reprobate inclinations. Perhaps Paul did no more than cease praying for them to receive a spirit of repentance from their errors, and warning faithful Christians to shun them.

Paul's authority as an apostle of Christ had come by divine commandment (1 Tim.1:1; Titus 1:3). In turn Paul was empowered to command the saints to obey the provisions of the gospel (Eph.4:25-5:4; 5:15-33; Col.2:6, 16, 18; 3:1-4:6; Philem.8; 1 Tim.6:11-14; 2 Tim.4:1-2). Also he groomed his spiritual protégés, Timothy and Titus, to a similar fitness to command. **9** Although their leadership had its apostolic aspects, neither Timothy nor Titus is explicitly referred to as an apostle of Christ.

Very few men are named in Scripture as filling the office of an apostle. We can identify only about 19 apostles by name before Acts 28. These include: the Twelve and Matthias, who replaced Judas (Acts 1:25-26), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-4; 14:14), Andronicus and Junias (Rom.16:7), and James and Jude (1 Cor.9:5; Gal.l:19). Besides these, Paul received envoys, or "messengers" (*apostoloi*), from the local churches he helped to found (2 Cor.8:23; Phi.2:25). Thus we need to distinguish between two different types of apostleship, based upon whether the sender was God or man (Gal.1:1). Only those sent by God could exercise divine authority.

Two main branches of God-sent apostles are discernible, repre­sented by Peter for the circumcision and Paul for the uncircumcision (Gal.2:7). Within the record of Scripture, Paul alone is said to have received a twofold ministry (Acts 26:16). Not only did he spearhead the gospel of the uncircumcision during Acts, but he alone is men­tioned by name as an apostle **after** Acts 28. Paul's evangel after Acts 28 concerned Christ in heavenly glory, as Head of a church having heavenly citizenship. Additionally, Paul alone was privileged to write the Scriptures concerning this present dispensation of the Mystery. To him it was given not only to complete the word of God (Col.1:25), but also to suffer in a uniquely Christ-like way for the church (Col.1:24). By the great afflictions which he endured, he has provided us a very potent example of the godly life, second only to that of Christ our Lord (Phi.2:17; 3:17).

Like their Rabbi, Who came in the flesh as "a Minister of the circumcision" (Rom.15:8), the Twelve Apostles exercised an authority limited to the twelve tribes. Any of the Twelve who remained alive when the Nation was cut off after Acts 28 must have been set aside as apostles, even if only temporarily. When Israel's prophetic hope is quickened again one day, who shall sit upon thrones to judge the twelve tribes if not these same Twelve (Mat.19:28)?

The fact that the plural "apostles" is used in Ephesians 2:20 and 4:11 seems to indicate there were other foundation apostles besides Paul. Or perhaps this is an example of the figure *Heterosis*, which employs an exchange of grammatical forms (in this case, the plural put for the singular) for the sake of emphasis.**10** An obvious example of the figure may be found in Hebrews 9:23, where the "better sacrifices than these" refers to the **one** sacrifice of Christ for sin forever (Heb.10:12). The use of the figure in Hebrews serves to exalt the greatness of His sacrifice. In Ephesians 4:11 its use would help to magnify Paul's office, assuming he were the only apostle of God for the present dispensation. Those who understand the uniqueness of Paul's message as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for (us) Gentiles" would not exchange his apostleship for any fifty other apostles and

prophets of the covenant gospel.

**Evangelists**

The function of an evangelist, as the word implies, is to preach the gospel (*euangelion*), both to believer and unbeliever alike. In our day we tend to restrict the evangelist's role to evangelizing the unbeliever and the apostate only. The Pastorals, however, address the need for all men to hear the gospel of Christ. For the saints of God, repetitious preaching is certainly not grievous (Phi.3:1).

In addition to preaching, the foundation evangelists Timothy and Titus were authorized by Paul to appoint "elders" in the local churches (1 Tim.3:1-13; 5:22; Titus 1:5). We have no evidence from the book of Acts that either of them exercised such authority during the Acts period. If my assertion about a post-Acts authorship of Timothy and Titus is correct, then neither of them was commissioned an evangelist until after Acts 28. Neither of them could be considered a novice after a decade or more of service, and they began shouldering greater responsibility in the new dispensation just when opposition to Paul's gospel was growing. Since Paul was not able to come to them in person, he sent encouragement by letter. Probably most of Paul's instruction in these letters was a repetition of what he had previously given them, designed to fortify their already enlightened minds. Paul seems to have been preparing these younger co-workers to fill the void about to be left by his "departure".

Matters relating to church administration also formed part of their evangelistic responsibility, such as:

1) Teaching methods (1 Tim.4:13)

2) Disciplinary methods (1 Tim.5:1-2)

3) Rules governing the care of widows (1 Tim.5:9-16)

4) Reward and punishment of elders (1 Tim.5:17-20)

5) Care of churches susceptible to Judaistic corruption or negative cultural influences (Titus 1:10-16)

6) Exampleship and personal authority (1 Tim.4:12, 15; Titus 2:7-8, 15)

7) Dealing with sectarianism (1 Tim.6:3-5; Titus 3:10-11)

8) Counseling pastors on leading their flocks

a) General conduct of men and women in the church (1 Tim.2:8-15; Titus 2:1-6)

b) Conduct of slaves (1 Tim.6:1-2; Titus 1:9-10)

c) Conduct of the rich (1 Tim.6:17-19)

d) Need for prayerfulness, meekness and subordination (1 Tim.2:1-3; Titus 3:1-2)

By the time Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus the foundation gifts were on the wane. Timothy was warned not to select an elder hastily, and the moral prerequisites for the candidate were clearly spelled out for his guidance (1 Tim.5:22, 24-25; 3, 1-13 and see Titus 1:5-9). False teaching was already corrupting the new faith, and it became a matter of grave concern lest any positions of authority in the church should also become corrupted. **11**

The possibility of Timothy's choosing an elder unwisely bears comparison with the previous dispensation, when the Holy Spirit was choosing the elders.

"Take heed to the flock among which the Holy Spirit appointed you **overseers** (*episkopos*, elsewhere translated "bishop"), to **feed** (meaning "to shepherd" or "pastor") the church of God, which He acquired with His own blood." Acts 20:28

Although the "overseers" or "elders" (see v.l7) of the Pentecostal period were divinely chosen, some would eventually pervert their faith (20:29-30). God tries out even a Judas occasionally to fulfill His will, but without divine guidance man is apt to choose a leader like Judas more frequently and less wittingly. Note that the terms "elder", "overseer" and "bishop" are used interchangeably. From the quote above we perceive that they functioned as "pastors" or "shepherds" (*poimēn*), overseeing the spiritual welfare of their flocks of saints.

**Pastors and Teachers**

The "elders" Titus was to appoint, like the "bishops" and assist­ing "deacons" Timothy had charge over, functioned exactly like those given as "pastor-teachers" in Ephesians 4:11 (Titus 1:5,7; 1 Tim.3:1-13; 5:17-19). The teaching aspect of the elder's office is emphasized in 1 Timothy 3:2 by the quality "apt to teach". A deacon (*diakonos*) was (and is) simply one who ministered or served in a subordinate capacity. Precise, Biblical definitions of the deacon's role are lacking, and he appears to have served his pastor and his church with good works meet for the situation at hand. Paul does not instruct deacons to specialize in various areas of church administration, although this may have become necessary for larger assemblies. This sort of division of labor occurred to some degree in the covenant churches of the Acts period (Acts 6:1-4). The Pastoral Epistles give me the impression that the same duties might have been shared by all the elders, whether they were overseers or auxiliary ministers. A "deacon" might be looked upon as a second-pastor who is subordinate to the principal-pastor, and possibly serving his apprenticeship. God's word gives us the freedom to work out many of the details of church government according to personal preference and judgment. Dogmatism as to governmental details may lead to strife and sectarianism.

It is difficult to say with finality whether the leaders Timothy was to be so careful in selecting formed part of the Christ-given gifts of Ephesians 4:11. All the ministries covered by Ephesians 4:11 seem to have been direct appointments from Christ our Head, with personal revelations and confirming prophecies coming from Him. But subsequent to the foundation appointments, He may have continued giving pastor-teachers to the church through the medium of Timothy's ministry and gift, without the accompanying prophecies.

The foundation apostles and prophets served to initiate the churches of the previous dispensation into the knowledge of Christ's secret, heavenly purpose. Once these churches became rooted and grounded in the new faith, the roles of apostle and prophet would have been largely fulfilled. The evangelist and the pastor would then build upon that foundation to bring the faithful into a matured, unified faith (Eph.4:12-13), and to draw in new believers. The "unity of the faith" may have been attained in Paul's day by some now unknown core of believers, before apostasy and indifference set in. If it ever existed, that unity must have been short-lived. Therefore,

the need to keep striving for the goal of "one faith" has continued down the centuries (Eph.4:5). Equally the church's need for preachers and teachers, by whatever titles we care to call them, has continued to this day.

The post-apostolic generations of ministers who have held fast the Mystery of the faith should also be looked upon as Christ's gift to the church, for He is the source of all edification (Col.2:19). The authority by which they serve rests not in an external, evidential token (as Timothy received through prophecies) but in the "badge" of Scripture alone. A preacher who expounds for us the word of truth rightly divided and encourages us to walk by sound doctrine, confirm­ing that doctrine in his own life, is to be listened to. In such a one the authority of Scripture is evident.

***THREE:* THE PURPOSE OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES**

Needless to say, the initial readership of the three epistles was very narrow. Timothy and Titus were to be guided by the epistles both in their evangelistic capacity and in their personal circumstances. The personal aspect is particularly true of Timothy's second letter, where Paul urges him to action in several matters. The relationship between Paul and each of these younger men was as a father to a "son". **12** If my estimate of the dating of the epistles is correct (63-­64 A.D.), then Timothy had served faithfully with Paul for about twelve years by the time 2 Timothy was penned. Titus' association with Paul had spanned at least thirteen years when he received his epistle. Both men were intimate fellow-laborers of Paul and were well versed in the sound doctrine. Each had proven himself in the Lord's service over the years **13** and was well chosen for the task of setting in order the churches in his circuit.

As discussed in the previous section, Paul's charges to Timothy and Titus included the spiritual supervision of elders in the local Churches. Because of this emphasis the books have been dubbed the "Pastoral Epistles". The teaching of the epistles is by no means limited to pastors, but finds application in the life of every believer who is working out his salvation. We should take note that *pastoral charges are lacking in 2 Timothy*, except for directing Timothy personally; and the reasons for this we shall look into shortly. The amount of space devoted to problems of eldership in 1 Timothy and Titus goes hand in hand with the many symptoms of gangrenous doctrine noted in these same epistles. A church equipped with spiritual pastors, well grounded in the faith and exercised in the worthy walk, would be prepared for the dangerous times ahead. Paul's prophecies about a corrupted church, desirous more of godly forms than godly substance (2 Tim.3:5), also speak loudly as to the purpose of the books. It was the Holy Spirit's intention in the Pastoral Epistles to make the folly of this corruption evident to those who are Scripturally learned (2 Tim.3:9). Thus the spread of the gangrene would be stayed, and the faith of many would be preserved through succeeding generations (2 Tim.2:16-18).

Although Timothy and Titus were proven ministers, their epistles contain much personal advice. These counsels from a fatherly Paul range between mundane and vital spiritual issues, as in the follow­ing two examples: **14**

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." 1 Timothy 5:23

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." 2 Timothy 1:8

Words of encouragement and correction are needed by all, including the seasoned Christian. Additionally, it is a joy to note that spiri­tual refreshment, like that which Paul received from Onesiphorus, may come from any part of the body of Christ (2 Tim.1:16-18; Eph.4:16). Each of us has a part to play in helping other members work out their salvation.

Paul's attitude in his last years seems to have been more solici­tous toward Timothy than Titus. The relationship between Paul and Timothy must have been especially close and emotional (2 Tim.l:3-4). Besides the two epistles addressed to him, Timothy is mentioned in nine other Pauline epistles and is included in the salutation of six of them. Titus, however, is mentioned in only three of Paul's epis­tles, apart from the one addressed to him, and the last mention bears a tone of reproach. Titus appears to be implicated in Demas' condemna­tion for deserting Paul during his blackest hour (2 Tim.4:10.16). The occasion of Paul's undoing (his "departure" or *analusis* - 2 Tim.4:6) probably followed the onset of the first Roman persecution of Christians under Nero (ca. 64-65 A.D.). At that time the spirit of power, love and sound-mindedness began yielding to weakness and fear. Many Christians chose the easy path by dissociating themselves from the ministry of Paul, who was drawn to the center of the controversy in Rome. All the churches of the province of Asia seem to have been affected, and this would include those at Ephesus, Colossae, and Laodicea (2 Tim.1:15). Other churches which neither Scripture nor history has recorded for us may also have been involved. The Asian area had received a large portion of Paul's Acts period ministrations. Subsequently the region was honored again in receiving the original drafts of the two great epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, which expound the charter of the church today. Those who had received so much apostolic care began to turn their backs on the prisoner of the Lord and his gospel (2 Tim.1:7,15). Timothy, too, appears to have wavered in the face of growing hostility and confusion (2 Tim.1:5-8; 2:1-3; 4:2-5).

**The Practical Focus**

Besides the two evangelists named in the salutations, and the elders in their charge, the application of the Pastoral Epistles extends to all believers. The thrust of the epistles is overwhelming­ly practical. The few statements of foundational truth in them are given not so much for the sake of "teaching", but "for conviction, for correction, for discipline in righteousness". Even 2 Timothy 3:16, a favorite proof text of Biblical inspiration, was given to us for a fuller purpose. Verse 16 addresses the profitability of Scripture in the four areas just noted, while the context speaks pointedly of shaping one's life according to the word of God. In verses 14 and 15 the spiritual babe learns Biblical wisdom for working out his salvation. In verse 17 that process is shown complete in the full-grown man of God.

The hallmark text for interpreting the Scriptures, 2 Timothy 2:15, affords us another practical lesson. The central verse depicts the unashamed workman as one who aspires to receive divine approval through rightly dividing the word of truth. Right division brings with it both a learning discipline and a heart-attitude toward Bible truth that will guard against the doctrinal excesses that have carried away many (2 Tim.4:3-4). When it is rightly exercised, right division should eliminate speculation and opinion from understanding the key issues of God's word. For those equipped with a right under­standing of His word, a worthy walk is able to follow (Eph.4:1-6).

A third example of foundation doctrine put to an admonitory use may be found in 1 Timothy 3:14-16. **15** Here the mystery of godliness is set forth for the explicit purpose of instructing Timothy how to conduct himself in the church. The Scriptural sense of the word church (*ekklesia*) is a body of believers, not a church building or a denominational affiliation. I have elsewhere explained my view that the mystery of godliness relates only indirectly to Christ as God incarnate. **16** The real thrust of this mystery deals instead with the resurrection power of Christ, which God has worked into the body of Christ the church.

No in-depth study of the Pastoral Epistles is necessary to discover their emphasis on works. The following applications or situations involving good works are encountered:

1) Good works are an adornment for godly women, to be preferred above fashionable clothing or jewelry (1 Tim.2:9-10).

2) The job of pastoring is a good work, which a man would do well to reach after (1 Tim.3:1).

3) Only widows who are old, desolate and distinguished with a lifetime of good works deserve to be entered on the widows' roll (1 Tim.5:9-10). These works include child-rearing, hospitality and acts of charity.

4) Timothy was to be careful in his appointment of elders, lest he choose a sinner rather than a doer of good works (1 Tim.5:22­-25).

5) The wealthy saint should seek to be rich in good works, if he would gain a heavenly reward (1 Tim.6:17-19). A willingness to share one's earthly bounty is especially relevant to him.

6) Separating oneself from unrighteous deeds and those who practice them will prepare one for the Master's service with a life of good works (2 Tim.3:16-17).

7) Knowledge of the word of God is necessary for the man of God to become outfitted for every good work (2 Tim.3:16-17).

8) Adhering to Jewish purification ordinances amounts to a denial of God, Who disapproves even "good works" performed from a faulty motivation (Titus 1:14-16).

9) Titus' personal example of good works was to express itself in his teaching, speech, serious demeanor and purity of lifestyle (Titus 2:7-8).

10) Part of our character as God's peculiar people today is a zeal for good works (Titus 2:13-14).

11) Readiness for good works is coupled with traits like obedience to authority, guileless speech, gentleness and meekness (Titus 3:11).

12) Believers are expected to distinguish themselves with good works, rather than immerse themselves in profitless, legalistic disputes (Titus 3:8.14).

As described in (1) above, good works are an adornment of salvation and not the means to it. The Pastoral message, for all its emphasis on works, is clear as to the grace-basis of salvation (2 Tim.1:9; Titus 3:4-7). However, we need to recognize that salvation removes us from one manner of life into another (Col.1:13). We are saved from lawlessness for good works. One's life is going to be characterized by works of one sort or another. As James' Epistle observes so well, "faith without works is dead (and idle)". This is truth for all times, and careless works will deny the Lord despite lip-service about faithful­ness (1 Tim.5:8; 2 Tim.3:2-5; Titus 1:16). Those who deny Christ in their walk will be denied places of honor in His heavenly kingdom (2 Tim.2:10-13). Hence Paul endured much suffering to bring the church to maturity, that their faith might bear fruit and not become an empty, intellectual faith.

Those who reject the appropriateness of the Pastoral Epistles for the church today have devalued many sobering truths that could aid us in our walk. While Ephesians and Colossians contain a great deal of practical truth, this is not their main focus. Our completeness in being furnished by the word of God will be commensurate with our use of the completed word. This use should include the practical teaching of Philippians and the Pastoral Epistles, as well as the great foundational epistles, Ephesians and Colossians.

**The Outworking of Godliness**

The emphasis upon practical issues noted in the previous section may be distilled into one word: "godliness" (*eusebeia*). The doctrine of godliness provides a recurring theme throughout the Pastoral Epis­tles. *Eusebeia* and its cognate forms occur mostly in the Pastorals. **17** The Greek word may be rendered literally "well-worship", and it conveys a worshipful attitude that is well-pleasing to God. This attitude should be shown not just in times of prayer or fellowship but in the whole life of the be1iever. "To live is Christ", as Paul sums it up in his Philippian Epistle.

An interesting example of godliness may be taken from Paul's advice on the care of widows:

"... but if any widow have children or descendants, let them learn **to be godly** to their own house first and to render recompense to their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God." 1 Timothy 5:4

The highlighted portion above could be paraphrased: "to worship well as to their own house". The point is that how one treats his parents is both an aspect of worship and a part of the godly life which the grace of God has taught us (Titus 2:11-12). It seems that there is no act too insignificant to be brought into submission to a godly life. Since godliness must be taught by God, it can be received only by the new heart or new man, which baptism has raised within us (Col.2:12­-13). Thus, Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith - this is an aspect of the mystery of godliness, or "God **18**... manifest in the flesh" (Eph.3:16-17; 1 Tim.3:16).

The quality of "soundness" provides a similar, practical emphasis in the Pastorals. From the Greek words used, *hugiainō* and *hugiēs*, our English "hygiene" and "hygienic" are derived. The same Greek words are used in connection with physical health in such places as Matthew 12:13 and 15:31. Thus, it would be no exaggeration to say that the Pastoral Epistles are much concerned with spiritual hygiene, as a characteristic of the godly life. Spiritual soundness, as it relates to "doctrine", "words" and "faith" in the epistles, gives the inner-strength necessary to walk faithfully. **19**

The practical disposition of the Pastoral Epistles is further amplified by numerous exhortations, employing such words as "grave" **20** (or "dignified" ), "sober" **21**, "prudent" **22**, and "faith ... love ... endurance". **23**

The relative importance of faith in these epistles, as compared with love, is noteworthy. The word "faith" (*pistis*) is found 33 times, and "faithful" (*pistos*) 17 times. By comparison the various words for "love" and "beloved" **24** occur only 15 times, or about a third as often. We learn from 1 Corinthians 13 that of the three virtues, faith, hope and love, the greatest is love. Although love may have been what the Corinthian church fell short in, we should not fail to note the overshadowing emphasis that Paul placed on faith as he neared the end of his course. The reason for this shift of emphasis is that a time of faithlessness and false teaching was ushering in. The accent on faith certainly does not lighten the lesson of love provided by the sacrifice of our loving Saviour. All who belong to Christ should emulate His loving attitude (Phi.2:5-8).

The word "faith" in Scripture often has reference to the act of believing, which enables the believer for outworkings of faith (that is, "faithfulness" in one's walk). "Faith" may also refer to what is believed in. Even in the Pastoral passages where the content of faith is dealt with, few details are provided as to what the faith is about. Consequently, we need to recognize that the Pastoral Epistles are not able to stand alone doctrinally. The context of "the faith" here must be supplied from other books: in my view Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

As for "endurance", it is the watch-word for those who seek the best of what God is offering to His church. Paul endured all manner of rigors and sufferings for the church's sake, in order for them to learn how to **endure** in the Christian life ("suffer" in 2 Tim.2:12 of the KJV). The reward of reigning with Christ awaits all who live out their spiritual lives with endurance. The race for this heavenly prize differs greatly from those contests which yield worldly prizes. Whether one places first or second or even last is of little account. All who finish the course, enduring faithfully and lovingly until the end, will win the crown of their calling (Phi.3:14; 2 Tim.4:7-8).

The use of the words "truth" and "teaching" in the Pastoral mes­sage is analogous to the use of "faith". The substance of theological truths is not Paul' s emphasis in these letters. "Truth" is mentioned 14 times, but always as it relates to the believer's walk or his handling of the word of truth.

Several variations of the words "teach" and "doctrine" will be found of interest. Throughout the three epistles, warnings against false teaching are contrasted with a commitment to sound teaching. Thus the epistles' treatment extends to both "teachers of good" (*kalodidaskalos* in Titus 2:3) and those who "teach otherwise" (*heterodidaskaleō* in 1 Tim.1:3; 6:3). "The sound teaching" **25** is referred to several times, usually in a practical vein, and often lacking details as to doctrinal content. This "sound teaching" should be identified with the "good teaching" in which Timothy had closely followed the apostle's example (1 Tim.4:6). Paul also calls this "my teaching" in 2 Timothy 3:10. In addition to his apostleship to the nations, Paul was a "teacher of nations". **26**  He once prophesied about a time when attention would shift toward heaps of teachers, who would not follow the apostle's teaching but rather "teachings of demons" (2 Tim.4:2-4; 1 Tim.4:1-2). Several of Paul's warnings indicate that false teachings would be Judaistic or ascetic in nature. **27** Besides the references already cited, the emphasis on teaching extends to several other passages, **28** each with a practical viewpoint.

It should be apparent that the Pastoral Epistles are concerned to a large extent with teaching teachers. Besides "committing" (*paratithēmi*) **29** charges to Timothy and Titus to keep as good "deposits" (*parathēkē*), **30** Paul had other ministers in mind. Thus he counseled Timothy to search out those who were "apt to teach" (*didaktikos*). Once again we should note the difference in scope between the two letters to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 3:2 it was aptness to teach in a prospective pastor that was Paul's concern. Later, in 2 Timothy, Paul did not discuss pastoral appoint­ments at all, instructing instead that the deposit be committed to "faithful men" who would be competent to teach also (2:2). In 2 Timo­thy 2:24 it is simply "a slave of the Lord" who should be apt to teach. The pastoring field is still indicated, despite the nonde­script titles "faithful men" and "slave of the Lord". With the disruption of authority in the church, as evidenced in 2 Timothy 1:15 and 4:10, the formal appointment of ministers came to have little meaning. False teachers were gaining ground quickly, so it became incumbent upon the servants of truth to imitate the Lord's meekness,

while resisting the lie without violence (2 Tim.2:24-25). Decidedly, the message of the Pastoral Epistles is suited for faithful saints who are well founded in doctrine and sufficiently exercised in their walk to withstand evil circumstances. A responsible servant of the Lord must have the self-discipline of an athlete, the hardening of a soldier and the patience of a farmer to wait for the fruit of his 1abor (2 Tim.2:3-6). This word of faith is for faithful ones who are eager to teach and share with others, yet able also to stand alone and defend the truth when there is none to help but the Lord (2 Tim.4:16-17).

**The Leaven of Ungodliness**

We noted briefly in an earlier place how Paul's prophecies were meant to ward off corrupting influences from the church. The counter­ing of false doctrine forms another great emphasis of the Pastoral Epistles. The "power of darkness" had unleashed many foes against the truth, especially from among Jewish Christians. Some of these Christians of the circumcision were unable to break with Mosaic Law after the revelation of the Mystery. For believing Israel after the Cross, the ancient law of Moses had continued to provide an inspiring heritage. **31** Although the "Gentile" graft of the Acts period was exempted from the law, they were required to keep the four ordinances (Acts 15:18-19). But God's moral law was already written in their hearts through the indwelling Christ­ spirit (Heb.10:16). In like manner it is written in our hearts today. Where the church today is concerned, all the old ordinances have been blotted out (Eph.2:14-15; Col.2:14-17). To lay claim to Judaistic things, including all rites and ordinances, would be a shameful work for us. **32** In view of these admonitions against a Judaized faith, we need to exercise great care in arriving at dispensational conclusions about the books of the Bible.

After Acts 28 certain empty-headed persons began waxing bold, making themselves out to be teachers of the law (1 Tim.1:6-10). Paul informs us that there is a "lawful" use of the law, but not for application to the saints. Its use is limited to lawless and godless men (all those "in Adam"), against whose sin the law will contrast the righteousness of God. Note in 2 Peter 2:8 that the deeds of Sodom are called "lawless", so a law more ancient than Mosaic Law was being breached there. In the world, the fear of the law embodied in human statutes is often the only deterrent to crime. If there is an application to the saints, it is to illuminate what should be written in our hearts, which seems to be the purpose of citing the fifth commandment in its fulness in Ephesians 6:1-3 **33**. A similar case must be made for "unclean" (*akathartos*) persons. Of the 192 occurrences of this word in the LXX and NT, the vast majority (191) deal with matters of ritual impurity or new covenant extensions of this Mosaic concept. The one exception is noted in Ephesians 5:5, where it teaches that an unclean person has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. This sense of uncleanness must be more pristine than the uncleanness dealt with in Mosaic Law.

The great freedom we enjoy as God's redeemed does not permit us to walk disorderly or lawlessly (Col.2:5). This is no prescription for legalism but an exhortation to walk carefully and accurately (or "cir­cumspectly" as in Eph.5:15 - *akribōs*). Saul of Tarsus, a "Pharisee of the Pharisees" with "a zeal of God but not according to knowledge", had walked in a similar manner before his conversion to Christ. He later described Phariseeism as "the **most straitest** (*akribestatos*) sect of our religion" (Acts 26:5). Armed with knowledge of the word of God rightly divided, ours will be a proper or "lawful" zeal of God.

In a similar vein, to contend "lawfully" for the crown of faith means to use the "dispensationally circumspect" approach to win divine approval (2 Tim.2:5,15). There is no legalism here, only a realiza­tion that each dispensation comes equipped with its own house-rules. A good servant does not dictate to his master, but accepts his master's word as law.

Some Pastoral texts indicate that dietary prohibitions were making inroads into the pure faith of Christ. Compare the alien teachings described in 1 Timothy 4 and Titus 1 with the false doctrines warned against in Colossians 2.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving ..." 1 Timothy 4:1-4

"For there are many unruly, and vain talkers and deceivers, spe­cially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. ... Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abom­inable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:10-16

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to

perish with the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things, indeed, have a show of wisdom in a would-be religion and humility and austerity toward the body, not of any value to remedy the indulgence of the flesh." Colossians 2:20-23

These texts speak with one voice in condemning dietary legalism, which was to find full measure soon in the asceticism of the Gnostics. Those who promote harsh treatment of the body as a means to attain deeper spirituality are misguided. Such things as fasts and vigils may have their own practical value, but as religious observances they will only indulge the flesh, not restrain it.

Doctrinal errors besides legalism were to be guarded against also. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught falsely that the resurrection was already past (2 Tim.2:17-18). Denial of the resurrection was a feature common to various Gnostic sects, whose philosophical systems matured about a generation after Paul's passing. An incipient form of Gnosti­cism appears to have threatened the faith during Paul's last years.

Among the tenets of the Gnostics was the belief in various levels, or "aeons", of existence. Life force was believed to emanate from the good God at one extreme, diffusing down by stages into the evil, material world at the other extreme. Between these antithetical extremes were proposed the mediating aeons, which included: Jehovah, various types of spirit-beings including angels, Jesus Christ, men, animals and plant life. Whether the teaching of the "one Mediator" in 1 Timothy 2:5, as well as the prohibition against "endless genealo­gies" in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Titus 3:9, were meant to dispel these fables is difficult to say with certainty. Colossians 2:18 seems to complement this line of reasoning, with its prohibition against angelic worship. These passages might also have been anti-Judaistic pronouncements, in view of the mediatory role of the angels under the covenants, the mediating priesthood of Israel, and the covenantal emphasis upon genealogy.

Gnostic philosophy was a scheme designed to deny its adherents direct access to the Father through Christ. This clearly contradicts Ephesians 2:8 and is warned against also by Colossians 2:18. **34** A further warning against Gnostic ideas may be found in "the profane, empty babblings and oppositions of the falsely-named knowledge" (1 Tim.6:20). The oppositions (*antitheses*) of this so-called "know­ledge" (*gnosis*) seems to be a double reference to Gnostic heresy. The claim of having attained an esoteric spiritual knowledge and the belief in spirit-matter dualism (spirit and matter are the *antitheses*) both formed part of their creed. Irenaeus named his treatise against Gnos­ticism, ***Refutation and Overturning of the Falsely-named Knowledge***, because he understood Paul to refer to their false doctrines in 1 Timothy 6:20. **35**

The mention of magicians Jannes and Jambres in 2 Timothy 3:8 is perhaps another indication that Paul was battling the seeds of Gnosticism. Many of the Gnostic teachers employed magic in their schemes of error. It is interesting that in his ***Refutation*** Irenaeus discusses the speculations of the Samaritan sorcerer Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-25) along with those of Valentinus and other Gnostics. In fact Irenaeus believed Simon to be the father of Gnosticism. **36** Among Simon's false teachings was a belief that resurrection was experienced solely at baptism. This may have given rise to the error of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

Doubtless there were many other types of error fermenting in that philosophically blasé world. Paul warned the Colossians against those who would steal them away by means of "philosophy and vain deceit" (Col.2:8). Similarly he counseled Timothy and Titus to be on guard against those who indulged in "fables" **37**, "profane, empty babblings" **38**, "questionings" (i.e., speculations - a favorite Gnostic pastime) **39**, "word-battles" **40**, "vain-talking" **41**, or who were otherwise "corrupted in the mind" **42**, "puffed up" **43** (intellectual arrogance was another Gnostic trait) and busybodies going from house to house. **44** They were further advised to be vigilant against those who were driven by a "love of money" **45** or by "diverse passions". **46** These are the more frequently used phrases by which Paul described the heaps of false teachers who were about to corrupt the church. Their methods were already turning aside some of the faithful, causing their faith to suffer shipwreck.

As seen above, the Pastoral Epistles and Colossians have much common ground in their refutation of error. This alone does not prove that the Pastoral Epistles belong to the church today, but it lends a strong testimony nonetheless. Fully twenty-five percent of the Pastor­al message is devoted to warnings against false teachers and their teachings. This may be a significant factor in determining to what period of Paul's career the Pastoral Epistles belong. Earlier in his course Paul had to teach vigorously against those who attempted to Judaize the Gentiles. Even so, the practice of Judaism during Acts was valid for Christianized Jews and was no "fable". The pre-Gnostic systems grew in strength during the latter part of Paul's apostleship. Like­wise the opposition to Paul and his gospel grew keener toward the end of his ministry. Therefore, the suddenness with which doctrinal dark­ness overshadowed post-apostolic Christendom comes as no surprise. In view of this spiritually bleak future, one would expect Paul to finish his preaching with many words of warning. With grievous warnings he had departed from the Ephesian elders for the last time (Acts 21:25-31), and in similar manner he departs from the scene of Scripture with the Pastoral Epistles. In spite of the differences that exist between apostolic times and our times, the Pastoral Epistles are still appropriate for us today. Indeed, their message is essential for all Christians who are concerned with growing into spiritual maturity.

***Four:* SOME DOCTRINAL ASPECTS CONSIDERED**

Although the bulk of the Pastoral Epistles is filled with practi­cal truth, we are able to discern nuances of dispensational truth if we look carefully. The search for the God-to-man relationship in a text is a good starting point for dispensational study. If, for example, we should find Christ set forth as the "King of Israel" in a book of Scripture, we shall know that the dispensational aspects of that book are not addressed to us, the body of Christ. We would then be careful how we handled any of the privileges and blessings described there.

In attempting to establish that the Pastoral Epistles are also Mystery Epistles, one will search in vain for any references to Christ as "Head" of the church. If this title of Christ were present, the link to Ephesians and Colossians would be as plain as day. We do find Christ called "the King eternal" and "the King of kings and Lord of lords", but without reference to His kingship of Israel (1 Tim.1:17; 6:15). I shall defer discussion of Christ as King until a little later.

Perhaps this investigation will be rewarded if we adopt for the moment a man-to-God rather than a God-to-man perspective. We have already found the epistles to be heavily slanted toward the sphere of man's participation in the church. The "church" is mentioned only twice in the Pastorals, both times in the third chapter of 1 Timothy. There we find:

"But if one knows not [how] to rule his own house, *how* shall he care for God's **church**?"

1 Timothy 3:5

"But if I should delay, that you may know *how* it behooves one to conduct himself in God's house, which is the living God's **church**: a pillar ..." 1 Timothy 3:15

In the two verses above, note the emphasis on the word "how" - how to care for and how to apply edifying conduct toward God's church. The "what" of this church's charter is not directly addressed anywhere in the Pastoral Epistles, but might be supplied from epistles dealing with the Headship of Christ. Ephesians and Colossians both bring out the "mystery" (or "secret", *musterion*) aspect of God's redemptive plan. In this stage of God's overall plan the Lord Jesus Christ be­came Head over heavenly and earthly things (Eph.1:9-10). The heavenly things pertain to angelic principalities and powers, and earthly things to the church the body of Christ. I would also add earthly powers, because He is now Head of all principality and power (Col.2:10 in the light of Col.1:16). During this "dispensation of the fulness of the seasons" God has singled out the church to know the mystery of His will. This mystery concerns God's dispensation for the nations apart from Israel's hope and kingdom. The inheritance for the new body of believers will be in a place called "the heavenlies", currently occupied by principalities and powers. In "the dispensation of the mystery" (as it is also known) there is no place for the earthly covenants or the earthly aspirations of Israel. The overcomers of Israel will eventually receive a heavenly inheritance also, in the form of a new capital city which will descend to the earth (Rev.21:2). But New Jerusalem hardly begins to compare with the place promised to the multi-national church in the heavenly Holy of Holies at the Father's right hand.

Since the church which is His body is the subject of a divine secret, hid in God in ages past (Col.1:25-26), we should not be surprised to find the words "church" and "mystery" associated together in the Mystery Epistles. **47** Thus, it seems more than coincidental that the only two occurrences of "mystery" in the Pastoral Epistles are found in context with two occurrences of the word "church":

"Ministers likewise dignified, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy, holding *the mystery of the faith* with a pure conscience." 1 Timothy 3:8-9

(context in vv.1-13, "church" in v.5)

" a pillar and base of the truth and confessedly great is *the mystery of godliness*; which (or the variant reading 'God') was manifested in flesh, was justified in spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among nations, was believed on in the world, was received up in glory."

1 Timothy 3:16

(context in vv.14-16, "church" in v.15)

The former text mentions "the mystery of the faith" without explanation, and presumably it would already have been understood and held fast by the reader. The context binds together the mysteries of verses 9 and 16, and the chapter as a whole concerns itself with the pastoral edification of the church. The mystery of "godliness" (literally *good piety* or *worshipfulness* - not Godlikeness) is synopsized in a series of six short statements, preceded by a declaration of purpose. Its purpose was to teach Timothy, and all his fellow-stewards, how to conduct their spiritual business in the church of God.

Both expressions of “the mystery” in 1 Timothy 3 are emphatic (doubly determinate) in having two articles. This is not apparent in the second expression, which is literally “the mystery of the piety.” The effect in idiomatic English is possibly equivalent to making these formal titles with capitalized nouns. Thus these might be rendered the Mystery of the Faith, and the Mystery of the Piety. The context in 1 Timothy and the other Pastorals concerning the Faith and the Piety **48** will help our understanding of these two expressions of the Mystery. Furthermore, 1 Timothy 3:16 provides an immediate six-fold definition of the Mystery of the Piety that is right at the heart of this epistle’s message. The fact that six elements compose the Mystery of the Piety indicates their application to an imperfect humanity **49**. The Mystery of the Faith, although very determinate, seems less defined here in 1 Timothy, so it should find its definition elsewhere. This finite expression in 1 Timothy must be equivalent either to the Mystery which is the main teaching of Ephesians and Colossians, or to some other previously defined mystery of Scripture. Other candidates might include: a) the mysteries of the kingdom (pl. in Mat.13:11; Luk.8:10; sing. in Mar.4:11); b) the mystery of Israel’s blindness (Rom.11:25) and the subsequent mystery of Gentile acceptance, revealed by the prophets but also silenced for age-times (Rom.16:25-26); c) the mystery of God concerning the Christ (1 Cor.2:1-8, Eph.3:4; Col.4:3): d) the mystery of the rapture (1 Cor.15:51); e) the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thes.2:7); f) the mystery of the seven stars (Rev.1:20); the mystery of God concerning the time of “Jacob’s Trouble” (Rev.10:7); or g) the mystery of Babylon the Great (Rev.17:3-13). The two strong candidates are the mystery concerning Christ personal and the mystery concerning Christ among the nations: the hope of heavenly glory (Eph.-Col.), and a lesser candidate is the mystery of God’s acceptance of the nations during the Acts period.

The majority view holds that the mystery of godliness is the mystery of God incarnate. But is it possible to learn church conduct from the earthly life of Christ, without being more specific than 1 Timothy 3:16 as to His conduct? There is much that Jesus did and said in the flesh that needs to be rightly divided before we can apply it to ourselves today. For instance, the signs, miracles and judgments that He worked fulfilled the covenant righteousness of God, but they have no place in the dispensation of grace. We should beware of seeking to imitate these acts of Christ. However, the more general aspects of His walk are to be imitated, and this includes His great

love and humility as set forth in Philippians 2:1-8.

If the majority view is true, then we seem to be presented with a sequence of six activities pertaining to Christ in the flesh and in resurrection. The natural inclination would be to take the series as a chronological account of the life of Christ, up to some present point of time. But this would place the “proclaiming to the nations” prior to His ascension into heaven, which makes no sense concerning Him Who was “minister of the circumcision” (Rom.15:8) right to the end of the Acts period (*ginomai* in 15:8 is in the perfect tense). Then there is the aspect “seen by angels.” Angels were not passively standing by to observe what Jesus said and did – they were active participants in the drama (Mat.1:20 through 28:5, and the other Gospels). In fact where seeing (*horaō*) is concerned, the Scripture says only that Jesus saw angels (Luk.22:43).

**The Church of God**

The expression "church of God" is found frequently in both the book of Acts and the Acts period epistles of Paul. Therefore, some are accus­tomed to using it as a technical term for the covenant church of the Acts period. Based on this reasoning the Pastoral Epistles must be viewed as Acts period Scriptures and not Mystery Epistles, because they use the phrase also. But a review of the twelve occurrences of "church of God" reveals that the majority are used to indicate a local assembly, a single church group . **50** Similarly, it is used in 1 Timothy 3 to signify local churches in general.

In every dispensation those whom God calls to membership in a church (be it a *sunagōgē* or an *ekklēsia*) become His peculiar posses­sion. **51** Consequently we find all the families of the redeemed named after the Father and bearing His seal, regardless of dispensation (Eph.3:14-15). Because of this divine possessiveness it is certainly reasonable to take "church of God" as a generic term, meaning "a church belonging to God ".

The expression "church of the *living God*" in 1 Timothy 3:15 may bring to mind the covenant relationship between Jehovah and Israel. In the first occurrence of the divine title "living God", Israel were filled with terror at hearing the living God's voice out of the fire on Mt. Sinai (Deu.5:22-26). The Lord God spoke to them with a living voice, as no dumb idol had ever done. Idolatry was still rampant 1,500 years later in Paul's day, and it would seem natural to find the Hebrew idiom "living God" coming from such "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" as he (Phi.3:5). Many other Hebraisms in Paul's Greek betray his Semitic origins, so expressions like "living God" and O.T. quotes in the Pauline epistles should be viewed as the norm. **52**

Although infrequent, we do find some direct quotes from the O.T. in the Mystery Epistles. An interesting example of this in Ephesians 6:1-3 repeats not only the commandment to obey parents but also the accompanying promise of prolonged life. A similar promise of length of days from the life-giving God had followed Israel's fearful response to the Sinai epiphany (Deu.5:33). These associations between Ephesians and the books of Moses no more invalidate the uniqueness of the Ephesian letter for the post-covenant dispensation, than do similar Hebraisms in the Pastoral Epistles.

"Living God" is used twice more in 1 Timothy. In 6:17 the riches showered upon us by the living God are contrasted with the idolatry of riches, which is covetousness. **53** Finally in 4:10, the living God has promised us a new life, both now in the present body of flesh and also for the coming age in resurrection (v.8). This life-giving Sav­iour was Himself put to death, but now lives forever in resurrection glory.

We need to be careful with expressions like "church of God" and "living God", lest we too hastily base a restrictive doctrine on a word or phrase of more general application in Scripture. The result may overly confine and thus, wrongly divide the word of truth.

**The Kingship of Christ**

A word or two needs to be said about Christ in the role of King. The glory life of our Saviour King is the subject of the two doxologies in 1 Timothy.

"Now unto the King of the ages, **incorruptible**, invisible, only God, [be] honor and glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen. " 1 Timothy 1: 17

"... the happy and only Sovereign (or 'Powerful One'), the King of those reigning as kings and Lord of those ruling as lords; Who alone has **immortality**, dwelling in unapproachable light, Whom not one man did see or is able to see; to Whom [be] honor and age-abiding might. Amen." 1 Timothy 6:15-16

The glory due to our Saviour God, raised "incorruptible" and "immor­tal", is here associated with His being the most exalted of kings. Not only is Christ now sovereign over all spheres of authority and power (that is, a King over kings and Lord over lords), but His glorious kingship is the direct result of His former humility and obedience.

"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:8-11

In the Philippian text above note that "every knee" is more extensive than in the Romans 14:11 and Isaiah 45:23 descriptions. Romans and Isaiah are not concerned with "things in heaven", as the Mystery Epistles are.

It is distinctive that 1 Timothy 6:16 says that no one has seen (*eidon*) Christ in this particular role of kingship. Then Whom did Stephen see (*eidon*) in Acts 7:55-56? Was it “unapproachable light” that struck Saul in Acts 9:3 (and see 1 Cor.15:8)? It seems that the visibility of Christ and His light spoken of in 1 Timothy 6 exceed that of the Acts period. From this I infer that Christ’s ascent “far above all” took place **after Acts** and **before 1 Timothy** were revealed to men.

The ultimate dominion of Christ extends far beyond the narrow earthly scope envisioned by John in the Revelation. John describes his Saviour as "King of kings and Lord of lords" in Revelation 19:16 and 17:14. Frequent references elsewhere to "the kings of the earth" **54** show that the covenant kingship of Christ has only the earth in view. In contrast, 1 Timothy uses a more lavish expression: literally, "King of those reigning as kings and Lord of those exercis­ing lordship". The purpose of this emphasis is to exalt the ascended, heavenly-enthroned Christ. Such a title is more in keeping with Him Who is “far above all principality and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named” both now and in the coming age (Eph.1:21), because by Him and for Him were created all heavenly and earthly “thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities” (Col.1:16). When Paul was commissioned to make known the Mystery, he taught that in heaven as well as on earth Christ rules supreme where His church is concerned. The seats of authority subor­dinated to Christ include "thrones" (the emblem of kingship), every one that can be named, whether visible or invisible, whether earthly or heavenly (Eph.1:20-23; Col.1:16). Thus we should recognize that the fulness of Christ our Head in this fulness of times includes the most excellent Principality, Authority, Power, Lord and King (Eph.1:9-10). Unique to the revelation of the Mystery is the heavenly participa­tion of a church knit together with Christ in His glory. The union of Christ and His church is so compact that Christ the Head is seen as incomplete without His body the church. The saints of this body of Christ are described as both presently translated into His kingdom (Col.1:13) and prospectively awaiting a future inheritance there (Eph.5:5). There is no contradiction at all between the kingship of Christ, which places Him over all authority, and the headship of Christ, which knits Him together "with" His church. Our being seated together "in Christ" on His throne (*sunkathizō* in Eph.2:6) is best explained in terms of a co-regency. We have been raised and seated with the Lord Jesus Christ so as to share His dominion "far above all principality and power". This pinnacle of revealed truth is reinforced by doctrine from 2 Timothy.

"Faithful [is] the word: for if we **died together**, we shall also **live together**; if we endure, we shall also **reign together** (literally '**be king together'**); if we deny [Him], He also will deny us ..." 2 Timothy 2:11-12

It is noteworthy that this text includes three of the seven stages of our spiritual identification with Christ: dying, living and reigning with Him. **55** The three verbs used are emphatic, being compounded with the preposition *sun*. **56** *Sun* denotes the strongest possible union and might be rendered "in conjunction with".

The "overcomers" of Israel are also depicted in Scripture as reigning with Christ, but this will be on earth for a thousand years only (Rev.20:4,6). Their dominion will be more an embassy than a co-­regency. Israel is to exercise a priesthood to the nations in connection with this less emphatic reign with Christ (*basileuō meta*). *Meta* conveys a less binding association than *sun* and may mean "after" or "in accompaniment with". This choice of words by the Holy Spirit implies a greater exaltation for the church in its heavenly reign with Christ the Head, than for the Millennial reign of Israel with the Son of David.

Although Ephesians and Colossians make no direct reference to Christ as "King", the indirect evidence of His kingdom and throne cannot be ignored. We have already noted the church's present trans­lation into His kingdom (Col.1:13), and what kingdom can stand without a king? The very name Christ means "anointed" and may signify the office of king or priest. Christ's role as the Anointed One for His church today includes both offices. We have already seen how His kingship includes a gracious co-regency, and His priesthood is equally fundamental to the church. Without rite or vestment, Christ offered Himself as the Great Sacrifice on our behalf, to secure for us righteousness unto life eternal (Eph.5:2,25; 1 Tim.2:5­-6; Titus 2: 3-14). Where the church is concerned, the Lord Jesus Christ has been made "all things": He is "the fulness" (Eph.l:23; 4:15: Col.3:11). Out of His fulness, Christ Jesus is given unto us as Head, Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, Priest, King and Lord.

**Our Hope Manifested**

The eschatology of the Pastoral Epistles is often confused with the Second Advent of Christ. This is not surprising, in view of how few Christians make a clean break between the heavenly and earthly programs of God. One of the great events of the earthly program concerns Israel, the head of all the earthly families (Gen.12:3).

When Christ returns to earth, He will rescue Israel from calamity after three and a half years of great tribulation. At that time the covenant church will be transformed into resurrection bodies and will be transported to meet the Lord in the air as He descends (1 Thess. 4:15-17; 1 Cor.15: 50-53). This atmospheric gathering of the flock of Israel will occur when Christ returns to establish the Millennial Kingdom. The Mystery Church, on the other hand, will meet the Lord in a resurrection far above all the heavens. This will occur in a manner unspecified and at a time not even hinted at by the prophets of old:

"For you died, and your 1ife has been hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life may be manifested, then also will you be manifest­ed with Him in the Glory." Colossians 3:3-4

The final aspect of our sevenfold identification with Christ will be to appear with (*phaneroō sun*) Him in the heavenly Glory. This glory constitutes not only a state but a place (described elsewhere as "the Holies" **57**) which is to be identified with the Temple in heavenly places.

At "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (*apokalupsis*) every eye on earth will see Him (Rev.1:7), but His co-manifestation with the church will be witnessed only in the super-heavens where He now sits on the Father's throne. The essence of this manifestation for the church will be the bodily attainment of that fulness which is presently a spiritual reality through the new man. It needs to be recognized that the church already manifests His glory, in anticipation or that great day:

"... that He might present it to Himself the en-gloried church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it might be holy and blameless." Ephesians 5:27

Elsewhere the attributes of perfection are imputed to the church as present realities, based upon the finished work of Christ (Eph.1:4; Col.1:22; 3:12).

For now, the church reflects the in-worked glory of Christ, but in due season the Lord will shine forth in Person all the fulness that is in Him bodily (Col.1:19; 2:9). A stronger word than "manifest" (*phaneroo*) is found in the Pastoral Epistles to signify this "appear­ing" or "shining forth" (*epiphaneia*) of the Lord in His heavenly Temple. The use of *epiphaneia* is almost exclusive to the three epistles, and a brief survey of the texts will prove worthwhile:

A. "I charge you before God, Who quickens all things, and Christ Jesus, Who witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession, that you keep the commandment spotless, irreproachable until the **appearing** of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in its own seasons will show the blessed and only Sovereign, King of kings ... dwelling in unapproachable light ... " 1 Timothy 6:13-16

B. " Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before age-times, but was manifested now by the **appearing** of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who destroyed death and brought to light life and incorruption through the gospel ..." 2 Timothy 1:9-10

C. "Therefore I testify earnestly before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is about to judge living and dead according to His **appearing** and His kingdom, proclaim the word; be urgent in season, out of season. Convict, rebuke, encourage with all patience and doctrine."

2 Timothy 4:1-2

D. "Henceforth the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord the righteous Judge will render to me in that day, and not only to me but also to all who love His **appearing**."

2 Timothy 4:8

E. "... instructing us that, having denied ungodliness and worldly passions, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age, awaiting the blessed hope, even the **appearing** of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ... " Titus 2:12-13

Texts A, C, D and E encourage us to persevere in good works until the epiphany of the righteous Judge, Who will judge living and dead saints at their entry into "His heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18). From these facts we may infer an analogy with the "Rapture" of Israel: some dead will be raised and some living transformed into glorious bodies to appear at that judgment seat. But for the Mystery church the resurrection union with Christ will take place in the heavenlies in the (now) unapproachable light (l Tim.6:16), rather than in the sky over the earth. That a works-based judgment awaits saints in the body of Christ is confirmed by Colossians 3:24-25.

Text B above does not look forward to this future event, but backward to an earlier epiphany of Christ. Many are accustomed to celebrate "the Epiphany" for an anniversary of remembrance of the Incarnation. However, this epiphany in 2 Timothy 1 is not simply the incarnation of Christ but includes His whole life's work as it relates to the church. **58** Although the work of Jesus Christ began with Israel, it culminated in salvation for His body the church. This saving grace was "given us in Christ Jesus before age-times" **59**, but it had yet to be worked out and revealed in time. Our salvation was paid for at the Cross, as was Israel's. However, the time of its revelation was deferred until after Acts 28, and this shining forth of the risen, ascended Christ in the minds of men forms the climax of the first epiphany.

The two epiphanies of Christ have been assigned their own appropriate times, at the beginning and the end of the present dispensation. The diagram of the word "seasons" (*kairoi*) given below reinforces this view of the two appearings of Christ our Head.

A. Himself a ransom for all, the testimony **in due seasons** 1 Timothy 2:6

B. in later **seasons** some will fall away from the faith 1 Timothy 4:1

C. the *appearing* ... **in due seasons** will show the King of kings 1 Timothy 6:14-15

*B.* in the last days will come difficult **seasons** 2 Timothy 3:1

*A.* *manifested* **in due seasons** His word in the proclamation Titus 1:3

The phrase "in due seasons" (*kairois idiois*), exclusive to the three passages (A,C,*A*), describes times of divine opportunity, known and appointed by God. In tracing the progress of God's established seasons, one discovers the means used (the two epiphanies) to initi­ate and to consummate this dispensation of grace. During the gap framed by these boundaries He has allowed man the freedom to follow his own course. For believers this course will include the good works God has prepared for us to walk in (Eph.2:10). Summing up the diagram above, the present age of grace began with a marvelous new revela­tion from God, which provided the capstone both of Scripture and of Paul's apostolic career (A, *A*). Next, the church age passed through spiritually careless times, which began as Paul was departing (B). The apostasy of the church will eventually come to a head in some last difficult days (*B*). But finally all the stumblings of the church will be overshadowed by the great day of Christ, when He is manifested in the Glory (C).

This analysis would not be complete without a comment on the remaining occurrence of *epiphaneia*:

"... and then will be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the **shining forth** (*epiphaneia*) of His **coming** (*parousia*) ..."

2 Thessalonians 2:8

A difference between this passage and the doctrine of the Pastorals should be noted. The *epiphaneia* of His *parousia* will destroy "the lawless one", who is also "the Beast" of Revelation 13. When applied to Christ, *parousia* is a technical term describing His kingly "presence" on earth at the Second Advent. There is, however, no coming of the Lord to earth either expressed or implied in the Pastoral Epistles.

A final text employing the adjectival form of *epiphaneia* applies to Israel, as attested by its use in Joel's prophecy:

"... and I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and **notable** (*epiphanes*) day of the Lord comes." Acts 2:19-20

Because of its varied usage, the term *epiphaneia* cannot be restricted dispensationally. But with the help of the context, including expres­sions like "His heavenly kingdom", we are able to keep its use in the Pastoral message separate from its use in the covenant epistles of Paul. "That blessed hope" centering on "the epiphany of the glory of the great God" is not the earthly hope of Israel. And "that day" in which Paul will receive his crown is not "the day of the Lord". However, the Spirit's choice of the word *epiphaneia* to describe one future hope, and *epiphaneia* of His *parousia* to depict another, suggest a connection between the two events - perhaps one follows the other closely in time.

Although Christ's judgment of the saints is mentioned in the Pastorals, a sense of its imminence is lacking. In Paul we find an urgent tone in connection with a time of judgment solely in his Acts period epistles. His urgency in 2 Timothy was due to the shortness of time left in which to wrap up his apostleship.

Timothy was instructed to keep Paul's commands until the epiphany, even as all the faithful are to long after His "appearing" (1 Tim.6:14; 2 Tim.4:8). Rather than implying that the Lord would manifest Himself soon, these passages are supplied for the encouragement of the saints that they remain faithful to the very end of their course. The need for encouragement also helps explain the good work God will perform in us "until the day of Christ" (Phi.1:6, 10). Endowed with the spirit of Christ, we should continue in a pure and inoffensive walk, which will merit a crown from the Righteous Judge when He reviews our works "in that day". We trust Him to keep account of our deposit of good works until that day of judgment (2 Tim.1:12).

Since there is no detailed timetable of prophetic events connected with the church's end-time, the second epiphany could have come at almost any time, as far as we can tell. It will proceed at a time of God's own choosing and we are not to live anxiously over it, but expectantly awaiting our day in glory with Christ.

***FIVE:* THE FINALITY OF PAUL'S SITUATION IN 2 TIMOTHY**

Although many Christians have taken 2 Timothy to be Paul's last epistle, this view is not shared by all. Some have seen in Paul's request that Timothy arrive before winter (4:21), bringing books and parchments (4:13), the delay necessary for him to receive and disseminate the revelation of the Mystery. Others have understood Paul's deliverance from lions and every wicked work (4:17-18) as an indication that he was ultimately freed. This inference, if true, would provide a strong basis for placing 2 Timothy toward the end of Paul's first visit to Rome, with the dispensational boundary falling some time after Acts 28:31. Ephesians and Colossians would then have been written during a subsequent imprisonment. Still others have tried to introduce the events of 2 Timothy well back into the Acts period, to coincide with Paul's two year imprisonment in Caesarea. This theory is easily dismissed as contrary to Paul's account of being visited in Rome by Onesiphorus (2 Tim.1:16-17). No journey to Rome took place before Paul's Caesarean detention.

I propose to demonstrate that the second epistle to Timothy is the last word of Scripture, whereby Paul was given "to complete the word of God" (Col.1:25). As the last book, it would necessarily follow that 2 Timothy belongs to the dispensation of the Mystery. Because of the doctrinal and linguistic ties that bind the three Pastoral Epistles, if one of the books is accepted as Scripture peculiar to the church, then all three should be recognized as such.

A gloomy outlook pervades 2 Timothy, but this is in no way attrib­utable to bitterness on Paul's part due to his situation. For him "to live (was) Christ, and to die ... gain". By comparison, the Old

Covenant Scriptures had ended on a similarly negative note, with the failure and setting aside of Israel in 2 Chronicles 36:14-21. Although the events of Chronicles do not form the conclusion of the O.T. period, this is the last book of the Hebrew canon. The last chronological O.T. book, Malachi **60**, paints a picture of the Nation abandoning the law of Moses once more. In spite of their apostasy Jehovah promised to restore the people by sending Elijah, and the very last clause of the book reveals the dire alternative: "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse". Although a typological Elijah was sent (Mat.17:11-13) and Messiah Himself came in person, the call to the New Covenant also ended in failure and reproach for Israel (Acts 28:25-29).

Perhaps the church has fared somewhat better than Israel, but even so the Mystery Epistles culminate with the dismal picture and admonishing tones of 2 Timothy. In the previous sections I have attempted to show how the Mystery Church was becoming fragmented from its very foundation up. An attitude of "every man for himself" was beginning to take hold of the church (e.g., see 2 Tim.1:15; 2:16-18 and 4:9-­10). At his death the worst of Paul's prophecies would begin to unfold: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ..." (2 Tim. 4:3-4). In every dispensation the message seems to be that, even with God's help to the contrary, the majority of men are bound to fall short of His high standard. Surely, then, our boast

should be in Christ and not in our own frail persons.

From the final chapter of 2 Timothy we are able to perceive that Paul saw his end coming soon:

"For I am **already being poured out** and the time of my dissolution has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will render to me in that day ... " 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Was Paul mistaken in this assessment of his situation, or were his words prophetic? The process of "being poured out" by the execution­er's blade had begun, in effect, with his present court appearance. Previously in Philippians 2:17 Paul had spoken only hypothetically of being poured out like a drink offering (these are the only NT occurrences of *spendomai*) - but **now** (*ēdē*) the final process of his sacrifice had begun. It is interesting to note a parallel with the Saviour's own sacrifice - "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were **now** (*ēdē*) accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'" (Joh.19:28).

Because he knew he had finished his course, except for the final act of suffering death, Paul was permitted to declare that the crown was already his. His circumstances were growing desperate then, whereas previously he had expected to be released (Phi.l:24-26; 2:23-24; Philem. 22) and was still actively striving for "the Prize" (Phi.3:11-14). Paul's earlier confidence was based on a consensus that he had done nothing worthy of death (Acts 23:29; 25:25; 26:31-32; 28:17-19). However, as the time of his "departure" **61** drew near, the apostle became more urgent in exhorting Timothy to fully carry out (*plerophoreō*) his ministry (2 Tim.4:5). Paul was bringing his own evangel to its con­clusion through his court defense at Rome, and Timothy would soon be left to carry on without his fatherly companion.

"In my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be reckoned to them. But the Lord stood by me and streng­thened me, that through me the proclamation might be fully made (*plerophoreō*) and all the nations should hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. And the Lord will deliver me from every wicked (*ponēros*) work, and will preserve me for His heavenly kingdom ... " 2 Timothy 4:16-18

The prospect of Paul's rescue here poses some difficulties for us. Does deliverance from the lion's mouth mean that he was spared an agonizing death in the arena? Although it was illegal to execute a Roman citizen like Paul in this manner, one could imagine the cruel Nero using almost any means to inflame the Roman mob against Christians. Nero's persecution of Christians, beginning in 64 A.D., employed some especially sadistic methods. Victims were used as human torches or were wrapped in bloody animal skins before being thrown to wild beasts, such as lions. For what it is worth, the tes­timony of tradition has Paul beheaded with a sword **62**, and this was the appropriate form of execution for Roman citizens. If one follows this tradition and interprets deliverance from the lion's mouth literally, he might place Paul's "first (or former) defense" during a first Roman imprisonment, with an acquittal shortly after the start of the persecution. It follows that 2 Timothy would have been written during a subsequent Roman imprisonment. But could a Christian so notable as Paul have been released, while so many lesser figures were being brutalized by Nero? This seems unlikely. If Paul's release came shortly after Acts 28:31 (my position), then it probably preced­ed the outbreak of persecution in 64 A.D.

Whatever Paul may have meant in being delivered from the lion's mouth, he expected to continue being delivered from wicked works and to be saved for the heavenly kingdom. Something other than bodily deliverance is suggested by the expectation of being saved or preserved for the kingdom. Additionally the rest of 2 Timothy, as well as secular history, indicate that Paul was not spared the martyr's baptism. Therefore, a literal "lion's mouth" seems to be the wrong connection for this passage.

We find deliverance from evil works coupled with receiving a kingdom in one other N.T. passage:

" Who delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son ... " Colossians 1:13

The context in Colossians 1:21 adds that we were once alien­ated and enemies in the mind by the "wicked (*ponēros*) works" we practiced, while under the dark power. This power belongs to "the prince of the power of the air", whom Peter likened to "a roaring lion ... seeking whom he may swallow up" (Eph.2:2; 2 Pet.5:8). Note that the evil that we are to resist is spiritual in nature:

" For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this evil (*ponēria*) in the heavenlies." Ephesians 6:12

Trench distinguishes the two major synonyms translated "evil" this way - "in *ponēros* the positive activity of evil comes far more decidedly out than in *kakos*..." **63**. So in the immediate context of Paul's deliverance from every wicked (*ponēros*) work, we find that Alexander had done him much harm or evil (*kakos* in 2 Ti.4:14). Was deliverance from the Alexanders of this world not what he had in mind?

But instead of Satan, "the lion" in 2 Timothy might be seen as a reference to Caesar as king (see Proverbs 19:12; 20:2 and especially 28:15), or to a persecutor after the manner of Psalm 7:1-2. The oppressor of Psalm 7 has been identified with King Saul, **64** and perhaps the lion here in 2 Timothy 4 was meant as a subtle reference to Jewish persecutors after the fashion of Saul of Tarsus. Any of these O.T. interpretations of the lion would have been right at home to a Hebrew mind like Paul's. But the notion of perse­cution by the rulers of the People seems more strongly indicated, because Paul's troubles with the Roman state were instigated by the Jews in the first place. The comparison between Psalm 22 and 2 Timothy 4 in the next section will tend to confirm this interpretation.

A purely spiritual deliverance in 2 Timothy 4 would fit well with the personal trials of Paul, in his abandonment by his friends and the seriousness of the charges against him. Now, more than ever before, it behooved him to speak boldly lest the reproach of the gospel go unanswered. Often in the past, Paul had been called upon to defend both his personal life and his testimony. **65** The burden on him must have been great, indeed, as he stood alone that day to give his answer before Caesar. **66** But we rejoice to learn that the Lord stood with him to give strength, delivering him from pressures that might have crushed him. His "deposit" of reward for faithful service has been preserved until the heavenly kingdom of Christ. Inciden­tally, this heavenly (***ep****ouranios*) kingdom is suggestive more of "the heavenly (***ep****ouranios*) places" of Ephesians than Israel's "kingdom of heaven" (*ouranios*) in the Gospel of Matthew. However, heavenly things (***ep****ouranioi*) do figure in the messages of John's Gospel, 1 Corinthians and Hebrews, so the word is not dispensationally distinctive.

**Paul's Defense**

It will prove helpful to our assessment of Paul's situation in 2 Timothy to investigate the legal causes behind his troubles. This approach will be prone to some guesswork, and the reader will have to judge for himself the plausibility of certain conclusions of mine.

Paul's "first answer", or defense, may imply that several indict­ments were brought against him (2 Tim.4:16). It was Nero's custom to hear and decide each count separately. **67** Apparently a delay in hear­ing the remaining charge (or charges) occasioned the writing of the epistle and the request for Timothy to hasten to Rome. The epistle is not clear as to whether Paul was acquitted of the first charge, or the gospel acquitted of its reproach (i.e., aspersions being cast upon it). Doubtless the courier who bore the letter to Timothy would also have brought all the personal news of Paul not covered by the epistle (cp. Eph.6:21). A full post-Acts chronicle of Paul's stewardship is lacking, so we do not know for sure the nature of the charges against him.

Although the Neronian persecution may seem a likely cause of Paul's troubles in 2 Timothy, that event appears to have been limited to the Christians of Rome. The Roman believers served as scapegoats to take the heat off Nero, who was widely suspected of having ordered the burning of the city in 64 A.D. Some have proposed that a general proscription of Christianity was in force throughout the empire during the latter part of Nero's reign (64-68 A.D.), but the evidence for this is inconclusive. Paul gives no indication in 2 Timothy that the civil authorities were to be feared by Christians in general. "Crimes" unique to Paul seem to have been at the heart of his contro­versy with Rome, and some of his associates became reticent to admit that they knew him personally (2 Tim.1:8, 16). Perhaps this was done out of fear that they would be charged as accessories. But Paul spoke in the first person **singular** concerning the troubles he suffered, so he must have been the primary target (2 Tim.2:9).

The "perilous times" prophecy describes persecution not from secular authorities, but from apostate religious bodies who practice "a form of godliness" (2 Tim.3:1-13; 4:3-4). During the Acts period most of Paul's religious opponents had been Jewish (including some Jewish Christians), and now a wider circle of opposition was coming from "Gentile" Christians whose faith became polluted by Jewish fables. With the setting aside of Israel and the revelation of the Mystery, there were probably some New Covenant Jews whose zeal for the traditions of the law was stronger than their regard for the Apostle of the uncircumcision. The Lord Jesus Himself experienced a similar falling away of followers toward the end of His ministry, as He set His face to finish His course (John 6:66; 12:37). Of course, unconverted Jews continued to trouble Paul as they had during Acts.

It may have been a new charge of wrongdoing connected with his ministry (2 Tim.2:8-9) that brought Paul to Rome the second time, or perhaps it was the continuation of his previous trial. After his release from the first Roman confinement, Paul asked Titus to fetch Zenas the lawyer **68** and Apollos the orator (Titus 3:13). The summoning of Zenas and Apollos might indicate only that Paul foresaw a second legal situation threatening to ensnare him. But the request may also suggest a postponement of the first trial, and it is conceivable that Paul's release was ordered to secure friendly witnesses for his case prior to a final disposition.

Paul's earlier imprisonment had dragged on two years at Caesarea until a change in Roman governorship, and then another two years (minimum) at Rome for reasons unknown to us. Then, as now, justice was sometimes dispensed slowly. Political corruption was partly responsible for the delay at Caesarea (Acts 24:27). The two year delay in Rome could have been occasioned by any of a number of factors, for example:

A. The need for another brief of the case from Festus, because the first may have been lost during the Malta shipwreck.

B. The reluctance of the accusers (legally also the prosecu­tors **69**) to press a case which they could not expect to win. As with Pilate judging Christ, the civil authorities thought Paul to be innocent. The procrastination of the Jewish accusers would serve to further Paul's hardships.

C. The need for the accusers to secure witnesses from the various corners of the empire where Paul had preached.

D. The difficulty of travel on the Mediterranean Sea in winter.

E. Intrigues between the Jews and Poppaea, Nero's Jewish mistress-then-wife, to persuade Nero to find against the defendant.

F. The whim of the Emperor in adhering to his court calendar.

It may prove informative to probe even deeper into Paul's earlier entanglement, to discover if any facts that may shed light on 2 Timothy. The first incident with serious legal ramifications for Paul was instigated by the Jews, in particular some Ephesian Jews who knew Trophimus to be a "Gentile" (Acts 21:27-29). The charge brought against Paul at that time was threefold:

"For having found this man a pest and moving insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a leader of the sect of the Nazarenes, who also attempted to profane the Temple ..." Acts 24:5-6

These three heads of accusation may be explained in the following legal terms:

A. Causing factious disturbances among the Jews worldwide - this amounted to treason (*majestas*) against Rome.

B. A ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes - or heresy against the law of Moses. Judaism was an approved religion, but new religions came under the ban against "new and illicit religions" (*religio nova et illicita*).

C. Attempting to profane the Temple, which was protected under Roman law. Even a Roman caught within its precincts might be put to death.

As to the charges of stirring up insurrection and profaning the Temple, Paul challenged his accusers to produce the evidence (Acts 24:11-21). On the charge of heresy, he claimed the same legal status for his "sect" that the Pharisees and Sadducees enjoyed. At that time Christians looked to the same Scriptures as the Jews for their in­struction, and they held the same resurrection hope as the Pharisees. Paul was very shrewd to seize this opportunity to secure for the Ju­dean churches the protection of the Roman governor. On an earlier charge of heresy brought against Paul by the Jews of Corinth, Gallio had summarily dismissed the case as improper. By not wishing to involve himself in matters of obscure religious interpretation, Gallio had given an implicit legal sanction for the Christian faith in his district.

Similar, if not identical charges may have brought Paul to Rome the second time to face Roman justice. However, because he now preached a gospel unconnected with the covenant promises to Israel, Paul could no longer claim to teach "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come ... " (Acts 26:22; 24:14). If a charge of heresy still weighed against him, his position was less defensible now than before. Considering the madness of the Jews against Paul during Acts (on account of the gospel of the uncircumcision), how much greater would their hostility become when they learned about his new ministry, which excluded Judaism altogether?

I am left with an impression in 2 Timothy of Paul's desire (and the Holy Spirit's) to establish a link, however weak, between the faith of Moses and the Mystery faith. The same God Whom Paul had once worshipped as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he now reverenced as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"I am thankful to God, Whom I serve as did my forefathers with a pure conscience ... "

2 Timothy 1:3

Although the heavenly hope is distinct from all things Jewish, the fact remained that Jesus Christ according to the flesh was an Israelite of noble ancestry:

"Remember Jesus Christ, raised from among the dead, from among David's seed according to my gospel ..." 2 Timothy 2:8 **70**

Even an example of wickedness was taken from the Pentateuch for an analogy to the present enemies of Paul's gospel (Jannes' and Jambre's opposition to Moses in 2 Tim.3:8). The earthly life of the Saviour, as well as all that the law and the prophets spoke concerning Him, are profitable for us to consider, even as we rightly divide the dispensational aspects. The covenant references in 2 Timothy, promoting the idea of one God and one Scripture at the heart of Paul's work, may have been in his thoughts recently as he prepared to answer a charge of introducing a new religion. If he were to succeed in persuading Caesar that Christianity ought still to be considered a

sect of Judaism, then all would be well for Christians throughout the Roman empire.

Under the empire, Rome had become a great melting pot of peoples and religions. As the flavor of Rome became more international, Roman tolerance towards new and illicit religions grew and gave way to an almost Athenian curiosity about them (Acts 17:21). However, this tolerance did not extend for very long toward Christianity. The tide of public opinion began to turn against Christians, and by the end of the first century notable Romans were denouncing it as a criminal sect. **71** While the law proscribing new religions became practically unenforceable during the early empire, it seems plausible that a Christian of Paul's eminence could have been prosecuted under this law after 64 A.D.

In his last page of inspired writing (my position), Paul mentioned that of all his fellow-laborers only Luke was with him (2 Tim.4:11). Luke would have proved vital as a character witness, having been a close com­panion of Paul and a chronicler of his exploits. Compared to some contemporary secular histories, Luke's account in Acts is a paragon of unbiased factuality. Furthermore, the Acts lends itself to an apology of Paul's twofold ministry. Paul is depicted not as an inflammatory demagogue but as a longsuffering servant who was always deferential to the Jews (until they rejected his message). He is shown keeping the law of Moses throughout the book and especially on his last visit to the Temple, which proved so damaging to him (Acts 21:20-26). Paul's sufferings for the sake of the gospel inspire admiration, and his conviction in his work is beyond question. Even the conclusion of the Acts record (which does not draw as sharp a line at Acts 28:28 as some perceive it to have been) emphasizes Paul's continuance in faithful service, rather than ending abruptly on a controversial note: the final pronouncement of Isaiah 6:9-10 falling upon the house of Israel. Providentially this may have lent itself to the book of Acts being introduced as judicial evidence. As such, it could have exonerated Paul of heresy and legitimized the Church before the highest Roman court.

The last third of the book of Acts is devoted to Paul's legal difficulties. Surely the amount of detail afforded these matters gives us a key to the book's purpose: an apologetic of the Pauline ministry. The roots of the Pauline controversy can be traced back to his conversion and ministry to the uncircumcision. Very serious difficulties stemming from the success of the gospel at Ephesus followed some years later (Acts 19:10, 23, 26). The numerous conversions in the province of Asia had led to book burnings and iconoclasm. Because many idolaters gave up worshipping the silver images of Diana, the Ephesian silversmiths suffered financial loss. In their frustration the smiths stirred up a riot that engulfed a large part of city (Acts 19:24-29). Many dispersion Jews had learned to accommodate their pagan neighbors, but this uproar of the idol makers gave a bad odor even to Jewish smiths like Alexander (Acts 19:33-34). In the eyes of these pagans Paul's Christianity was just another Jewish sect. Although Alexander was put forward by the Jews to placate the mob, he would have defended the monotheism of both Jew and Christian, in effect. Later Alexander was to become a bitter foe of Paul, even bringing accusations against him (read "informed many evils" for "did many evils" in 2 Tim.4:14). **72** All who were associated with Paul risked sharing his sufferings as an accused man. Thus Timothy was warned to be vigilant toward Alexander, who was an enemy both in the personal and doctrinal sense (2 Tim.4:14-15).

Insurrection had been one of the charges against Paul at Caesarea, and it may have proved convenient in the end for the Jews of Asia and for the "town-clerk" of Ephesus to blame him for the illegal "con­course" at Ephesus (Acts 19:38-41). If Paul was released from his Roman house-arrest in order to secure witnesses of his choosing, doubtless he would have sought the support of those Asiarchs ("the chief of Asia") who were friendly to his cause (Acts 19:29-31). It is difficult to be sure of many of the details, but parallels between the causes of both imprisonments can be drawn. The O.T. references in 2 Timothy which draw together the ancient and modern faiths into "all Scripture" suggest a mind preparing to answer a charge of heresy. And the evil that Alexander informed against Paul admits the possibility that the Ephesian insurrection, thanks in part to the Ephesian Jews who seized him in the Temple (Acts 21:27-30), was being blamed on Paul. If these hypotheses are true, then the court appearance unfolding in 2 Timothy 4 was probably a continuation of the earlier appeal to Caesar. Paul had to stand alone to defend himself on the latter occasion because Demas, Crescens and Titus had gone their separate ways. One might have expected Zenas and Apollos to stand with Paul, but they are not mentioned. Without legal advisors or friendly witnesses to aid his case, the prospects of an acquittal were dim even in the face of trumped up charges.

I apologize for the somewhat speculative discussion above. Admittedly, this treatment of Paul's defense is a weak link in the chain of evidence tying the Pastoral Epistles to the present dispensa­tion. However, this discussion and the one following will serve to supplement the picture I hope to draw for the reader.

**A Comparison of the Sufferings of Christ and Paul**

All who see "what is the dispensation of the Mystery" should recognize the uniqueness of Paul's role as chief-steward of the Mystery. The Lord Jesus Christ once toiled in the flesh to establish His kingdom among believing Israelites. He ministered, He suffered, and then He sat down in glory to take His rest from the work (Heb.10:12; 4:10). The work that remained to build up this "church of the firstborn" was left to apostles and evangelists, who also suffered for the gospel's sake throughout the Acts period.

Although the revelation of the Mystery did not come until after Acts 28, the same redeeming, justifying work of Calvary's cross was applied to the newly created Mystery church. **73** But there was no return of Christ to toil in ministry and suffer persecution for the founding of *this* church. That labor was left initially to Paul:

"Now I am rejoicing in my sufferings on your behalf and am filling up instead that which is left over of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh for His body the church."

Colossians 1:24

Above all Paul sought to magnify Christ in his body, "whether by life or by death" (Phi.l:20).

The parallels between the passion of Christ and Paul's circum­stances in 2 Timothy are striking, and they serve to confirm the imminence of Paul's death as he wrote the epistle. Both their trials were heard before a civil authority, although their "evildoing" had been to speak the truth in the face of a hostile religious leadership. Both men were betrayed:

"And as He was yet speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great crowd with swords and staves from the chief priests and elders of the people."

Matthew 26:47

"Alexander the coppersmith informed many evil things against me (the Lord will render to him according to his works), whom also you beware of for he exceedingly withstood our words." 2Timothy 4:14-15

And both were forsaken by their fellows:

"Then said Jesus to them, 'You will all be offended in Me during this night. For it is written: I WILL SMITE THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK WILL BE SCATTERED ..." Matthew 26: 31

"Then all the disciples, forsaking Him, fled." Matthew 26:56

"... Demas forsook me, having loved the present age ..." 2 Timothy 4:10

"In my first defense no one stood by me, but all forsook me." 2 Timothy 4:16

Although forsaken by men, neither one was without a strong Ally:

"Or do you think that I am not able to call upon My Father and He will stand by Me now with more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53

"Behold, an hour is coming and has now come that you will be scattered each to his own, and you will leave Me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." John 16:32

"But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me ... " 2 Timothy 4:17

Both forgave those who had rejected or abandoned them:

"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. '" Luke 23:34

"... but all forsook me. May it not be reckoned to them." 2Timothy 4:16

Both suffered as malefactors, falsely accused:

"In that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Are you come out as against a robber to take Me with swords and staves?'" Matthew 26:55

"... my gospel in which suffer evil unto bonds as an evildoer." 2 Timothy 2:8-9

But each was to receive a crown afterward:

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head ..." Matthew 27:29

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor ..." Hebrews 2:9

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me ... " 2 Timothy 4:8

Both were lacking garments:

"... they divided His garments, casting a lot ..." Matthew 27:35

"Bring the tunic which I left at Troas ..." 2 Timothy 4:13

And both anticipated the end of an appointed course:

"I glorified You upon the earth, having finished the work which You have given Me, that I should do ... " John 17:4

"When Jesus, therefore, took the vinegar, He said. 'It is finished' and having bowed the head He yielded up His spirit." John 19:30

"For I am already being poured out and the time at my destruction has come. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:6-7

It is written that Jesus began to recite Psalm 22 on the cross (Matthew 27:46 begins it and John 19:30 ends it). It appears that Paul also had this Psalm in mind as he wrote the last chapter of 2 Timothy. Compare the following:

1. "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." Psalm 22:13

"Save me from the lion's mouth .. " Psalm 22:21

"... and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." 2 Timothy 4:17

2. "I am poured out like water ..." Psalm 22:14

"For I am already being poured out ..." 2 Timothy 4:6

3. "Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help." Psalm 22:11

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me ... Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me ... " 2 Timothy 4:16-17

4. "For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me ... " Psalm 22:16

"Alexander the coppersmith informed many evil things against me." 2 Timothy 4:14

5. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." Psalm 22:27

"... that by me the preaching might be fully accomplished, and all the nations might hear ..." 2 Timothy 4:17

6. "For the kingdom is the Lord's; and He is the Governor among the nations." Psalm 22:28

"... and will preserve me for His heavenly kingdom ... ' 2 Timothy 4:18

The analogies here seem too numerous to be circumstantial, as though it were the Spirit's intention that we compare how Paul measured up to Christ. We do well then to mark both their lives for our encourage­ment. We should not only exercise the mind of Christ but also follow after the example of Paul in seeking to know Him (Phi.2:4-8; 3:10­-17).

Chronologically 2 Timothy must have been written late, at least some time after Ephesians and Colossians, because of the ruined state of the Asian churches evidenced in 2 Timothy 1:15. The province of Asia included both Ephesus and Colossae. Ephesians gives us no clue as to a rising tide of apostasy, and Colossians only a small indication that false teachers were a present danger. Certainly there is nothing in those books to suggest a falling away so widespread as to warrant the words: "All who are in Asia turned away from me."

A late date for 2 Timothy is corroborated by other evidence as well. Paul honored his fellow-laborer Demas by naming him in the salutations of two earlier Mystery Epistles (Col.4:14; Philem.24). However, he was roundly condemned in 2 Timothy 4:10 for turning his back on the ministry. Dissolution and dispersion are much evident in 2 Timothy, which Paul wrote shortly before his removal as the leader of the foundation ministry.

Paul's account in 2 Timothy implies some sort of delay in the legal proceedings against him. A final disposition at least several months away seems to have been his expectation.

"Be diligent to come before winter." 2 Timothy 4:21

In addition to this comment, he requested books, parchments and a tunic be brought to him in prison (v.13). Apparently Paul's part in the ministry was not quite complete yet, and both Mark and Timothy were summoned to receive final instructions as the dispensational transition period drew to a close (v.11).

The fact that an item like a tunic was left behind at Troas, as well as his cherished books, seems to indicate that Paul was caught away hastily from that region to be brought to Rome for trial (2 Tim. 1:16-17). Whatever the cause for the delay of his trial until winter, Paul seems not to have anticipated a long adjournment. Hence we note his urgency in asking Timothy to come to him quickly, and before winter at the very latest (2 Tim.4:9, 21). It must have been among Paul's last wishes to see his spiritual son again, before parting.

***SIX:* CONCLUSION**

This investigation of mine has probably not settled every doubt or answered every question concerning the economy of the Pastoral Epis­tles. But then those who set aside these epistles (and Philippians), as dispensationally inappropriate for the church, seem to me to leave many questions unanswered. For example, if these books predated the revelation of the Mystery, then when exactly were they written? During which imprisonment of Paul might the prison epistles 2 Timothy and Philippians have been written? Philippians could not have been written from prison in Caesarea, because Paul's extraordinary gift of healing would have been effective to cure Epaphroditus (Acts 19:11-12; Phi.2:25-30). And 2 Timothy could not have originated any time during the Acts period, whether during the Caesarean or first Roman imprisonments, for two reasons.

First, we again find Paul's Acts period gift of healing to be absent. This can be established by the fact that on the way to prison he left Trophimus behind, too sick to travel (2 Tim.4:20). But on the earlier journey which saw Paul in bonds at Caesarea, Trophimus had been a fellow-traveler right to the end, and presumably in good health too (Acts 21:29). This contradiction concerning Trophimus' whereabouts is sufficient in itself to refute the notion that Paul wrote 2 Timothy from Caesarea. I have previously pointed out that Rome seems to be the point of origination for 2 Timothy, as attested by the reference to Onesiphorus' courage in seeking out Paul in Rome (2 Tim.1:16-17). Now, if Paul had in mind some past event involving his "chain" "in Rome", this would also eliminate Caesarea, because Paul's first trip to Rome **followed** his Caesarean imprison­ment.

Secondly, his earlier travel to Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts, had not been so hasty as to require that tunic and parchments be left behind. On that occasion Paul knew that prison awaited him, and he would certainly have prepared for a period of indefinite confinement by bringing all necessary clothing and study materials with him (Acts 20:22-23). So Caesarea is again eliminated as a possible background for 2 Timothy. Prior to writing 2 Timothy, Paul had only recently been to Troas and Miletum, and possibly Corinth as well (2 Tim.4:13, 20). Because his house-arrest in Rome came three years or more after his previously recorded visits to Troas, Miletum and Corinth, we must rule out his first Roman visit also. Our findings on 2 Timothy thus far are out of harmony with the book of Acts in its entirety, leaving me little choice but to conclude that Paul was released from his two years of house-arrest in Rome (Acts 28:30). Subsequently he made his way to the Greek peninsula to visit Macedonia, Crete and Nicopolis (1 Tim.1:3; Titus 1:5; 3:12). This freedom was anticipated in both Phi­lippians 1:24-26 and Philemon 22. Therefore, we may conclude that Philippians and Philemon were written during the first Roman confinement, Timothy and Titus after his release from his chain, and 2 Timothy after his re-imprisonment in Rome.

One may accept the foregoing conclusions about Paul's circum­stances as he wrote his later epistles and still hold that the Pastoral Epistles predate the revelation of the Mystery. However, if Ephesians and Colossians were written during a second Roman imprisonment **after** 2 Timothy, as some propose, then Philemon will have to be regarded as a pre-Mystery epistle also (because of the expectation of release). But it must be pointed out that Philemon is linked very strongly with Colossians as a companion epistle. Not only are the same people situated with Paul in both instances (Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas and Lucas), but Archippus is addressed in both letters and Onesimus a Colossian is mentioned as dispatching both. Colossians can be fixed as a pre-release epistle by virtue of its close association with Philemon. As noted earlier, Demas had not yet fallen in love with the world, as his state is described in 2 Timothy 4:10. We could propose a third (unconfirmed) Roman imprisonment, but these personal details about Paul's state and those of his companions would still remain jumbled.

If the Mystery went unrevealed until the last months of Paul's life, then we are left to explain certain doctrinal issues pertaining to an inter-dispensational transition period. What was God's gracious purpose at that time (2 Tim.1:9)? What are we to make of the "heaven­ly kingdom" in 2 Timothy 4:18 **74** and the saints reigning like kings with Christ in 2 Timothy 2:12? What is the import of a Saviour-based citizenship in heaven (Phi.3:20) and the calling up high that yields the prize (Phi.3:14)? To whom do the nation-ward salvation and hope pertain (1 Tim.1:15; 2:4, 7; 4:10; 2 Tim.l:10-11; Titus 2:11-14)? For which people could these things have been given, who were neither Israel nor the Church the body of Christ? If 2 Timothy precedes the revelation of Ephesians-Colossians, then there must be **another** heavenly "Gentile" calling, unconnected with the Mystery. But nowhere in Scripture will we find such a concept developed.

The use of the phrase "dispensation of God" (or "stewardship", but not "edifying" as in the KJV) in 1 Timothy 1:4 is also problematic, as is the "steward of God" in Titus 1:7. Can a dispensation be in force during a transitional period, before the revelation of new rules and purposes and the appointment of stewards to carry them out?

Could an inter-dispensational period of short duration have accommo­dated the prophecies of "latter times" and "last days" (1 Tim.4:1-4; 2 Tim.3:1-5)? Historically the fulfillment of the "latter times" here­sies followed the times of Paul's apostleship. The false doctrines of the Gnostics, Manicheans, monastics and others who flourished in the immediate post-apostolic period fit this prophecy well. The fleshy formalism of "last days" religion became prominent even later, with the sacraments and ordinances which have permeated Christianity for many centuries now. Another aspect of times and seasons dealt with in the Pastoral Epistles concerns God's gracious gift and promise of hope "before age-times" (2 Tim.1:9; Titus 1:2). It bears repeating that these texts require an eye toward right division, even as our election in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph.1:3).

What was "the happy hope" (Titus 2:13) of God's people of this period, and what was it about the divine purpose at that time that rendered Him "the happy God" and "the happy ... Sovereign" (1 Tim.1:11; 6:15)? **75** Many doctrinal points about the hope and the calling of the Pastoral period church are not developed very well in the Pastoral Epistles themselves. We are either left with a mysterious transitional period that defies description, or we must take our cue from various "heaven­ly" and "Gentile" texts to align the Pastoral Epistles with Ephesians and Colossians. Tracing out the alternative views on the economy of the Pastoral Epistles leads to rather untenable conclusions.

To grasp the reason for the differences in the seven Mystery Epis­tles becomes easier if we allow first for their diversity of purpose. That purpose relates initially to a readership who were undergoing a transition out of the Acts period. This post-Acts church, for all the perfection that Christ had worked into it, still possessed an authori­ty structure based upon the newly laid foundation of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. The responsibilities and authority given these ministers is especially well developed in the Pastoral Epistles. Their application today must be modified for post-apostolic times, or strife and sectarianism will consume the church and make it a stumbling-stone rather than a blessing.

Each of the Mystery books has its own unique features, and yet strong parallels in doctrine and language appear among the various subgroups of the seven. We might draw a comparison between these doctrinal interrelationships and the personal interactions of members in a "fitly-framed together" church (Eph.2:21; 4:16). Each of us is unique, too, and contributes his part toward the finished building. Analogously the diversity of the Mystery Epistle teaching is able to fill all our varied needs.

Those who reject all but Ephesians and Colossians as undispensa­tional for the body of Christ have approved of the two most founda­tional documents of the seven. These two books have much doctrinal commonality, for example:

a) Christ's headship and His union with the church.

b) The fulness of God's purpose in the Mystery dispensation.

c) The church's interaction with heavenly principalities and powers.

Obviously Ephesians and Colossians form a didactic twosome. Their common purpose seems to have been to give those early members in the body of Christ a clearer understanding of the doctrinal basis of the Mystery just recently revealed. However, some differences in doctrine and word choice do appear between the two books. If one were to become carried away with questions "of words and names" (cp. Acts 18:14-15), he might even come to doubt the dispensational basis of Colossians. Colossians bears several references to the reward of our calling, but Ephesians has in view the free gift of grace rather than rewards based on works

(Col.2:18; 3:24). Also the book of Colossians (unlike Ephesians) makes no reference to blessings "in the heavenly places" (Eph.1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Instead it describes a hope "in the heavens" and refers to "things above" (Col.1:5, 16). Now "in the heavens" in Colossians could be interpreted as a reference to Israel's hope in New Jerusalem, if we ignore the context (see 2 Cor.5:1; Heb.10:34; 1 Pet.1:4 and cp. Heb.11:16). But clearly Colossians shares the same hope as Ephesians, although their word usage differs somewhat. So we need to evaluate **all** the facts relating to the Pastoral Epistles and Philippians, before drawing conclusions based on word usage alone.

Similar to the doctrinal association of Ephesians and Colossians is the unity in thought and style of the Pastoral Epistles. They share the joint purpose of teaching teachers, pastoring pastors, and preparing the saints generally for maturity in their service to the Lord. The following relationships between the Mystery Epistles may also be observed:

a) Philippians has strong ties with 2 Timothy regarding the sufferings of the saints, the kingdom in heaven, and the prize or crown of reigning with Christ.

b) Teachings about the prize and our need for heaven-mindedness draw Philippians and Colossians together.

c) The perfection or maturity of the saints is in view in both Philippians and Ephesians.

d) Earlier in the study I discussed the relationship between the mystery of godliness in 1 Timothy 3 and the great Mystery of Ephesians-Colossians.

e) The Epistle to Philemon applies to an individual situation the Christian principles governing master-slave relationships, as developed by Paul in Ephesians 6:5-9 and Colossians 3:22-4:1.

f) The uncompromising stand against Judaistic intrusions into the faith is a current running through several epistles, including Colossians, Philippians and the Pastorals.

So then, by two's and by three's we may begin to use Paul's later epistles to sketch the doctrinal framework of our steward­ship today. By many threads, some coarse and some fine, the interrelations of the seven epistles may be fitly framed together. A multiple application of the rule of two or three witnesses is able to settle once and for all the issue of how to rightly divide the Scripture legacy of Paul. Bearing in mind the very practical nature of the Pastoral Epistles, and the doctrinal maturity of Timothy and Titus, we should not be troubled by the absence of references to "Christ the Head" or "His body the church". And if we permit ourselves to become

fixated on the use of expressions like "King of kings" and "Church of God", it may lead us to miss the message of these letters altogether. The three books take for granted a firm rooting and grounding in the foundation truths of Ephesians and Colossians.

The differences we perceive between the better organized churches of that foundation time and some of the highly independent gatherings of Acts 28 believers today may present some difficulties. The transi­tion from apostolic to sub-apostolic times within our dispensation,

and the ensuing spiritual darkness, accounts for much of the differ­ence. We have grown to mistrust ecclesiastical authority and to look instead to the authority of the word of God. Additionally, an ongoing spirit of reformation, dating from Martin Luther's time, accounts for some of our modern differences. For many of us the regaining of lost truth is a continuing process, and a fixed theology that explains all Scripture has yet to be found. But sadly, a sectarian spirit has also contributed much to make the church what it is today. In this matter let each of us examine himself.

To put the Pastoral message into practice would prove much to our *profit*. **76** It seems only fitting that the book that closes the canon, 2 Timothy, should contain two bedrock statements concerning the word of truth: its infallibility (3:16-17) and its governing principle of interpretation, right division (2:15). May the Lord continue to edify the church through His precious word, with the blessed Mystery Epistles (all seven of them) at the forefront.

The following page is a figure attempting to depict chronological flow and logical dependencies by the use of color-coding words and text boxes.

**Historical Timeline**

???

Paul's Release

Acts Period pre-Acts 28:28

2 yr. House Arrest

Additional Detention

A.D. 69-70

Paul imprisoned in Rome

Israel Lo-Ammi - no more healings

Judgment announced

Acts 28:28

Paul heals nations

Acts 28:8-9

Trophimus not left behind sick

Acts 21:29

Paul prepared for prison Acts 20:23

Holy Spirit appoints 'bishops'

Acts 20:28

**Israel/**

**Gentile**

**Graft:**

In view of the impending Parousia, Paul advises widows not to marry 1 Cor.7:8

**?**

Wrath to come

Eph.5:6; Col.3:6

Paul expects release

Phi.1:24-26, Philem.22

Revelation of the mystery by Paul the prisoner for the **nations - heavenly hope**

Eph., Phi., Col.,

Philem.**1**

Paul with 'bishops & deacons'

Phi.1:1

**Body of Christ:**

Focus on the **nations**

1 Tim.2:7, 3:16;

2 Tim.1:11, 4:17

**heavenly kingdom**

2 Tim.4:18

**Great Mystery** of right-reverence

1 Tim.3:16

Timothy sick

1 Tim.5:23

Paul free

1 Tim.1:3; Tit.1:5

Men appoint 'bishops'

1 Ti.3:1-13; 5:22; Tit.1:5-9

Jewish fables

1 Ti.4:1-4; Tit.1:10-16

**Great Mystery:** Christ fills the church

Eph.5:25-32

**Mystery:** Christ in you Col.1:27

Law set aside

Eph.2:15; Phi.3:2-9; Col.:14

Paul unable to heal

Phi.2:25-30

Pre-overthrow

blessings

Eph.1:4

No reference to 'bishops' - commission to faithful men

2 Tim.2:2

Imprisoned in Rome

2 Tim.1:16-17

Trophimus left behind sick

2 Tim.4:20

Paul unprepared for prison - tunic, scrolls, parchments left behind

2 Tim.4:13

All in Asia turned away

2 Tim.1:15

Demas abandoned Paul 2 Tim.4:10

Paul now being offered

2 Tim.4:6

Paul assured of his Crown

2 Tim.4:8

Asians faithful Eph.1:1, Col.1:2

Demas faithful

Col.4:14

If Paul is offered...

Phi.2:17

Paul pressing for the Prize

Phi.3:11-14

Paul pressing for the Prize

Phi.3:11-14

**Pastoral Epistles:**

Paul advises widows to marry

1 Ti.5:11-14

NOTES: 1) Col. and Philem. are companion letters, because in both Onesimus delivered them, Archippus is personally

addressed, and Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas and Lucas are mentioned or send greetings.

Pre-age-time blessings

Titus 1:2 2 Tim.1:9

**END-NOTES**

**1.** Recommended reading: M. Penny, ***Paul's Three Ministries***, Open Bible Trust; C. Welch, ***United Yet Divided***, Berean Publishing Trust.

**2.** My thanks to Charles Ozanne for this coinage in ***The Word of the Kingdom in Matthew's Gospel***, Open Bible Trust.

**3.** Although the word "Gentile" appears occasionally in this study, its use often clouds the Scriptural sense of *ethnos*, whose primary meaning is "nation". The word "nation" is more inclusive than "Gentile", which today means an extra-national of Israel. "Nation" (*ethnos*) is even used to describe the people of Israel, although they are hardly to be considered Gentiles in the usual sense of that word (Joh.11:48, 50, 51, 52). In some texts the association of dispersed or frontier Jews with their indigenous or neighboring nations is described rather strongly (e.g., "Galilee of the nations" in Mat.4:15 and "Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven" in Acts 2:5). During Acts, Paul's apostleship to the nations was for the Jewish dispersion as well as the non-Jews, who included Israelites cut off from their nation by apostasy. Then too, proselytes of other nations (i.e., non-Israelites) are to be reckoned as Jews. These relationships should be borne in mind when the context is searched for the meaning of "Gentile". With the disenfranchisement of Israel at the end of Acts the word "Gentile" has taken on new meaning, for Israel is not presently at the head of the nations but has been dispersed among them. Also, the genealogical sense of *ethnos* has been blunted by centuries of intermarriage (even truer today than in Paul's time). In **applying** the post-Acts 28 gospel to our time, the word "peoples" may be substituted for "Gentiles" in many places in the Pauline Epistles.

**4.** See 1 Corinthians 5:1, 7-8; 7:14; 10:1-2; 14:34-35; Acts 18:4, 8.

**5.** The whole Acts period can be identified with Israel's early harvest feast of Pentecost, and the events of that time are prophetically typified by the rituals commanded in Leviticus 23:15-21.

**6.** Paul apparently had known for some time that a martyr's death awaited him (Acts 9:15-16).

7. ***The Early Centuries and the Truth***, p.13, Berean Publishing Trust .

**8.** Note that it was "by" Paul's hands as chief steward and "with" the elders' hands in the spirit of "joints and bands" that Timothy's gift was imparted.

**9.** See 1 Timothy 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:17-18; 2 Timothy 2:14; Titus 2:15; 3:10.

**10.** Cf. E.W. Bullinger, ***Companion Bible***, Ap.6 and ***Figures of Speech Used in the Bible***, pp. 529-533.

**11.** To gauge how serious the corruption had become, see 1 Tim.1:3-4, 6-7, 19-20; 2:12-14; 4:1-4, 7; 5:11-15; 6:3-5, 9-10, 20-21; 2 Tim.1:15; 2:14-18, 23-26; 3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4, 10, 14-15; Titus 1:9-16; 2:8; 3:9-11.

**12.** See 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:1; 1:2; and Titus 1:4.

**13.** See Philippians 2:19-22 and 2 Corinthians 7:13-15; 8:16-17, 23.

**14.** A more comprehensive survey of personal advice follows: 1 Timothy 1:18-19; 3:14-16; 4:6-7, 11-16; 5:1-3, 19-25; 6:11-­17, 20-21; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; 2:1-7, 14-16, 22-23; 3:1, 10, 14-17; 4:1-5, 14-15; and Titus 1:12-14; 2:1-10, 15; 3:1-2, 8-14.

**15.** For further examples see: 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 2:1-8, 11-15; 4:8-11; 5:21; 6:7-8, 13-16; 2 Timothy 1:8-11; 2:8-10, 11-14; 4:1; Titus 1:2-3; 2:11-15; 3:3-8.

**16.** ***The Mystery of Godliness***, Open Bible Trust.

**17.** *Eusebeia* in 1 Timothy 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 1:1 (and 5 other NT occurrences); *eusebeō* in 1 Timothy 5:4 (and Acts 17:23); *eusebēs* (3 occurrences in Acts and 2 Peter); *eusebōs* in 2 Timothy 3:12; Titus 2:12.

**18.** The text of Nestle-Aland 26th edition prefers the reading "which" over "God" based on a likely corruption due to the *nomina sacra* abbreviations. The following excerpt from Kurt and Barbara Aland's ***The Text of the New Testament,*** p.278 describes how this might have happened:

"At the beginning of Acts 1:3, for example are the words oij kaiparesthsen. Some manuscripts here read o Ihsouj paresthsen... The words fit the context, but it is puzzling to us why the variant should have occurred until we remember that in the uncials the text could have been OIC, and that the nomina sacra were written in abbreviated form, with ̅~~O~~C for qeoj, ̅KC for kurioj, ̅IC for Ihsouj. Then it becomes clear that the scribe who wrote o Ihsouj at Acts 1:3 was copying from an uncial exemplar in which a bar had inadvertently been placed over IC (as it actually happens in Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus [C]). The error is obvious (and the variant is not noted in the apparatus of Nestle-Aland 26). The reverse process may also occur, as in the hymn to Christ in 1 Tim. 3:16. The original reading here was oj efanerwqh (as in \* A\* C\* F G 33 365 *pc*), i.e., in the uncial script OCEΦANEPΩΘH. Only a stroke of the pen needed to be added above OC, and the misreading of ̅OC as ̅ΘC (qeoj) was almost inevitable (in a single step), with an enhancement of devotional overtones. The correction was made accordingly by later hands in א, A, and C: qeoj is read by אC AC CC D2 Ψ *M* vgms, and in a further stage (in 88 *pc*) the article o was added."

**19.** References: 1 Timothy 1:10; 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2, 8.

**20.** *Semnos* in Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2; *semnotēs* in 1 Timothy 2:2; 3:4; Titus 2:7 (only occurrences).

**21.** *Nēphalios* in 1 Timothy 3:2,11; Titus 2:2, *nēphō* in 2 Timothy 4:5.

**22.** *Sōphroneō* in Titus 2:6; *sōphronizō* in Titus 2:4; *sōphronismos* in 2 Timothy 1:7; *sōphronōs* in Titus 2:12; *sōphrosunē* in 1 Timothy 2:9, 15; *sōphrōn* in 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 5.

**23.** Phrased together in 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 3:10; Titus 2:2.

**24.** *Agapaō*, *agapē*, *agapētos*, *phileō*.

**25.** *Hē hugiainousa didaskalia*, only in 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1.

**26.** *Didaskolos ethnōn*, only in 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11.

**27.** For example: 1 Timothy 1:3-10; 4:3-4; Titus 1:9-16; 3:5, 9. And compare Philippians 3:1-9, 17-20 and Colossians 2:14-3:2.

**28.** See 1 Timothy 2:12; 4:11, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 2, 3 and Titus 1:11.

**29.** The verb *paratithēmi* in 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; and see also 1 Timothy 2:1, 8; 3:14; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17.

**30.** The cognate noun *parathēkē* in 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:12, 14.

**31.** Acts 21:20; Rom.2:17-20; 9:4-5.

**32.** See Philippians 3:2-6, 17-20; Colossians 3:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:15.

**33.** In addition to the 5th commandment, the Law, Psalms and OT prophets are applied to the saints in several spiritualized ways in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians:

a) "And He put all things under His feet..." Ephesians 1:22

This applies a clause from the Messianic Psalm 8 to the heavenly aspect of Christ's dominion (headship).

b) The rebellious, Satan-led, unbelieving Israel upon whom the wrath of God would come (by the hand of Rome in 69-70 A.D.) are described with the Hebraism "sons of disobedience" in Ephesians 2:2; 5:6 and Colossians 3:6. The emphatic Greek *hoi huioi tēs apeitheias* is an excellent rendering of the *benêy merîy* (“sons of rebellion”) of Numbers 17:10, describing the majority of Israel after divine wrath had come upon Korah. Note that the Romans 10:21 condemnation of Israel calls them "a disobedient (*apeitheō*) and contradicting people."

c) "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" Ephesians 2:20

But Isaiah 28:16 tells of laying in Zion a precious cornerstone as a sure foundation, and Romans 9:33 relates this prophecy to Christ.

d) "in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord." Ephesians 2:21

A Temple figured prominently in Israel's worship from Solomon's day onward, interrupted by the Babylonian captivity and the 70 A.D. overthrow. Acts period believers are also called a temple (1 Cor.3:16-17).

e) "Therefore He says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.'" Ephesians 4:8

This gift-giving aspect of Psalm 68:18 is here applied to Christ giving the foundation ministry to the church. Leading captivity captive also has reference back to Deborah's Song in the LXX of Judges 5:12.

f) "'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor...'" Ephesians 4:25

This is a literal application of Zechariah 8:16 for today.

g) "Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Ephesians 4:26

The same commandment in spirit is found in Psalm 4:4 - "Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still."

h) "But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.'" Ephesians 5:13-14

This echoes the Messianic prophecy to Israel and the nations in Isaiah 60:1-3.

i) Singing and melody-making in the heart with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is mentioned in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Although the three Greek words used (*psalmos*, *humnos*, *ōdē*) are found throughout the LXX (including the Book of Psalms), the use of *psalmos* in the NT is informative - in 4 out of the 5 non-Mystery references it is an obvious reference to the OT Book of Psalms or an individual Psalm out of that book. This suggests an adaptation of the ancient Psalms for use in the Mystery church. The use of *ōdē* in the LXX includes the Song of Moses, the Song of David, the 1,005 songs of Solomon, the dedication song of the Temple of Solomon, the dedication song of the new wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah), and the new songs of the Revelation. Israel were steeped in a tradition of singing joyful songs of deliverance, a tradition that apparently continued into the dispensation of grace.

j) "'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'" Ephesians 5:31

This direct application from the first book of the Law (Genesis 3:24) is applied analogously to the great mystery of Christ and the church.

j) "Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness ... And take the helmet of salvation ..." Ephesians 6:14, 17

The breastplate and helmet portions of the panoply are borrowed from Isaiah 59:17.

k) "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:9-11

This expands upon the oath that Jehovah swore by Himself in Isaiah 45:22-23.

l) "Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all." Philippians 2:17

Drink offerings of wine were integral to many of the Mosaic sacrifices, and the pouring out of the blood of sacrificial animals was done continually at the base of the altar.

m) "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" Colossians 2:11

This spiritualizes the sign and commandment of circumcision that were a key part of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17:10-14).

n) "buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Colossians 2:12

Baptisms were central to purification under the law (Hebrews 9:10).

o) "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." Colossians 4:6

A "covenant of salt" and "salt of the covenant" figure in the past covenants and sacrificial offerings (Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19).

In addition to these lawful uses, we find the warnings of Colossians 2:16-23 against some unlawful uses of the law: feasts, sabbaths, kosher laws, ritual cleanness (touch not, taste not, handle not).

**34.** Colossians 2:18 should be read: "Let no one defraud you of the prize, taking delight in the religious humility of the angels ..." If we were to join the angels in their worship outside the heavenly veil, we would deny Christ, Who has provided us a place at the Father's right hand. Our access to the Father is to be taken hold of boldly (Eph.3:12), not with a false humility as if our proper place were with the angels.

**35.** Book I, Ch. XXIII, Sec. 5.

**36.** Book II, Preface.

**37.** 1 Timothy 1:3-4; 4:6-7; 2 Timothy 4:4; Titus 1:14.

**38.** 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:15-16 and cp. 1 Timothy 4:6-7.

**39.** 1 Timothy 1:4; 6:4-5; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9.

**40.** 1 Timothy 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:14.

**41.** 1 Timothy 1:5-7; Titus 1:10-11.

**42.** 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:8.

**43.** 1 Timothy 6:4; 2 Timothy 3:4.

**44.** 1 Timothy 5:13; 2 Timothy 3:6.

**45.** 1 Timothy 6:10; 2 Timothy 3:2.

**46.** 2 Timothy 3:6; Titus 3:3.

**47.** For example, in Ephesians 5:22-33; 1:7-11 (*ekklēsia* not found until v.22, but still the main topic throughout chapter l); 3:1-11; and Colossians 1:15-27.

**48.** The structure of *godliness*, *godly, show piety* in the Pastoral Epistles:

1. 1 Tim.2:1-3 … supplications, prayers … for kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all *godliness* and respectability. For this is … acceptable before our Saviour God.
2. 3:15-16 A pillar and foundation of the truth and confessedly great is the mystery of *godliness* …
3. a) 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives’ myths, and exercise yourself as to *godliness*.

b) 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little while, but *godliness* is profitable for everything …

A. 5:4-5, 8 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to *show piety* to their own house … for this is acceptable before God. … continues in supplications and prayers … if anyone does not provide for his own … he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

D. 6:3 … sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to *godliness* …

*C. a)* 6:5 … men … destitute of truth, holding *godliness* to be gain …

*b)* 6:6 But *godliness* with contentment is great gain.

E. 6:11 O man of God, flee these things and pursue (*diōkō*) righteousness, *godliness*, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit.

*B.* 2 Tim.3:5 … having a form of *godliness*, but denying its power …

*E.* 3:12 And all, indeed, who wish to live *godly* in Christ Jesus will be pressed (*diōkō*).

*D.* Ti.1:1 … the acknowledgement of the truth which is according to *godliness*.

*A.* 2:12 … having denied ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live discreetly and righteously and *godly* in the present age …

A – Examples of godly living toward those without and those within.

B – The Mystery of the Godliness (in-worked power) versus the mystery of iniquity (power denied).

C – The profit and gain of godliness, and its perversion.

D – The teaching of truth that is according to godliness.

E – The pressures of godly living – subjective and objective.

**49.** Biblical significance of the number six – E.W. Bullinger, ***Number in Scripture***, p.150.

**50.** The majority: Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 11:16; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15. But 1 Corinthians 10:32 and 11:22 are ambiguous as to whether a local church or the collective church is meant.

**51.** Old Covenant saints are so described in Exodus 19:5; New Covenant saints in 1 Peter 2:9; and Mystery saints in Titus 2:14.

**52.** See J.H. Moulton, ***A Grammar of New Testament Greek***, vol. IV by N. Turner, pp. 86-96.

**53.** Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5.

**54.** Revelation 1:5; 6:15; 16:14; 17:2, 18; 18:3, 9; 19:19; 21:4.

**55.** In sum, the full spectrum of identification is: crucified, died, buried, quickened, raised, seated, and yet to be manifested in the Glory with Christ.

**56.** *Sunapothneskō*, *suzaō* and *sumbasileuō*, respectively.

**57.** Read "the Holies" instead of "the saints", as found in the KJV of Ephesians 1:18; 2:19 and Colossians 1:12.

**58.** Titus 2:11, which introduces text E, and Titus 3:4 use the verb form *epiphainō* to indicate the former epiphany.

**59.** "His own purpose and grace ... given us in Christ Jesus **before age-times**" (2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 1:2) coincides with His heavenly purpose, whereby He chose out a church "**before the foundation of the world**" (Ephesians 1:3-4).

**60.** ***Companion Bible***, Appendix77.

**61.** Moulton and Milligan, ***The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament***, p.36 entry for *analuō*, which cites an example of a memorial inscription using this word metaphorically of the one who died. Note that a similar word, *apoluō*, is used for Simeon’s departure of death in Luke 2:25-29, where it is synonymous with “seeing death”.

**62.** Eusebius, ***Ecclesiastical History***, Book II, ch. 25.

**63.** Richard Trench, ***Synonyms of the New Testament***, p.316

**64.** ***Companion Bible*** note on verse 1.

**65.** For example, in Acts 22:1-21; 24:10-21; 25:6-8; 26:1-29; Philippians 1:7, 17.

**66.** Caesar assisted by his Council of Assessors usually sat in judgment of criminal cases, by a tradition estab­lished under Augustus. However, under the latter Neronian regime the Prefect of Rome may have heard the case. See Conybeare and Howson, ***Life and Epistles of Saint Paul***, pp. 604, 831-832 (People's Edition).

**67.** Seutonius, ***Nero***, 15.

**68.** Moulton and Milligan, ***The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament***, p.428 entry for *nomikos* cites several examples from second century A.D. of secular lawyers referred to by this term.

**69.** Conybeare and Howson, ***Life and Epistles of Saint Paul***, p.74, (Peoples' Edition). Also, after 61 A.D. Roman law did not permit an accuser to drop his charges.

**70.** Note the word order here, which is faithful to the Greek. The placement of the "from" phrases emphasizes the deadness of David's seed where our glorified Lord is concerned. This death relates to the "slaying of the enmity" (Ephesians 2:14-16). Christ died as an Israelite in the flesh, but was raised in a body of heavenly glory for all men in this dispensation (Colossians 3:11).

**71.** Tacitus, ***Annals***, xv, 44.

**72.** That the Alexander of Acts 19 is the same one mentioned in 2 Timothy 4 seems probable based upon his trade as a coppersmith and the fact that Paul had recently dispatched Timothy to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Apparently Alexander was persuaded to become a Christian in the end, but he seems to have been unconverted at the time of Acts 19. After the riot in Ephesus it was too risky for Paul to set foot there any longer, but out of his great concern for the "grievous wolves ... not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29-31) he sent Timothy in his place. Alexander may qualify as one of the grievous wolves, because he and Hymenaeus were later found causing shipwreck in the church

(1 Timothy 1:19-20). Hymenaeus is mentioned again in 2 Timothy 2:17 in a more advanced state of apostasy, and because Alexander failed to recant his error, he too "waxed worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13).

**73.** Note the use of *ktizō*, "create", in Ephesians 2:10,15.

**74.** Cp. the references to this kingdom and its King in Acts 28:31; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15 and 2 Timothy 4:1.

**75.** Nowhere else in Scripture is God called 'happy', whether *makarios* in the NT or *ashrêy* in the OT. Is it to be imagined that anything could make God happier than the implementation of His highest purpose (that is, the calling of His heavenly church and the revelation of the great Secret to them)?

**76.** The word "profitable" (*ōphelimos*) occurs just four times in the Greek Bible. See 1 Timothy 4:6-10(2); 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Titus 3:4-8. Alphabetically *ōphelimos* is the last word of the Greek Biblical lexicon. By analogy, the Pastoral Epistles are also the last word of Scripture. How fitting that such a word should close out our revelation from God! Recall that the very last word used in the OT (at least chronologically – per the book order in the Christian Bible) is “curse”, that is the land (of Israel) as a “devoted thing” which Jahveh was threatening to smite (Malachi 3:16).