

Let us bow our heads; If we need to use the Recovery Procedure as found in 1 John 1:9, let us do so at this time that we might be in fellowship. (pause) Father, we thank you for the privilege and opportunity to study your word and for the freedom that you have provided for us here in Corpus Christi, Texas, U.S.A.; furthermore, we express our appreciation to God the Holy Spirit who will enlighten us regarding the message this morning. We as priests pray this through the person of our Lord Christ Jesus, our High Priest, Amen.

2 Chronicles 7:14, “and if My people [the believers of a Client-Nation], who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” Matthew 6:34, “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will care for itself [Don’t concern yourself with the problems which may occur tomorrow.]. Each day has enough evil [trouble] of its own.”

Heavenly Father, we express our thanksgiving to you for the wonderful spiritual life and all the assets that accompany it. Today, we approach your throne of grace to pray for our nation which has fallen into the hands of evil people and entities. Those in our national government for the most part, the news media, our tech industries, much of our judicial system, the leadership of the FBI, CIA, NSA, Home Land Security, the Department of Justice etc. Furthermore, our school system is in the hands of Marxist and atheists, and in our medical system, the professors, leading doctors and the heads of the medical institutions have for the most part been bought off in one way or another by the pharmaceutical companies. Now, we come to understand (The Great Taking, a book just published) that there may even be an attempt by entities such as the FED and certain so-called elites to seize basically all the assets of the citizens of the United States as they seized many financial assets in the great depression of the past.

Why do we need to understand what is going-on? If we do not understand some of these things, we will be ignorant of Satan’s attempt to destroy

individual privacy and private property rights. If Satan can bring all or most of the world's property under one international entity such as the FED, he will then have tremendous world power. Furthermore, with that power, he will be able to remove all privacy through such mechanisms as the CBDC (central banks digital currency).

We must understand that the FED is not a U. S. organization, rather it is an international organization no different from the United Nations. Neither of these organizations have any allegiance to the United States. How can they since they are international organization with allegiance to a one world government. The Lord sponsors nationalism; Satan sponsors internationalism.

Well, we laugh at all of these powerful people and entities for as great as their power may seem to be, it still is finite. On the other hand, the power of the Godhead is infinite. Father, we know that you have infinite power by way of your Divine Decree and omnipotence; Jesus Christ is the one who controls history and with just a whisper from his lips can shut down these evil conspiracies in a nanosecond. Furthermore, God the Holy Spirit who restrains evil in the Church Age will tolerate and put-up with just so much evil. We pray all this in Christ's name, Amen.

Colossians 4:

Verse 1: Responsibility of Management to labor: belongs with the previous chapter

Verses 2-6: The Function of the Team

Verses 7-14: The Personnel of the Team

Verses 15-18: Special note to the Laodiceans

4:1. Masters [management] provide for your slaves [employees] what is right and fair because you know that you have a Lord [one to whom you are responsible] in heaven.

Οἱ κύριοι, τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχεσθε, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔχετε κύριον ἐν οὐρανῷ.

A few points regarding management:

1. Leaders in business must be righteous and fair. They must never promote an unqualified person over a qualified person. A leader may violate his integrity by promoting a relative or some person whom he personally likes over a qualified employee, a senior employee or someone whom he dislikes.
2. A leader has no right to dislike anyone under his authority and furthermore, must treat everyone in an unbiased manner.
3. Leaders must motivate each employee to do the best job that the employee is capable of doing.
4. Leaders must avoid all activity which promotes competition among employees. Rather, employees of an organization must be motivated to function as a team, not to be in competition with each other.
5. Sometimes management which lacks leadership offers a reward for this or that. This can only lead to unfairness and unfairness will cause strife in the organization.
6. Christian leaders must develop a love for the Lord so that they will possess true love for all under their authority. If a leader loves the Lord, he will be able to avoid arrogance and any mental sins toward those under his responsibility.

7. True love is always fair, righteous and gracious toward those under their responsibility. No one can be a great leader if he dislikes or even worse hates someone under his authority. This is a manifestation of arrogance and arrogance destroys all leadership potential.

A few points regarding labor:

1. Those who love the Lord have the power to accept authority in a system without becoming involved in the sins of arrogance and emotion.
2. Those who love the Lord execute the policy of management without bitterness or discouragement.
3. Reciprocal love fulfills the objectives of the organization no matter how incompetent, inefficient, or unreasonable others in the corporation may be.
4. While system testing is a major source of peer pressure, reciprocal love-motivation has the power to carry on without sinful reaction.

The Team Concept:

Romans 12:4-5, “For just as we have many parts in one body [of the Royal Family of God], and all parts do not have the same function, (5) so we, the many, are one body in Christ and individually parts one of another [sustaining each other through our spiritual gifts],”

When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church Age, he is given a spiritual gift which is designed to function in harmony with the spiritual gifts of others in the team (1 Corinthians 12:8-21). Therefore, we must understand how this team functions, and how this team becomes a great team. No team ever functions well together and becomes a winning team without a lot of instruction, training and respect for authority.

What is an effective Christian team, and how and when is it formed? The team formed by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at Salvation is described as the body, and its leader is called the head. Jesus Christ is the head, and all Christians make up the different parts of the body. Some members of the team are eyes, some are hands, and feet etc. (1 Corinthians 12:20-22). At salvation, God the Holy Spirit gives each believer a spiritual gift which gifts determine the position the Christian plays on the team. Let us use American football as an analogy to illustrate how a team should function. There are different positions and functions on a football team. Not every Christian can be the quarterback; not every Christian can be the running back and carry the ball. Some Christians must do the blocking. Some Christians must do the tackling. Every position is important. The quarterback is not going to be effective unless there is good blocking and tackling. (Though spiritual gifts were designed to unite the members of a church into a harmonious functioning team, they were dividing the members in Corinth.) Furthermore, the team is not going to be effective unless every player on that team does his job.

The team must be taught well by the pastor under the Filling of the Spirit. This means that each member of the team must learn the technical words of theology and all the doctrines related to establishment and the spiritual life. In order to accomplish this, the Holy Spirit communicates through the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. The pastor is the agent, but it is the Holy Spirit who makes Biblical truth understandable to the believer.

The team benefits when spiritually advanced-Christians function well under their spiritual gifts. On the other hand, the team suffers when Christians do not function properly under their spiritual gifts. Every church, missionary organization, Bible college, seminary etc. consists of a team of believers. When the team consists of spiritually advanced believers, the team functions harmoniously under grace, but when the team is made up of emotionally non-thinking believers, the team becomes irrational and legalistic. So, for Christian organizations to function well, the believers in those organizations must either be in spiritual maturity or very close to it.

1 Corinthians 12:4, “Now there are differences [a variety] of [spiritual] gifts [*χαρισμά*], but the same Spirit [The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts]. “

The Holy Spirit at salvation forms the spiritual team. Just as there are many positions on a football team so there are many spiritual gifts on the spiritual team. It is the sovereignty of God the Holy Spirit who decides what position (what spiritual gift) each member of the body of Christ will receive. (The Greek word *charisma* “*χαρισμά*” means a gift freely and graciously given without any human merit.) This decision of the Holy Spirit was not to make one believer superior or inferior, but for harmonious team function.

4:2. Be devoting yourselves to prayer [dative of advantage], keeping alert in it [in prayer] with thanksgiving;

Τῇ προσευχῇ προσκατερεῖτε, γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ,

The believer is commanded to pray; to be alert for prayer opportunities and always with thanksgiving. It is to the advantage of every believer priest brought out by the Dative of Advantage to enter into the ministry of prayer. It is also beneficial for the recipient of prayer. Praying for each other becomes a team function.

Thanksgiving:

Thanksgiving toward God and his plan is based upon receiving something from God without having to earn it. Even the Greek verb for thanksgiving *Εὐχαριστέω* takes its root from the Greek word for grace *χαρις*, the basic root for all the Greek words for thanksgiving. The more you understand grace, the greater is your appreciation of God’s plan. Thanksgiving, then, is simply grace orientation expressing itself toward God.

1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Be thankful for the blessings of life;

be thankful for the adversities of life for both blessings and adversities can be used in God's plan to advance you spiritually. Environment should not weaken you, enslave you or destroy you. When the Christian has the ability to apply and does apply the Ten Problems Solving Devices successfully to any type of environment, he will be consistently thankful.

Thanksgiving requires power and is that form of worship in which the Church Age believer acknowledges the gracious benefits received from the three members of the Trinity. The power for worship is found in John 4:24, "God is a spirit, and those who worship Him, must worship by means of the Spirit [the Filling of the Spirit] and by means of truth [doctrine metabolized in the soul]." The enabling power of the Holy Spirit with the power of metabolized doctrine, these two applying the Problem-Solving Devices equals true thanksgiving. Thanksgiving has no meaning, even for the believer, until he is consistently functioning under God's empowered plan.

Thanksgiving is a part of the daily function of the Ten Problem-Solving Devices deployed on the FLOT line (forward line of troops in a defensive position) of the soul. Thanksgiving is not some shallow, fleeting system of gratitude for something. Thanksgiving is a moment-by-moment mental attitude produced by metabolized doctrine in the stream of consciousness. Thanksgiving is the mental attitude forged from cognition and inculcation of Bible doctrine plus subsequent capacity for life, love and happiness. Colossians 2:7, "Having been rooted and having been edified in Him, and being stabilized by means of doctrine as you have been taught, overflowing with thanksgiving." There is a relationship between your consistent perception of Bible doctrine and your attitude of thanksgiving toward God. Ephesians 5:20, "always be thankful with reference to all things toward God, even the Father, through the person of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thanksgiving is an index of the spiritual status of the believer. The greater the content of metabolized doctrine in the believer's right lobe, the greater the capacity for mental attitude thanksgiving in the life. Capacity for blessing means thanksgiving potential. Thanksgiving potential depends on the amount of Bible doctrine in the soul of the

believer, so that the believer who is blessed is occupied with the Giver as well as the gift. True happiness is loving the Giver more than the gift. Capacity for life is to enjoy the Giver more than the gift.

Thanksgiving is that form of worship in which the Church Age believer acknowledges the benefits related to the divine initiative of antecedent grace in eternity past and in time. The divine initiative of antecedent grace in eternity past is the provision of our very own Portfolio of Invisible Assets. The divine initiative of antecedent grace in time is the function of the four spiritual skills.

All true worship in the Church Age is based on the two power options: the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the metabolization of doctrine. There is a relationship between your consistent perception of Bible doctrine and your attitude of thanksgiving toward God. Bible doctrine gives capacity for gratitude. Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us for a share in the endowment of the saints in the light." Thanksgiving is an act of giving thanks, grateful acknowledgement of the benefits of the grace of God. Hence, it is an expression of gratitude toward God based on your doctrinal capacity to appreciate who and what He is. Only winner-believers have capacity for true thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is more than an expression of gratitude, more than appreciation in a human sense. It is appreciation for God. Thanksgiving is first of all directed toward God, and as an overflow it is capacity and appreciation for life.

Thanksgiving is related to all the Problem-Solving Devices. Once you begin to understand rebound by grace, inevitably it becomes an expression of gratitude to God for the forgiveness of sins and restoration to fellowship with God. Thanksgiving is related to the Filling of the Holy Spirit as the means of expressing our appreciation to the Spirit for His enabling power. Without the Filling of the Spirit, we cannot even possess true thanksgiving to God. The Faith-Rest Drill results in capacity and expression of thanksgiving. Grace orientation is a continual source of thanksgiving to God. Doctrinal Orientation provides greater and greater capacity for thanksgiving until the capacity is so great that God shares his happiness

with the believer. A Personal Sense of Destiny is a source of thanksgiving for the believer oriented to the objectives, purpose, and understanding of God's will, plan, and purpose. Personal love for God the Father adds motivational virtue to our thanksgiving. Impersonal love for all mankind relates interpersonal relationships to mental attitude thanksgiving toward God. You are thankful regardless of unjust treatment. Sharing the happiness of God provides tremendous contentment in life, and therefore, thanksgiving and tranquility in every circumstance in life. The ultimate in mental attitude thanksgiving and the overt expression of gratitude toward God comes from occupation with Christ. The ultimate in mental attitude thanksgiving and the overt expression of gratitude comes from love for God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving then reaches its peak in personal love for God the Father and occupation with the person of Christ. 2 Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." Revelation 7:12, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and ability belong to God forever and ever. Amen." Psalm 100:4, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, honor His person."

Thanksgiving is a function of prayer.

Ephesians 1:16, "I do not cease giving thanks for you when making mention of you at the time of my prayers."

Colossians 1:3, "We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."

Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving."

Philippians 4:6, "Stop worrying about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

Giving causes thanksgiving, 2 Corinthians 9:7-12, “Each person to the degree he has determined [not a percent] by means of his right lobe [by means of his thinking from metabolized doctrine] so give, not from distress of mind [never give because you are pressured], not under compulsion of emotion [giving is worship; so, worship must be related to doctrine, not emotion.] for God loves a grace-oriented giver. (8) God is able to make all grace abound to you [provides extra funds for the grace-oriented believer] that always having a sufficiency in everything [money to give to a grace cause] you may have an abundance for every good deed [the same concept as in Ephesians 4:28]. (9) Just as it stands written [a quote from Psalm 112:9], He scatters abroad [also has the meaning of being generous; God provides extra money to certain generous people]; He gave *it* [via these generous believers] to the poor. His righteousness abides forever [God’s righteousness supports grace-oriented giving]. (10) Now, he who supplies seed to the sower [God providing the capital in an agricultural society] and bread for food, He God will supply and multiply your store of seed [your capital] and increase the harvest of your righteousness [in context the Christian who is a grace-oriented giver]. (11) You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us [Paul and his team teaching the spiritual life that they might have the capacity for such a service] your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. (12) This service [giving is recognized as Christian service] that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people [logistical grace provision] but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.”

Food should be accepted with thanksgiving, 1 Timothy 4:3-5, “[men] who forbid marriage [and advocate] abstaining from foods, which God has created [the Greek word *ktizo*; Keep in mind that God did not create highly processed foods. So, use a little common sense.] to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. (4) For everything created [the Greek word *ktizo*] by God is beneficial, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with thanksgiving. (5) for it is sanctified [to be nourishing to the body] by means of the word of God and prayer” This applies to all food, anytime, anywhere. Thanksgiving and asking God to

sanctify the food, protects the believer's health from any possible impurities in the food and so that the food will fulfill the requirements of the body when metabolized.

Other areas of thanksgiving:

(1) Thanksgiving is often a public acknowledgment or celebration of worship. When the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the City of David, King David put the Ark into a tent and offered burnt offerings and reconciliation offerings before God (1 Chronicles 16:1) and assigned Asaph [a Levite and an eminent musician] and his relatives to give thanks to the Lord as per 1 Chronicles 16:7-36.

(2). The integrity of God demands that the believer being blessed have capacity for that blessing. Capacity for blessing means thanksgiving potential. Thanksgiving potential depends on the amount of Bible doctrine in the soul of the believer, so that the believer who is blessed is occupied with the Giver as well as the gift. And to enjoy the gift, the person who is thankful must be occupied with the Giver. True happiness is loving the Giver more than the gift. True thanksgiving is to be occupied with the Giver more than the gift. Capacity for life is to enjoy the Giver more than the gift. You cannot give thanksgiving for what you do not possess.

(3) Thanksgiving is a priestly sacrifice, Psalm 116:17, "To You, I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. And call upon the name of the Lord." Psalm 107:22, "Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His works with joyful singing." Hebrews 13:15, "through Him let us be continually offering up a sacrifice of praise to the God, that is a fruit of our lips that gives thanks to His person [acknowledging His fame]."

(4). Thanksgiving is the mental attitude of the spiritually adult believer and a demonstration of his capacity. 2 Corinthians 4:15, "For all things are for your benefit [Paul's teaching regarding the Church age] so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God."

(5) Personal testimonies of mature believers are found in the following passages: Daniel 2:20, 23, “Daniel said, ‘Let the person of God be blessed forever and ever for wisdom and power belong to Him. (23) To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise for you have given me wisdom and power.” Romans 1:8, “First of all I thank my God through Jesus Christ concerning all of you because your faith is celebrated in the entire world.” 1 Corinthians 1:4, “I always thank my God on your behalf for the grace of God which has been given to you in Christ Jesus [current positional truth].” Philippians 1:4-5, “Always in my every prayer for all of you when offering prayer with inner happiness, because of your contribution [monetary] from the first day until now, for the purpose of spreading the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:3, “I thank my God whom I serve with a pure conscience, the way my fathers did [Paul and his fathers were a blessing to those in their periphery and to their nations] as I constantly remember you in my prayers, night and day.” Jesus Christ, the God-Man offered thanksgiving from his humanity to the Father regarding the resuscitation of Lazarus. John 11:41, “So, they removed the stone. Then, Jesus raised his eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard Me.”

(6). Believers who are positive to doctrine are motivated to give thanksgiving regarding others, 1 Thessalonians 3:9, “For what thanks can we render to God in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account.”

In summary, thanksgiving is an index of the spiritual status of the believer. The greater the content of metabolized doctrine in the believer's right lobe, the greater the capacity for mental attitude thanksgiving in the life. The increased usage of the Problem Solving-Devices of the protocol plan of God results in increased capacity for thanksgiving toward God.

4:3. Be praying [iterative present, imperatival participle] **at the same time for us** [all communicators by application] **as well, in order that God** [the Father] **will open up** [ingressive aorist] **to us** [dative of advantage, to our advantage; Paul and other pastors in Rome] **a door for**

the word, in order that we may communicate the mystery of Christ [Church age doctrine belongs to Christ], **because of which** [mystery doctrine] **I have also been chained** [literally to a member of the Praetorian Guard];

προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου, λαλῆσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, διὸ καὶ δέδεμαι,

We are not to be critical of other believers rather we are to pray on behalf of them. Prayer becomes the means of encouraging those who have a communicative gift. Apparently, Paul had some difficulty in getting the gospel to some of the Praetorian Guard and VIPs. So, he needed some prayer blocking, some prayer support. God will open the door in answers to prayers. Believers who are faithful in praying for communicators and their ministries, open doors for someone to communicate the gospel to the unbeliever and to communicate Bible doctrine to the royal family. The apostle is not only including himself, but there are many pastors in Rome for it is a large city with many congregations, and he is asking for prayer for all the pastors there.

Open Door:

1. The open door for communication of doctrine and service, 2 Corinthians 2:12, “Now, when I [Paul] came to Troas for the purpose of gospel [communication the gospel and doctrine] of Christ and even though a door was opened for me by the Lord. [The Lord opened a door (provided a ministry) for Paul in Troas.]” 1 Corinthians 16:8-9, “But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; (9) for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries [who opposed the ministry of Paul].”

2. The open door of reversion recovery, Revelation 3:20, “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone [in the Laodicean Church] hears my voice [responds to punishment of warning and intensive discipline] and opens

the door [uses the Recovery Procedure], I will enter face to face with him and dine with him, and he with me [Fellowship with the Lord]”

(1). Since the Lord is outside, there is no fellowship.

(2). Metaphorically, mild knocking would be analogous to warning discipline; hard knocking would be indicative of intensive discipline.

(3). The Christian must make the next move by opening the door analogous to using the Recovery Procedure.

(4). If the Christian uses the Recovery Procedure and subsequently learns the spiritual life and advances in that spiritual life, he will have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord with him.

3. The open door for greater blessings, Revelation 3:8, “I know your accomplishments [modus operandi and vivendi]. Now hear this, I have placed before you an open door [some form of opportunity] which no one is able to shut [the Lord uses his power for this purpose since the believer’s power is limited], because you possess a little power [to deal with the persecution coming from the powerful Jews in Philadelphia], even so you have kept My Word and have not denied My person [even though they have been under persecution from these religious Jews possessing much financial and other influence].”

No adverse circumstance of history, nor a person nor Satan with all his power can shut a door of blessing which the Lord has opened. Only the Lord can shut a door which he has opened. Only the Lord has the power to shut or open doors. In Philadelphia, though the believers had little power and influence in the community, the Lord would use His power to bless them, so that even the financially and politically powerful Jewish

contingent living in Philadelphia could not hinder God's blessing to the believers of the church in Philadelphia.

This refers to the dynamic impact of the mature believers impacting the trends of history, a dynamic which is invisible and unknown to people in general. The impact of anonymous believers on history is far greater than any impact of any famous person in history.

4. The open door at the Rapture, Revelation 4:1, "After these things [the Church Age and its historical trends] I looked [John began an investigation of prophetic history]. In fact, now hear this: [behold: a transitional phrase from the historical trends of the Church Age to prophetic history] a door has been opened in heaven [the Rapture had taken place, and Church Age believers had been taken into heaven] and the first voice which I heard was like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here [the mandate to take John to heaven] and I [Lord Jesus Christ] will show you what must take place [from the Rapture to the end of time] after these things [after the Church age]."

5. The open door of the second advent. At the end of the Tribulation a door opens in heaven and the Lord Jesus comes back with the Church, Revelation 19:11, "Then, [the first day of the second Advent of Christ] I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who is mounted upon it is called, 'Faithful [He will fulfill the four unconditional covenants] and True [keeps His word to deliver Israel];' and with justice He will judge and He will make war [explains how He will judge]." Psalm 24:7-9, "Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! (8) Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle. (9) Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in!"

6. The door of salvation, as per Acts 14:27, "When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith [the opportunity

to believe in Christ] to the Gentiles.” John 10:9a, “I am the door [the way of salvation]; if anyone enters through Me [believes in Jesus Christ], he will be saved,”

Protocol plan of God taken from Thieme’s Bible Doctrine Dictionary pages 206-207.

“The way of life designed for Church Age believers, characterized by precise procedure and objectives. With the inauguration of the Church in A.D. 30, a unique system of protocol replaced the rituals and ordinances of the Jewish Age. Believers in this age are to function under protocol because they belong to a spiritual dynasty—a family of spiritual royalty—founded by the resurrected King of kings, Jesus Christ. The way of life for spiritual royalty requires the highest standards of thinking and behavior (1 Thess. 2:12). God’s protocol, therefore, offers clear-cut instructions and guidelines, allowing believers to know precisely how to think and act in any given situation. Jesus Christ Himself set the standard for this superior lifestyle during His time on earth, and now the entire system of protocol is available for each member of the royal family to learn and master.

Delegation of divine power: God provides everything necessary for executing His protocol plan. Inside God’s system, the believer functions under the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16) and the dynamic power of the Word of God (Heb. 4:12). With these powerful assets overcoming all human frailties, he is able to solve problems, serve God, impact others, and gain rewards in time and eternity. No contradictions exist inside God’s system. Either a believer will utilize the delegated divine omnipotence and execute God’s protocol plan, or he will use human energy and ability to execute an inferior plan of his own.

Protocol defined. The word “protocol,” formally defined, is “a rigid, long-established code prescribing complete deference to superior rank and strict adherence to due order of precedence and precisely correct

procedure.” Each element of this definition applies to God’s plan and deserves a closer look:

“Long-established code.” Although new to history at the beginning of the Church Age, the code of divine mandates is “long-established” in the mind of omniscient God. Before time began, God created for each believer a portfolio of spiritual assets and set up the protocol for conveying the blessings of His glory (Rom. 9:23; Eph. 1:3–4a).

“Deference to superior rank.” Sovereign, omnipotent God holds infinitely superior rank. The protocol plan requires obedience to God’s ultimate authority and also to His delegated authority in the temporal and spiritual realms: namely, the laws of divine establishment and Bible doctrine communicated by the gift of pastor-teacher.

“Strict adherence to due order of precedence.” Establishing precedence means establishing priorities for a superior way of life. The highest priority in the believer’s scale of values must be learning God’s Word. By consistently learning and applying Bible doctrine, believers come to know God, relate to Him, obey His will (Eph. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15), and enjoy virtuous and right relationships in all other aspects of life (Acts 20:32; Phil. 3:15–16).

“Precisely correct procedure.” Perfect God has one way of doing everything: the right way. This is why He provides believers with His power for executing the protocol plan and with His Word for truth and guidance. Precisely correct procedure means that a right thing becomes wrong when done in a wrong way (Acts 5:1–11), a wrong thing is still wrong when done in a right way (1 Cor. 6:4–8), and obviously a wrong thing done in a wrong way remains wrong (Col. 3:25). Everything the believer does to fulfill God’s plan must be the right thing done in the right way, God’s protocol way (1 John 2:29; 3:7).”

The Mystery-Doctrines:

Vocabulary based on the Ancient Cults:

The Greek word *musterion* is a reference to the secrets of the ancient cults. Only those who were initiated into the fraternities and sororities of these cults knew the mystery doctrines or their secrets. The mystery cults of the ancient world were all demonic. Some of the famous mystery cults included: The mystery cult of Eleusis related to the goddess Demeter (Ceres) adopted by Athens, the mystery cult of Isis, the cult of Egypt, the mystery sorority of Dionysus for women whose rites included heavy drinking, drugs, ritual shouting and ecstasies, wild frenzied dancing, lesbian homosexual perversions, and human sacrifice, the mystery cult of Mithras was for men only, worshippers of Cybele who often castrated themselves in the madness of the rites, and the Orphic mystery cult centered around the singer Orpheus. Though these cults were said to be famous, infamous would be a better word to use.

Therefore, a vocabulary was developed in the Attic Greek for these cultic functions. The Greek word *museo* means to be initiated into the mysteries of the fraternity or sorority. This initiation was comprised of learning through inculcation, the secrets and doctrines of the fraternity (sorority) which secret doctrines were never to be revealed to outsiders. The Greek word *muste* referred to those who were initiated, to those who persevered until they actually learned all the fraternity (sorority) doctrines which doctrines were called mystery (*musterion* in the Greek).

Paul borrows the Greek word, *musterion* of the ancient cults to explain the Church Age and its unique doctrines:

The word *musterion* came down into the Koine of the New Testament. *Musterion* referred to the content of the doctrine, the actual principles and points that had to be learned to understand the spiritual life of the Church Age. The apostle Paul who used this word twenty-three times in the New Testament, took this noun away from the Greek fraternities (sororities) and gave it, under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, a Biblical definition which stands in the Word of God forever.

The meaning of Mystery (*musterion* in the Greek) in the Church Age:

The word “mystery” (*musterion* in the Greek) refers to Church Age doctrines that were never revealed in Old Testament times. In the Old Testament, the Church Age with its unique spiritual assets was completely blacked-out. None of the following unique doctrines were known to the Old Testament writers of Scripture such as:

1. The five things provided by the Holy Spirit at salvation namely the Baptism of the Spirit, Regeneration, Indwelling of the Spirit, a spiritual gift, Sealing of the Spirit, and the Filling of the Holy Spirit. Though Regeneration and Efficacious Grace are provided as well, they are not unique to the Church Age.
2. The new spiritual species of the royal family of God,
3. The unique Protocol Plan of God with its precisely correct procedure,
4. The equal privilege and equal opportunity of every Church Age believer to execute the protocol plan of God,
5. The Portfolio of Invisible Assets,
6. The unique royal commissions of the royal priesthood and the royal ambassadorship,
7. The indwelling of each member of the Trinity in the body of every Church Age believer,
8. The 100% availability of divine power (the omnipotence of the Father, Son, and Spirit),

9. The dispensation of invisible heroes having personal, national, international, and angelic impact.

10. Marriage in the Church Age which may need a little elaboration is also part of the Mystery doctrine. *No* unbeliever could fulfill the phrase “as unto the Lord” as found in Ephesians 5:22 and the clause, “just as the Lord loved the Church and gave himself as a substitute for her” (5:25). As a matter of fact, only mature believers have the ability to obey these commands; growing believers should be challenged to advance to spiritual maturity in order to fulfill these mandates. Furthermore, these commands found only in Ephesians were never given to any Old Testament believer. Moses, for example was never given the command found in Ephesians 5:25 since to execute these commands requires the power of the ‘mystery doctrines’ as found in the New Testament Epistles and the power of the Filling of the Holy Spirit. So, this passage was designed for Church Age believers only. In the Old Testament both unbeliever-marriage and believer-marriage were under the Laws of Establishment whereas in the Church Age, the Christian marriage is not only under the Laws of Establishment, but is related to the spiritual life as well. Thus, the standard of believer-marriage in the Church Age was raised to the highest possible level. This makes Christian marriage in the Church Age unique and a part of the mystery doctrines. Ephesians 5:32, “And this mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and with reference to the Church.” The divine institution of marriage during the Church Age is far more important and has greater repercussions than any other period of human history because it is related to the mystery doctrine of the Royal Law.

The Church Age and the Mystery Doctrines are not mentioned in the Old Testament; the Church Age and these doctrines are skipped-over:

There are a number of Old Testament passages which could have mentioned the Church Age but passed over it. Between the following

passages the Church Age occurred and so could have been revealed, but it was passed over in silence: Daniel 2:40-41, “Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron [the Roman Empire]; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so like iron that breaks in pieces, it [the Roman Empire] will crush and break all these in pieces. [the Church Age] (41) And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay [the consolidation of the Revived Roman Empire in the Tribulation].” Daniel 7:23-24, “Therefore, he said [the interpretation from the angel], ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth empire upon earth [the Roman Empire], which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and crush it. [After speaking about the Roman Empire, Daniel skips over the Church Age and proceeds to the Tribulation.] (24) And as for the ten horns [the Revived Roman Empire], out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another [a little horn, the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] shall arise after them; and he shall be different from the previous ones [Satan’s servant, the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] and he shall conquer three kings.” Hosea 5:15-6:1, “I will go away and return to My place Until they [historical Israel in the Old Testament] acknowledge their guilt and seek My face [the Church Age]; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me. (6:1) Come, let us return to the Lord [at the 2nd Advent]. For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us; He has wounded *us* [under the 5th Cycle of Discipline], but He will bandage us [restore Israel at the 2nd Advent].

Jesus prophesized in part regarding the Mystery-Doctrines:

John 14:20, “In that day [Pentecost] you will know [they did not understand it when Jesus taught it] that I am in My Father [identification of Jesus Christ with the essence of God], and you in Me [Baptism of the Spirit], and I in you [Indwelling of Christ in every Church Age believer].” Acts 1:5-8, “For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized by Holy Spirit [identification with Christ in heaven] not many days from now. (6) Then, indeed, these coming together, they asked Him, saying,

“Lord, do You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel [His millennial reign]? (7) And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put under His own authority. (8) But you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you [the Filling of the Holy Spirit]. And you shall be witnesses [both to unbelievers of the human race and to angels with regard to the angelic appeal trial] to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’”

The Mystery-doctrines for the Church Age as taught by Paul:

These mystery doctrines are now revealed, Romans 16:25-26, “Now to Him who is able to establish [stabilize] you [through the spiritual life] according to my good news and the preaching of Jesus Christ, on the basis of the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret [concealed] for long ages past [past dispensations]. (26) But now [in the Church Age] has been revealed through the prophetic Scriptures [of the New Testament] by the decree of the eternal God, having been made known to all the Gentiles, for the purpose of obedience [to the plan of God] from doctrine.” Ephesians 3:2-6, “Inasmuch as you have heard about the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for your benefit, that through revelation, the mystery doctrine was made known to me just as I have already written briefly. By reading this, you ought to be able to understand my technical knowledge about the mystery of Christ which was not made known to mankind in other ages [other dispensations], so that it has now been revealed to His holy apostles, even the prophets, by the Spirit; that Gentiles are fellow-heirs and members together of the same body and sharers together of the same promises in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.” Never before in human history has the grace policy of God promised so much for the ordinary believer, no matter how insignificant his life may be.

Pastors are mandated to teach the Mystery-doctrines:

1 Corinthians 4:1, “Let a person regard us [communicators of God’s Word] as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:7, “But we communicate God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden assets which God predestined before the ages for the purpose of our glory.” These doctrines of the Church Age will manufacture invisible heroes when Christians are willing to learn them from having correct Biblical priorities.” 1 Timothy 3:9, “With a pure conscience, keep holding the mystery, even the Church Age doctrine.” Colossians 1:25-26, “Concerning which [body which is the Church] I have become a minister with reference to the dispensation from God having been given to me for my benefit [it is to the advantage of the communicator to be oriented to dispensations] for the purpose of [communicating it to] you [directional] to fulfill [every time the communicator teaches] the Word of God [Bible doctrine must be taught to the congregation in the frame work of dispensations.] (26) That is, the mystery which has been hidden from past dispensations and generations [within those dispensations], but now has been revealed to the saints [the Royal Family of God].” Since this mystery is now revealed, there is no excuse for ignorance.

So, it is the pastor’s job to inculcate the mystery-doctrines, to inculcate through repetition. Ephesians 3:9, “And to make perspicuous what is the dispensation of the mystery.”

There is a link between the great power experiment of Hypostatic Union and the great power experiment of the Church Age.

Colossians 2:2, “That their right lobes may be encouraged, having been held together by means of love, and resulting in all the riches from the full assurance of technical knowledge [insight] resulting in metabolized knowledge of the mystery of the God, *that is*, Christ [who utilized the Filling of the Spirit].” Note the linkage between the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union and the great power experiment of the Church Age. The humanity of Christ pioneered maximum utilization of divine omnipotence inside the prototype spiritual life. We have the

operational type spiritual life for the utilization of that same power. 1 Timothy 3:16, “And by consent of all, great is the mystery of the spiritual life: the unique One [Jesus Christ] who appeared in a human body was vindicated by means of the Holy Spirit; He was observed by angels; He was proclaimed among the nations; He was the object of faith in the world; He was taken up into glory [ascension and session].” Our Lord’s humanity resided inside the prototype spiritual life where He depended entirely upon the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit and metabolized doctrine. Today, we have exactly what the humanity of Christ had. He functioned in the prototype; we have the operational-type. The strategic victory of our Lord during the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union resulted in a second Christocentric dispensation: the great power experiment of the Church Age. The great power experiment of the Church Age derives its precedence from the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union. So, the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union has two applications. First, it serves as a permanent line of demarcation between the dispensation of Israel in the Old Testament and the dispensation of the Church in the New Testament. Secondly, it also serves as a precedence for the unique spiritual life of the Church Age with its mystery doctrines.

Distinguishing between the Age of Israel and the Church:

The modus operandi of Israel is based on being a new racial species. The modus operandi of the Church is based on being a new spiritual species. Therefore, Israel did not have the 100% availability of divine power as we have nor did Israel have the indwelling of all three persons of the Trinity, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the universal priesthood of the believer, the universal royal family of God composed of all believers, the equal privilege and equal opportunity of both Jews and Gentiles, the modus operandi of the protocol plan of God, and the extremely high mandates required in Christian marriage.

Using the Mosaic Law for the spiritual life of the Church Age instead of the Mystery-Doctrines:

Throughout the Church Age, there has been the prevalence of using the Mosaic Law for the Christian way of life. The Mosaic Law became the center of attention for explaining the Christian way of life, and self-determined morality became the order of the day instead of Spirit-filled virtue. The result of morality combined with arrogance related to Sabbath observance, tithing, ritual muttering of the alleged Lord's Prayer. All these things are not the Christian way of life. For the protocol plan of God for the Church Age derives its precedence from the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union, not from the Old Testament and not from the Mosaic Law.

In conclusion, the dispensation of Israel provides no precedence for the Church Age. All precedence for the protocol plan of God is taken from the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union.

The Portfolio of Invisible Assets: a brief introduction of the Primary, Secondary, Personnel and Unique Assets.

Definition.

1. While a portfolio is a word which originated in English from the flat portable case or briefcase used for carrying documents by ministers of state, it is now used for the securities held by an investor or commercial paper held by a bank or mortgage company. We will use this word for the work of God on behalf of the believer in eternity past, the securities and the invisible assets which God the Father has provided for each member of the royal family of God before creation. You have securities and invisible assets that stagger the imagination. Before these assets are usable, they must be understood.

2. The Portfolio of Invisible Assets connotes the grace work of God the Father on your behalf in eternity past. God the Father found the way for His integrity to provide perfect fantastic blessing to His righteousness without any compromise of His essence. In your Portfolio of Invisible Assets God provided everything necessary for function in life, dying,

eternity, growing in grace, and the execution and fulfillment of the Protocol Plan of God. The Portfolio of Invisible Assets provides everything necessary for you to have a fantastic life through receiving your Escrow Blessings which glorify God both in time and forever.

3. When God the Father completed this work He probably said, “It is finished,” because everything you would ever need as a Christian was provided. Since this existed in eternity past, it continues to exist forever.

4. The very existence of Escrow Blessings implies the conditions for the transfer of those greater blessings from their present place of deposit in Christ to us, from the Escrow Officer to the grantee.

5. Our Portfolio of Invisible Assets only becomes apparent when living in God’s power system under the ministry of the Spirit, and by hearing correct and accurate Bible teaching so that we become inculcated with the Protocol Plan of God as recorded in the longest sentence in the Bible namely Ephesians 1:2-14, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God to those saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus: (2) Grace and prosperity [every kind of prosperity] to you for your benefit [bringing out the meaning of the Dative of Advantage], from God, our Father [the author of our portfolio and the grantor of our Escrow Blessings] and the Lord Jesus Christ [the escrow officer]. (3) Worthy of praise and glorification, the God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who [God the Father] has blessed [Escrow Blessings] us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places [a reference to Escrow Blessings] in Christ, (4) just as He [the Father] has elected us for Himself [in the direct middle voice, the subject participates in the action of the verb; a reference to God the Father programming the Divine Decree] in Him [Jesus Christ] before the creation of the world, that we may be set apart [Experiential Sanctification] and blameless [Ultimate Sanctification] in the presence of Him [God the Father]. (5) By means of love [the Greek of the previous verse], He has predestined [culminative aorist: provided the Operational Spiritual Life] us for the purpose of adoption as adult sons to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the pleasure [grace purpose] of His will.

(6) To the praise of [that we might praise] the glory of his grace by which grace he freely blessed us [the culminative aorist; graced us out] in the beloved [in the Lord Jesus Christ]. (7) By whom [Christ] we keep on having redemption through His blood [the judgment of all sins on the cross] resulting in the forgiveness of sins, on the basis of the riches of his grace [the Portfolio of Invisible Assets]. (8) From which [riches of grace] He [God the Father] he has made us super rich, by means of all wisdom and insight [way of thinking]. (9) Having made known to us the mystery [the mystery doctrines of the Church Age] of his will [purpose and design], according to His gracious intention which He pre-designed [planned] in Him [Christ]. (10) With reference to the dispensation of the fullness of times [the Church Age] to gather together all members [*τὰ πάντα μέλη*] in the Christ, the members in heaven [believers who die before the Rapture], and the members on earth [those on the earth at the Rapture] in Him. (11) In Whom [the Lord Jesus Christ] also we have received an allotment [Escrow Blessing prepared in eternity past], having been predestinated [according to His Protocol Plan] for the purpose of a predetermined plan for one [God the Father as the author of the plan] who works all things in conformity with the purpose of His will [so that He may be glorified]: (12) In order that we should be for the praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ [at salvation], (13) In whom also, when you heard the message of truth [a reference to Common Grace] the gospel of your salvation in whom also when you had believed [a reference to Efficacious Grace], you were sealed [in the Book of Life with a signature guarantee] by the Holy Spirit with reference to the promise [eternal salvation], (14) Who [the Holy Spirit] is the guarantee [the pledge, the down payment] for the release of the assets of our inheritance [in our personal portfolio] for the redemption to the praise of His glory [the reason why we are here].”

Escrow Blessings: There are four parts to the definition of escrow.

1. An escrow is a written agreement entered into by three parties, the grantor [God the Father], the grantee [you], and the depositary [our Lord Jesus Christ as the escrow officer], for the transfer of certain benefits.
2. The sealed agreement of God the Father as the grantor, generally accompanied by the deed, bond, or chattel (tangible property except real estate) to be conveyed, is made contingent on some future happening or on the performance of some act by the grantee, and is delivered to the depositary and held by him pending the occurrence of that event or the performance of the required act by the grantee.
3. When the event has taken place or the grantee has performed the specified act, the depositary delivers to him the agreement and the deposit.
4. The depositary or custodian is allowed no discretion, but must follow strictly the terms of the agreement as it concerns the other two parties.
5. The date of our escrow blessings is eternity past.
6. The conditions of the escrow are fulfilled by us in the execution of the unique spiritual life of the Church Age.

Scripture.

1. The sealed agreement of God the Father as the grantor is found in the verses which use the phrase “the riches of His glory” and Ephesians 1:2-3, “Grace to you for your benefit and prosperity [escrow blessings] from God the Father [the grantor of our escrow blessings] and our Lord Jesus Christ [the depositary for escrow blessings]. Worthy of praise and glorification is the God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (escrow blessings) in heavenly places in Christ.”
2. Ephesians 1:18, “I pray that the eyes of your heart [your stream of consciousness] may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the

confidence of His calling, what are the riches of the glory [escrow blessings] of His inheritance to the saints.”

3. Ephesians 3:16, “that He would give you on the basis of the riches of His glory [escrow blessings] to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner person.”

4. Philippians 4:19, “My God will supply [make full, fill up] every need of yours on the basis of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

5. Colossians 1:27, “to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you, the confidence of glory.”

6. In 1 Corinthians 2:9, Escrow Blessings are a part of our portfolio of invisible assets, “However, as it stands written, ‘Things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard [a reference to empiricism] and no mind has conceived [a reference to rationalism] what God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

7. This same principle existed for the Jeshurun [experientially righteous] believers of the Old Testament, Proverbs 8:18, “With me [the personification of Bible doctrine] are riches and honor [for time], enduring wealth and prosperity [for eternity].”

8. The Escrow Blessings deposited by God the Father in eternity past are called in Ephesians 3:8, “the inexhaustible riches in Christ.” Our escrow blessings have been deposited with or in Christ.

The Analogy to the Eternal Escrow.

1. There is an eternal escrow and there are three parties in that escrow. The grantor is God the Father, who has placed Himself under legal obligation in eternity past to provide two categories of special and unusual blessings, both temporal and eternal, for the grantee, the believer who

fulfills the protocol plan of God. The depositary or custodian is God the Son. In eternity past, both categories of blessings were deposited with our Lord Jesus Christ in escrow, pending the grantee's future advance to spiritual maturity. The grantee is the Church Age believer. Under the Protocol Plan of God and the sovereign will of God, expressed in the doctrine of election, the Church Age believer is obligated to fulfill the contingency prior to the transfer of blessings from escrow.

2. So, Escrow blessings were transferred in eternity past by the grantor, God the Father, and delivered to the depositary, Jesus Christ, pending the performance of the grantee, the Church Age believer in the Protocol Plan of God.

3. Temporal blessings on deposit are transferred to the believer when he fulfills the Protocol Plan of God in time, not to be confused with logistical grace blessings given to all believers.

4. Eternal blessings are transferred to the mature believer after the Rapture at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where the winner is awarded special rewards.

5. The sealed agreement with two categories of blessings were delivered to Jesus Christ in eternity past. This emphasizes grace.

6. First God created the blessings, even before He expressed His sovereign will in election and before He designed the Protocol Plan of God in predestination, Ephesians 1:3.

7. Reaching spiritual maturity in time provides the capacity for Escrow Blessings in time; glorification in resurrection body will provide the capacity for Escrow Blessing in the eternal state for the rewardable believer.

Amplification of the Escrow Analogy.

1. In eternity past, the blessings deposited in escrow were made contingent on the future performance of the obligee. In other words, your advance to spiritual maturity in the Protocol Plan of God is the contingent for the transfer of your blessings out of escrow to you.
2. Spiritual maturity is the point that we leave behind the lesser blessings of logistical grace and move into the sphere of the superior blessings.
3. Therefore, when the grantee, under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and momentum from metabolized doctrine, attains spiritual maturity, he receives the first installment of blessings from the depositary, Jesus Christ. The second installment is conveyed to him at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
4. In summary, God the Father is the grantor. He delivered in eternity past to God the Son, the depositary, both temporal and eternal blessings for every believer in compatibility with His sovereign desire in election. This is the Magna Charta of Christianity.
5. These blessings are held by Christ as the depositary, pending the grantee's fulfillment of the protocol plan of God.
6. The temporal blessings in escrow must not be confused with logistical grace blessings. Ephesians 3:20 describes these greater blessings as "exceedingly abundantly above all we could ever ask or think." By contrast, logistical grace blessings are sustaining blessings.
7. God's highest and best is in escrow for you, and He has provided you with equal privilege in the royal family of God and equal opportunity in the Protocol Plan of God to receive these Escrow Blessings.

Primary Assets: Election, Predestination, and Escrow Blessings.

1. The sealed agreement of eternity past is therefore analogous to a modern escrow. The grantor, God the Father, deposited these two

categories of blessings in escrow for every believer, pending his advance to spiritual maturity by the use of His equal privilege and equal opportunity.

2. In coordination with these special blessings deposited in our Lord Jesus Christ as the depository, God the Father elected the believer for these blessings in eternity past.

3. God the Father willed the highest and best for every believer and put that highest and best into escrow before He elected that highest and best. In other words, He showed His good faith by depositing in escrow your highest and best first. Then He elected us, giving us equal privilege and equal opportunity, along with the protocol plan of God as the vehicle of conveyance.

4. Under predestination, God provided the Protocol Plan of God as the means of conveyance, the means of the grantee performing the required act to receive these blessings.

5. The combination of escrow blessings, election, and predestination in eternity past guarantees the conveyance of those blessings to any Church Age believer who is a winner.

6. Not all grantees are winners. In human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree. You can use your free will to completely fail to receive these blessings. Therefore, in eternity there are winners and losers, rich and poor forever. The tragedy of this is that all believers have the equal privilege and opportunity to receive their escrow.

7. The righteousness of God demands Escrow Blessings from the justice of God to any believer who executes the spiritual life. The righteousness of God demands that every believer have equal opportunity to execute

God's plan and receive escrow blessings. The justice of God guarantees that this happens.

The Spiritually Rich and the Spiritually Poor.

1. The spiritually rich are those winners in the Protocol Plan of God who receive the transfer of their blessings from the escrow.
2. The spiritually poor are losers in the Cosmic System who are still supported by God's logistical grace. Although they have equal privilege and equal opportunity, they don't receive their Escrow Blessings simply because they're negative, through either ignorance or cognizance.
3. The spiritually poor cannot lose their salvation and will receive their resurrection body at the Rapture, but they will receive no Escrow Blessings at the Judgment Seat of Christ [the Evaluation Platform of Christ].
4. In this context of the escrow, cosmic believers are double losers and the poorer for it. Their first loss is in time. Though they had equal privilege and opportunity at salvation, they failed to fulfill the Protocol Plan of God. Hence, their escrow blessings for time remain on deposit forever as a memorial to their failure. They are a double loser because, as a result, they won't receive their eternal Escrow Blessings either.
5. Hence, losers are under divine discipline in life. Although their names are still recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life, they are omitted from the honor's list in eternity.
6. Logistical grace extends equal opportunity to every believer, beginning on the day of his salvation, to receive his escrow blessings. Every believer is kept alive by logistical grace long enough so that he could become a winner.

7. Therefore, every loser is a loser by his own decisions. Every believer must take the responsibility for his own decisions in eternity future.

8. Some believers exploit the equal opportunity of election and predestination and fulfill the Protocol Plan of God in time. Losers do not. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, they become double losers.

9. Time provides the opportunity for the grantee to attain God's highest and best under election.

Relation Back Doctrine.

1. This legal doctrine states that the escrow is irrevocable from the date of deposit into escrow.

2. That which God the Father deposits into escrow with our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be withheld from us once we have fulfilled the obligations of reaching spiritual maturity.

3. We must fulfill the obligations of the escrow document prior to the distribution of our Escrow Blessings.

4. The date of deposit (eternity past) is the date of irrevocability. The date of conveyance is the date of the fulfillment of the conditions--the day you reach spiritual maturity.

5. If the conditions are not fulfilled in time, then the escrow blessings remain in escrow forever as a memorial to lost equal opportunity. The loser believer can see his Escrow Blessings on deposit in heaven forever as a memorial to equal opportunity. The loser believer does not lose his salvation, but does lose his Escrow Blessings for time and eternity. He will live forever in heaven with only lesser blessings.

Concluding Principles.

1. The fulfillment of the protocol plan of God in time leads to a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom.
2. This dramatizes the importance of the spiritual life under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and the consistent perception of doctrine and its spiritual metabolism.
3. Nothing dramatizes the protocol plan of God more than the spiritual blessings held in the eternal escrow.
4. What brings your blessings out of escrow?
 - a. Stay in the Protocol Plan of God; quickly rebound to get back in after sinning.
 - b. Remain under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Metabolize the doctrine you learn.
5. How will you know when you're in spiritual maturity? You will recognize your spiritual blessings!
6. Your Escrow Blessings are actually a conveyance from the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, the depositary, to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ in you by virtue of your union with Him.
7. The challenge is found in Hebrews 10:35-36, "Therefore, do not throw away as worthless your confidence, which keeps on having great distribution of blessing. For you keep on having need of perseverance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive the deposit which was promised." The greater blessings in life are not a matter of prayer, but the execution of the unique spiritual life of the Church Age.

Secondary Assets:

Volitional assets are achieved through how one uses his volition on a moment-by-moment basis. For the believer, growing in grace, the desire to know and love God becomes its own asset and a driving force in life.

Production assets is produced by Christian service as a result of spiritual growth. Legitimate Christian service is performed through a wide range of activities, including witnessing, working in the local church, charitable giving, foreign missionary service, and others.

Suffering for blessing assets, namely the three undeserved suffering tests: Providential Preventive Suffering, Momentum Testing and Evidence Testing.

Invisible Impact assets are as follows: individual, national, international and angelic. These are the assets of the mature believer.

Personnel Assets: At the moment of salvation, God the Holy Spirit bestows at least one spiritual gift upon the believer. These assets are designed for the coordinated function of believers particularly in the operations of the local church. Spiritual gifts, in all their variety, unite the Church into a team of mutually supportive believers.

4:4. that I may make it [Bible doctrine pertaining to the Church Age] **clear** [through teaching] **as I ought** [obligation and responsibility] **to communicate.**

ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι.

The apostle Paul needs prayer in order that he might stay on course. It is very easy for anyone who has the gift of communication to be distracted or to get off course. This means that there is the constant necessity of a very strong stability in the life of a communicator of God's Word. He must be unusually stable in order to stay with what his job is and not be distracted into other things.

4:5. Conduct yourselves [keep walking as a pattern of life] **with wisdom toward outsiders** [unbelievers: witnessing lucidly and correctly], **making the most of the opportunity** [keep purchasing the time as the unbeliever is concerned].

Ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω, τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι.

The Sophisticated Spiritual Life first taught by R. B. Thieme Jr.:

Definition and Description.

1. The doctrine of the uniqueness of the Church Age demands the most unusual and sophisticated spiritual life in all of human history.

2. By sophisticated is meant technical refinement, the status of being highly developed and complicated. In this study sophistication is used in the sense of altering or changing the believer through a unique system of Bible doctrine pertinent to the dispensation of the Church. It refers to the adult phase of the spiritual life.

3. Etymology. Of the many antithetical and subtle definitions which occur in the English language, the one selected for this doctrine has its roots in an abstract, Attic Greek noun *sophia*. The noun *sophia* denotes quality rather than activity and unusual knowledge rather than ability.

(1) People think activity or human ability is the function of the Christian life which is erroneous. They never come to understand that the sophisticated spiritual life is quality not activity. Correct activity is the result of quality. Because so much of Christianity is putting activity first, they never have quality. Put the quality first and you will have correct activity.

(2) Sophistication means quality which is the product of divine good produced from divine power. Activity is human power, human talent, human ability, wrapped up in sincerity. The

sophisticated spiritual life is unusual knowledge rather than human ability.

(3) There is no quality without thinking. The Greek word *sophistes* means an expert, a master of one's craft, adept, skilled, wise, prudent, a statesman like person, a sage, a sophist (a teacher who gave lessons in many subjects). This was applied to a person who has been changed by education, by wisdom, by knowledge, by prudence.

4. The adjective sophisticated is applied to a person who has been changed by cognition, by knowledge of the word of God. The spiritual skills produce thought and the application of thought. People are changed by thought, not by activity, human ability, or dead works.

5. Sophisticated denotes the altering of the believer through the unique system of Bible doctrine pertinent to the Church Age. The doctrine of the sophisticated spiritual life notes that the believer has been changed through the utilization of divine power (the Two Power Options—the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the metabolization of doctrine) and the consistent function of the three spiritual skills (the Filling of the Holy Spirit, the metabolization of doctrine via Operation Z, and the use of The Ten Problem Solving Devices).

6. The function of the spiritual life demands thought before action, cognition before service. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for rebuke, for correction [if one accepts the rebuke], for training in righteousness [virtue], (17) that the man of God might be proficient [capable], having been well equipped [prepared] for every good work [Christian service].”

The only Christian who is qualified (equipped) for Christian service is the mature virtuous believer, the one who loves God. In this passage verse sixteen precedes verse seventeen, spiritual preparation precedes service, thought precedes action.

7. The sophisticated spiritual life begins with a personal sense of destiny. A personal sense of destiny separates the adult believer from spiritual childhood and the winner believer from the loser believer. Mastery of the technicalities of the Two Power Options and the Three Spiritual Skills results in attaining a Personal Sense of Destiny and entering into the sophisticated spiritual life. Once you have a personal sense of destiny you are going to move forward in your spiritual life. You will change based on doctrine in your stream of consciousness.

8. Since a personal sense of destiny and entrance into the sophisticated spiritual life is based on the utilization of the Power Options and the functions of the spiritual skills, it relates to the offensive actions of the spiritual life which brings about victory. Offensive action in the Christian way of life is the function of the Two Power Options and the Three Spiritual Skills. Therefore, offensive action in the spiritual life begins with thinking, and thinking begins with cognition of Bible doctrine, and cognition of Bible doctrine begins with the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the teaching ministry of the Spirit begins with the Filling of the Holy Spirit. Offensive action of the sophisticated spiritual life is quality rather than activity, unusual knowledge of Bible doctrine rather than human ability. The sophisticated spiritual life emphasizes how you think as a believer and begins with a personal sense of destiny. Your human I.Q. has nothing to do with this kind of thinking. Activity without the Filling of the Spirit, metabolized doctrine, and the Problem Solving-Devices is dead works, Christian activism, and evil.

9. In the sophisticated spiritual life there is a tremendous system of suffering for blessing, testing which advances us through each phase of spiritual growth. There are three categories of testing: Providential Preventative Suffering, Momentum Testing, and Evidence Testing. Jesus Christ developed the sophisticated spiritual life for himself and eventually gave it to Church Age believers. Furthermore, the sophisticated spiritual life of Jesus was tested which eventuated in the humanity of Christ establishing the precedence for one system of Evidence Testing namely Relationship with God as per Matthew 4:1-10.

Matthew 4:1. Then [after his baptism] Jesus [humanity] was led into the desert [of Judea] by the Spirit [under the authority of the Filling of the Spirit] to be tested by the devil.

The word ‘Jesus’ comes from the Greek which in turn comes from the Hebrew. Both the Greek and the Hebrew word for Jesus mean savior (the one having provided salvation). Since the work of salvation took place in one location on the cross, the name Jesus emphasizes his humanity, “and he himself bore our sins on his body on the cross,” (1 Peter 2:24a).

Jesus must be tested alone. The desert can be a very beautiful and wonderful place and at the same time a very hostile one. If isolated from friends, it can be a place of great loneliness. In all of these temptations, Jesus Christ was isolated from any human encouragement. Doctrine in his soul developed from His sophisticated spiritual life was his only encouragement. (Encouragement from friends once in a while is a wonderful thing, but if you depend upon that, you will not advance in the spiritual life.) To avoid any compromise, he must be alone. He must handle these temptations from his own thoughts, motivations and decisions, not from someone else’s.

There will be three temptations attacking a relationship each in a different location. The first will be related to his relationship to the Holy Spirit: Will he continue to apply doctrine under the authority of the Holy Spirit or will he solve the problem of hunger by producing a miracle by the use of his deity? Using his divine power would have been a violation of Kenosis (He was not to use his divine power to solve his personal problems (Philippians 2:7)! The second is his relationship to the Word: Will he understand and reject Satan’s distortion of Scripture? The last temptation is related to the plan of God the Father: Will he wait for the Father to bless him with the rulership of the world at the 2nd Advent or will he accept Satan’s offer to rule the world (a bona fide offer since Satan is the ruler of the world)? The temptations will take place in three different locations: The first in the desert, the second on the highest point of Herod’s temple, and the third on a high vantage point in space.

Satan understood well the Hypostatic Union and the doctrine of Kenosis. The definition of the Hypostatic Union is as follows: In the person of the incarnate Christ there are two natures, divine and human, inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal (two natures united forming one person) and eternal. The definition of Kenosis is as follows: During the dispensation of the hypostatic union, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the use of His divine attributes in compliance with the Father's plan for the Incarnate Christ during the First Advent. This means that Jesus Christ did not use the attributes of His divine nature to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, or to glorify His human nature; rather he relied on the Problem- Solving Devices to solve his personal problems.

Philippians 2:5-6, "Keep on thinking this [correct thinking and correct values] within you which also was in Christ Jesus. Who, though He existed in the essence of God, did not think equality with God a gain to be seized and held [to remain as God only], but deprived himself [The Greek verb "kenoo." He laid aside his privileges: He did not use his deity in violation of the Father's plan: He did not use miracles to solve his personal problems] taking on the form of a servant, having come to be in the likeness of men [but without a sin nature and without Adam's Original Sin], and being found in outward appearance as a man [inwardly he was different]. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of [the substitutionary spiritual] death [He was punished for the consequences of our spiritual death] that is the death of the cross."

Matthew 4:2. And having fasted forty days and nights afterwards he was very hungry [suffered hunger].

The purpose of fasting is to give a person more time for prayer and for learning God's word. Each one of us spends a certain number of hours eating. If this time were not spent on eating, it could be used for these other purposes. Also, fasting enhances one's concentration. So, Jesus

Christ after 40 days and nights of fasting for the purposes stated above was prepared to meet Satan.

When a person stops eating food, he will have great hunger for two or three days until his stomach shrinks. Then, he will not usually experience hunger again until 30 days has elapsed. Somewhere between day 30 and 40, the body will provide warning signals that the body is facing a critical situation. At that point the person will become extremely hungry.

When a typical person is under extreme hunger, he thinks only about food, not about the opposite sex or anything else. Even his conversation will be about food. Christ functioning under the sophisticated spiritual life was not typical and so, even though His body was beginning to suffer starvation, he concentrated on making correct application of God's word. While applying the Word, His temptation to use his deity to solve his extreme hunger must have been phenomenal; a temptation he resisted. The average person would have been concentrating on himself and on food, and many would have been praying for a miracle.

All the attacks were against his human nature. In the first temptation, Satan tried to put so much pressure on his human nature that he would use his divine nature to solve the problem of hunger. (This would be comparable to a Christian praying for a miracle.) In Eternity past, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit agreed to provide sufficient assets for the humanity of Christ via the Problem-Solving Devices so that he would not have to rely on his divine nature to solve His problems and pressures.

Matthew 4:3. And after the Tempter [Satan] had come, he said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God and you are [1st class Greek conditional clause], speak [imperative of entreaty] so that these stones might become bread.

Just as Jesus Christ was to use the eight problem solving devices (He didn't need Recovery Procedure nor did he use Occupation with Christ since he was Christ.) to solve his person problems. So, we are to use the ten problem solving devices to solve our problems, pressures and

adversities. If Jesus had manufactured a miracle to solve this problem of hunger, he would have been disqualified from going to the cross. Yet, many Christians pray to God that He might solve their problems with a miracle.

When the Tempter came, he came with great confidence since he knew that Jesus was made lower than the angels in body and mentality. “You [God the Father] have made Him for a little while (1st Advent) lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7). However, Satan underestimated the power of Bible doctrine in His soul. Jesus with God’s thinking circulating in his soul had great knowledge, wisdom, humility and integrity whereas Satan lacked all four of these virtues. This gave Jesus the edge to defeat Satan in these tests.

Satan tempted the human nature of Christ: The temptation to use his divine nature to solve the problem of his hunger instead of relying on the authority of the Holy Spirit [apply Deuteronomy 8:3] and the provision provided in the Father’s plan [angels will bring food after the test]. Satan knew that it was not possible to tempt the deity of Christ directly. So, he tempted the humanity of Christ, the weakest link of the Hypostatic Union.

Satan approaches Christ with pseudo humility. In his pseudo concern, he entreats (the imperative of entreaty) Jesus to turn the stones into bread. “If you are the Son of God and you are.” Satan understands very well the doctrine of the hypostatic union and the Doctrine of Kenosis. Based on his knowledge of the hypostatic union, Satan knows that Jesus could use his deity to solve this problem of hunger. Based on Satan’s knowledge of Kenosis, he knows that if Jesus does use his deity to solve the problem of hunger, Jesus would have violated the Father’s plan and thus be disqualified to go to the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

Matthew 4:4. But He answered and said, it has been written, “This Man shall not live by means of bread alone, but on the basis of every word which proceeds through the mouth of God [the Father].” [Jesus applies Deuteronomy 8:3]

Remember that in this test, He is being tested in his relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not want Him to solve a personal problem via a miracle which would be a violation of the doctrine of Kenosis, but wants Him to apply Deuteronomy 8:3.

Jesus makes clear his values: The soul is more important than the body; the Word of God is more important than anything related to this life. Applying the Word of God is far more important than solving a hunger problem. Jesus in His use of the sophisticated spiritual life always magnified God the Father's word and plan above his own human desires as in this verse. Hebrews 10:5, "Therefore, when he [the humanity of Christ] comes into the world [his birth], he says, 'Sacrifice and offerings you [God the Father] have not desired, but a body you have prepared for Me.'" (Jesus understood that animal sacrifices and food offering were teaching aids only to foreshadow the cross. Jesus was to sacrifice himself on the cross. That was to be the reality. He was saying in effect that he understood his destiny and was willing to execute it by bearing the sins of the world on his body. Then as he faced the cross, He said in Matthew 26:39b, "and fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible and it is [Jesus had to agree to bare the sins of the world: 1st Class conditional clause], let this cup [which contained the sins of the world] pass from Me, yet not as I will, but as You will.'" All of these verses illustrate the opening line.

Matthew 4:5. Then, the devil took [historical present] him into the holy city [Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:1)] and caused him to stand [Satan selected the location] on the highest point of the temple.

Satan took Jesus to the highest point of Herod's temple [a wing of the temple: Herod's porch] overlooking the Valley of Kedron. From that point, it is 450 feet to the rocky floor of the valley.

Matthew 4:6. And Satan said, "Since [if . . . and you are] you are the son of God, throw yourself down [The Greek idiom means to jump] for it has been written, 'He will give command to his angels concerning you

[omitted: to guard you [a promise to the Jews of the Exodus generation] in all your ways] and they [guardian angels] will lift you up on their hands [angels have hands] so that you should not strike your foot against a rock.’”

Jesus had just said that he would live by the word of God. Then, Satan having replied in effect, if you desire to live by the Word, then apply Psalm 91:11, 12 by jumping into the Kedron Valley. Satan is an expert in distorting Scripture, and leaping into the Kedron Valley would have been a distortion of a promise made to the Jews in their desert wanderings. In that passage, likely written by Moses, God promises protection for the Jews as they moved through the Sinai Peninsula. In order to provide protection, God assigned guardian angels to these Jews to safeguard them from the wild animals of the area and from falling to their death accidentally as they passed over some high, rocky and treacherous terrain. Regarding the application of Scripture, God does not condone senseless or unreasonable action which can come from distorting Scripture. Satan was actually quoting Scripture which did not apply to Jesus and giving it a false application in order to get Christ to act in violation of Scripture by what would be tantamount to suicide. God created the laws of gravity. Having created these laws, he will not violate them. If some Christian moron were to pray, “Father, I am about to jump off the Empire State Building. So, please send one of your angels to gather me into his arms.” He then would proceed to jump to his death!

In his distortion of Scripture, Satan deliberately skipped the line, “to guard you on all your journeys [the second line of verse 11].” This line is the basis for the correct interpretation. Since Jesus is not journeying across treacherous terrain, it would have no application to him. Furthermore, by interpretation it was a promise given to the Jews in their desert wanderings; it was not given to the humanity of Christ. Even if one of those Jews on their wandering through the desert had deliberately jumped off a cliff which would have been a distortion, his guarding angel would probably have said, “I’ll see you in heaven, moron.”

In his reply, Jesus didn’t deal with Satan’s omission and his suggestion of

nonsensical action (to leap from a high structure), but Jesus did make an issue out of Satan's distortion of Scripture. Distortion of Scripture is tantamount to blaspheming God. Thus, any creature who distorts Scripture is testing as it were the patience of God. In effect Satan made a mistake when he admitted that Jesus was deity.

Matthew 4:7. Jesus replied to him once more [the situation demands the right application], "It has been written. You shall not put to the test the Lord your God [God the Son is the one who had created Satan]."

Satan has a right to test the humanity of Christ, but not his deity. The mishandling and distortion of Scripture is an attack on the deity of Christ. So, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16 in his command to Satan. In this way, the Lord turned the first conditional sentences of verses 3 and 6 against Satan. (In those two verses Satan admitted that Jesus was God).

"For the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise, the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested Him at Massah [to test, to prove as in Exodus 17:1-7: complaining about no water]." (Deuteronomy 6:15, 16)

Matthew 4:8, 9: Again, the devil took him to a very high vantage point [possibly a high point in space] and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glamour, and he said to him, "All these [reference to the kingdoms of the world] I will give to you if you will fall down and worship me [3rd class conditional sentence: maybe you will or maybe you won't; the aorist tense: just once will be enough]."

Since the devil is the ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), it was a genuine offer. The Greek word '*horos*' means mountain or high vantage point. Obviously, it can't mean mountain in this passage since the kingdoms of the world cannot be seen from the top of any mountain in Palestine nor any other mountain including K2 or Mount Everest. On the best day from Mount Everest, the most one can see is more mountains in

China, Tibet or India, beautiful, but not the glamour of the world.

Satan goes to a 3rd class conditional sentence, the only option left to him. He has already been defeated in his use of the 1st class conditional sentences and the 2nd and 4th would be admitting defeat. In his desperation, he reverses the order of the conditional sentence, putting the conclusion first “All these, I will give to you if ...” Before in Matthew 4:6, he requested that the Jesus jump 450 feet into the Kedron Valley; now just drop to the ground and worship me for a second or two; it is easy and not dangerous.

Satan is telling Christ that he can have the crown and His kingdom now without having to go to the cross. The crown without the cross as it were. Satan suggest his plan rather than to wait for the unfolding of God the Father’s plan. Jesus Christ can have the crown without the suffering of the cross and he doesn’t have to wait for it.

Satan is always trying to bring about improved environment without truth and without the cross. This is impossible for only when a people in a nation accept truth can great environment come about. Thus, the United States’ little experiment in nation-building in the Middle East was doomed before it even started. The Muslim religion not only rejects the cross and other forms of truth, but is also anti-Semitic. These rejections of divine truth can only be punished by the justice of our Lord. If a nation desires to help the Arabs in the Middle East, it needs to send qualified missionaries.

Matthew 4:10. Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan for it stands written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” (Deuteronomy 6:13)

Jesus is pointing out that all creature loyalty is to God. No creature is to worship another creature rather all creatures are to worship God.

The Difference Between the Spiritual Life and the Sophisticated Spiritual Life.

1. The spiritual life of the Church Age believer is related to the four dimensions of Ephesians 3:18, “That you may utilize the divine power [the Two Power Options] to grasp the idea with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth.” The divine power given to you includes two options. Your spiritual life starts with grasping an idea. Not doing, but thinking, learning. The four dimensions are:

(1) Width—the ten problem solving devices deployed on the FLOT line of the soul.

(2) Length—the two power options which combine to form the ten problem solving devices.

(3) Height—the execution of the protocol plan of God resulting in a winner believer or invisible hero.

(4) Depth—the divine initiative of antecedent grace in eternity past providing your very own portfolio of invisible assets.

2. The first five problem solving devices (the Recovery Procedure, the Filling of the Holy Spirit, the three stages of the Faith-rest Drill, grace orientation, and doctrinal orientation) are the basic problem-solving devices of spiritual childhood. Using these problem-solving devices advances the Christian from spiritual childhood to spiritual adolescence, the sixth problem solving device, a personal sense of destiny which is the dividing line between spiritual childhood and spiritual adulthood. It is the separation of spiritual childhood from spiritual adulthood which adds a focal point and sophistication to the spiritual life of the Church Age believer. Spiritual self-esteem, which is cognitive self-confidence and entrance into the sophisticated spiritual life. Spiritual autonomy, which is cognitive independence and adds greater sophistication from greater cognition. Spiritual maturity, which is cognitive invincibility and provides

maximum sophistication to the spiritual life, i.e., maximum focal point in concentration. Your focal point changes from your environment and the people around you to true Christian fellowship with God.

The Focal Point of the Sophisticated Spiritual Life.

1. The focal point means the principal or central point of focus in your spiritual life.
2. Focal point begins with making Bible doctrine number one priority in your life.
3. From this comes an advance in your focal point, the principle of thought before action. Thought before action is the consistent function of the two power options namely the Filling of the Holy Spirit and metabolized doctrine circulating in the stream of consciousness.
4. Extrapolated from metabolized doctrine in the stream of consciousness are the Ten Problem-solving Devices provided by God in your Portfolio of Invisible Assets.
5. The deployment of these problem-solving devices on the FLOT line of the soul results in the perpetuated function of The Three Spiritual Skills, so that the Filling of the Spirit and continued metabolization of doctrine creates a mirror in your soul. You can look into that mirror and see yourself as you really are spiritually. You can see your relationship to other people and whether or not you truly have fellowship with God.
6. The three spiritual skills must be formed and operational before Christian service in any category is effective in the production of divine good in contrast to dead works, human good, and evil.
7. A personal sense of destiny produces a total realization that every aspect of the Christian life must function under divine power. Therefore, entrance into the sophisticated spiritual life, where spiritual skills must

precede production skills for the performance of divine good, is a new life, greater than anything you have ever imagined.

8. Maximum effectiveness in Christian service is related to a personal sense of destiny. Divine power comes into Christian service through the use of the two power options. Only Christian service under divine power is legitimate according to the word of God. The Three Spiritual Skills are the source for and the modus vivendi of effective Christian service. The expression of Christian service is the function of problem-solving devices on the FLOT line of the soul. The sophisticated spiritual life activates maximum effectiveness in Christian service.

The Sophisticated Spiritual Life makes full use of the Four Spiritual Mechanics.

THE FOUR SPIRITUAL MECHANICS	
<p>1 <i>Utilization of Two Power Options</i></p> <p>(FHS + HIQ = SIQ) + OPZ = PSDs</p> <p>① ②</p>	<p>2 <i>Function of Three Spiritual Skills</i></p> <p>FHS + OPZ + PSDs = PPG</p> <p>① ② ③</p>
<p>3 <i>Deployment of Ten Problem-Solving Devices</i></p>	<p>4 <i>Execution of Three Stages of the Adult Spiritual Life</i></p> <p>PERSONAL SENSE OF DESTINY ↓</p> <p>SSE + CSC + PSDs + PPS = SA STAGE 1 #7, #8</p> <p>SA + CIND + PSD + MT₄ = SM STAGE 2 #9</p> <p>SM + CINV + PSD + ET₂ = MGG STAGE 3 #10</p>

FHS = Filling of the Holy Spirit
 HIQ = Human IQ
 SIQ = Spiritual IQ
 OPZ = Operation Z
 PSDs = Problem-Solving Devices
 PPG = Protocol Plan of God
 SSE = Spiritual Self-Esteem
 CSC = Cognitive Self-Confidence
 PSDs #7, #8 = Problem-Solving Devices
 #7 (personal love for God the Father)
 #8 (impersonal love for all mankind)
 PPS = Providential Preventive Suffering
 SA = Spiritual Autonomy

CIND = Cognitive Independence
 PSD #9 = Problem-Solving Device
 #9 (sharing the happiness of God)
 MT₄ = Momentum Testing in 4 categories
 (people, thought, system, disaster)
 SM = Spiritual Maturity
 CINV = Cognitive Invincibility
 PSD #10 = Problem-Solving Device
 #10 (occupation with Christ)
 ET₂ = Evidence Testing in 2 categories
 (relationship with God, relationship with life)
 MGG = Maximum Glorification of God

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A Summary of the Stages of Spiritual Growth:

At Spiritual Self-esteem, the believer with a lot of confidence is beginning to enter the Advanced Spiritual Life. For this reason, he must be tested on the first two advanced stages of the spiritual life namely Problem-Solving Devices 7 and 8 namely personal love for God the Father and unconditional love toward all people. These two will be tested under the test called 'Providential Preventive Suffering. Upon passing this test, the Christian will advance spiritually to Spiritual Autonomy.

At Spiritual Autonomy, the Christian no longer leans on things or people for his happiness. His happiness is based upon his execution of the Father's plan and in so doing pleases God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He is said to be cognitively independent, in other words in his thinking he does not depend upon anything in this life for his happiness other than the execution of the plan before him. Of course, this new found happiness must be tested and it is via Momentum Testing. For example, during this test, he could lose a loved one, or he could lose some of his possession from Disaster Testing as a part of Momentum Testing.

Having passed Momentum Testing, the Christian advances to Spiritual Maturity at which juncture, he has love for Christ namely he knows the mandates of Scripture and obeys them. This presupposes his tremendous grace orientation, doctrinal inculcation, integrity and wisdom which combined makes him virtually invincible. However, even though from his soul, he is invincible, if he should get out of fellowship and remain in that state, he would no longer be invincible. However, assuming that he will continue in this status quo, he will receive Evidence Testing. His passing this test will bring maximum glory to the members of the Godhead.

Maximum glorification of God:

1. Tactical victory in the angelic conflict.
2. Maximum dynamic impact on both individuals and history in general.

3. Receiving Escrow Blessing for time which guarantees Escrow Blessing distributed at the Evaluation Platform of Christ.

4. Execution of the Protocol Plan of God.

5. Becoming an invisible hero and a winner believer.

6. Passing Evidence Testing.

7. Glorification of God both in time and for all eternity.

4:6. Your word [formed in the mind] **always in the sphere of grace** [let your speech always be with grace], *as though having been seasoned* [making it palatable] **with salt** [the beneficial qualities of the advanced believers in dealing with others; When you have maximum doctrine in your soul you become the seasoning for the population of the country.], **so that** [intended result] **you may know how you ought to answer each person** [as a royal ambassador: how to answer to an unbeliever, how to answer a failing believer].

ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι, ἅλατι ἡρτυμένος, εἰδέναι πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἀποκρίνεσθαι.

The Grace Plan of God:

God's plan is based on grace, not some philosophical system of human works. Grace means freely given and undeserved. God does all the giving; we undeservedly reap all this giving. For example, in grace God provides for all believers the same spiritual I.Q. Human I.Q. plus the Filling of the Spirit equals spiritual I.Q. Any Christian who implies or states that he, the one with a high human I.Q. alone is able to learn the deep matters of God is in a state of arrogance and does not understand God's system of grace.

1 Corinthians 15:10a, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [the greatest act of grace took place on the cross] and the love of God [the Father the author of reciprocal love] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit [the enabling power of the Spirit].” When we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we became the recipients of the greatest possible endowment of grace, and grace pursues the advancing believer his entire life.

Developing the concept of Salt:

We continue as a nation because this country has been seasoned with salt. The seasonings with salt are the born-again believers, members of the royal family of God, who continue to take in maximum Bible doctrine. The passive voice indicates that a nation receives blessing because of the spiritual advance and progress of believers living in that nation by means of Jesus Christ who controls history and often permits nations to survive in spite of the reversionism, the apostasy, and the decadence in that nation.

A few points for elaboration:

1. Salt was very common in Bible times, that is why salt is used so extensively in the Scripture. Salt was used in the ancient world for a number of reasons, all of which are to illustrate Bible doctrine. Salt was used in the ancient world for preserving food for it was the original system of refrigeration; It was also used for the seasoning of food. It was used for the expression of fidelity in the ancient world. For example, eating salt with a king or a VIP meant allegiance to that king or VIP. Enlistment in armies often included eating salt, meaning I will be faithful to my commanders. Making a peace treaty or a covenant of friendship was used by eating bread and salt together. Salt was an expression of hospitality, and when you ate salt with someone, even though it was an enemy and under their roof, they couldn't kill you until you left their property. Salt was used as an expression of judgement. For example, Carthage was sowed with salt after the Roman conquest of that city. All of these uses are found in the Scripture as an illustration of many different things.

2. The biblical use of salt as a seasoner of food, Job 6:6-7, “Can something tasteless be eaten without salt, or is there any taste in the white of an egg? (7) My soul refuses to touch them; They are like loathsome food to me.” What Job is saying in is that there are certain things he will not do, it is like trying to eat food without salt. For example, he will not associate with evil people; He will not do something wrong in order to advance himself. In effect, he is saying, my soul refuses to touch them because he has salt in his soul. Salt in his soul is Bible doctrine. His life has been savored with salt and since he now has a seasoned life, he cannot go back to the tasteless things of socialism and liberalism and do-goodism, and all of the other principles that are minus salt or minus grace. So, salt as a seasoner of food is used as an analogy for separation from false concepts.

3. Salt was used in the Levitical offerings. The food offering of Leviticus chapter two, which portrays propitiation with emphasis on the person of Christ, used salt. Salt was also used in the other offerings as well. Salt in the food offering, however, had a special meaning, it follows the concept of preservation or eternal security. Leviticus 2:13, “Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt [representing an eternal relationship].” Salt was used in the burnt offering to indicate eternal security as well as the efficacy of the work of Christ. Ezekiel 43:24, “You shall present them before the Lord, and the priests shall throw salt on them, and they shall offer them up as a burnt offering to the Lord.”

4. Salt is used in three categories of judgement: Personal judgement for example Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt, Genesis 19:17, 26, “When they [the angels] had brought them outside, one said, " Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away. (26) But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

Salt is used for the judgement of cities, Deuteronomy 29:23, “All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no

grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.” Judges 9:45, “Abimelech fought against the city all that day, and he captured the city and killed the people who were in it; then he razed the city and sowed it with salt.” Eternal judgement of the Lake of Fire is described in terms of salt as per Mark 9:47-49, “If your eye causes you to stumble [sexual abuse of children which causes much scar tissue and the destruction of one’s faith], throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes [to dramatize the importance of not destroying one’s faith through child sexual abuse], to be cast into Gehena [a synonym for the Lake of Fire], (48) where their worm does not die [idiom for eternal judgment], and the fire is not quenched. (49) For everyone will be salted with fire [every unbeliever will be judged with fire].”

5. Salt is analogues to the mature believer as the preserver of his nation, Matthew 5:13, “You [the advanced or mature believer] are the salt of the Land [of Israel; by application the United States], but if the salt has become tasteless [insipid in this case, by rejection of truth], how [by what] can it be made salty again? It is no longer good [has ability] for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

As salt has the ability to preserve and add flavor to food, so the mature believer is the basis for the blessing and preservation of his nation. As salt which has lost its ability to preserve and to savor food is worthless so the believer who enters into reversionism becomes worthless to his nation and to those around him. Rather than being a preserver of his nation through advance to maturity, he as a believer in apostasy becomes the basis for God to judge his nation. Rather than being a blessing to others, he becomes a cursing by association. In the ancient world, insipid salt was thrown out onto the street and trampled under the foot by those who passed by. Like insipid salt which is trampled underfoot, so the reversionistic believer will be trampled underfoot by the Lord. So, take your choice whether you want to be a blessing or a cursing to others and to your nation.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the one who controls history uses his power to preserve and to bless a client nation based on that nation having a sufficient number of mature believers. In other words, the Lord blesses people, groups and nations because of their association with great believers. Elijah once complained that only he was faithful to the Word. However, the Lord reminded him that there were 7000 who had not bowed a knee to Baal and for that reason Israel would be preserved (1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18). Moses was so great that the Lord delivered the Jewish people from the Egyptian bondage. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 presents the baptism of [identification with] Moses, “For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses [identified with Moses and so delivered] in the cloud and in the sea.” Moses was identified with the cloud or Jesus Christ, and the people were identified with Moses, and so the people were able to pass through the sea unharmed. Later at Mount Sinai, the Lord threatened to destroy all the Jews and to make a new nation from the loins of Moses, but Moses interceded on behalf of the Jews and the Lord changed his mind (listened to the intercession of Moses) about destroying the nation (Exodus 32:7-14). Did the Jews learn from their Mount Sinai experience? After the Jews had heard the report regarding giants in the land from the reconnaissance team, they refused to go into the Land of Milk and Honey. Again, for a second time, the Lord threatened to destroy all these Jews to a man and then to manufacture a new nation from the loins of Moses, but again Moses interceded on behalf of the Jews and the Lord pardoned them (Numbers 14:11-20). If there are no believers with salt (with doctrine in the soul) there is no hope for the nation. Mark 9:50, “Have salt in yourselves” is having maximum doctrine in the soul, this is the preservation of the nation, “and be at peace with one another,” in other words, the salty believer is at peace with everyone else [an expression of impersonal love].

6. The believer without truth in his soul possess neither the preservative power of salt nor any of the beneficial assets of salt, and therefore is thrown-out, is removed by the Lord. Luke 14:34-35, “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless [by analogy the believer enters

reversionism], with what will it be seasoned? (35) It is useless either for the soil [by analogy to the nation] or for the manure pile [the believer who rejects truth provides no benefit to the nation illustrated by his failure to make even good manure]; it is thrown out [analogous to the Sin unto Death]. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

7. Salt is analogous to the mature believer's beneficial qualities including his divine viewpoint, Colossians 4:6, "Your word [formed in the mind] always in the sphere of grace [let your speech always be with grace], *as though* having been seasoned with salt [the beneficial qualities of the advanced believer in dealing with others], so that [intended result] you may know how you ought to answer [infinitive of conceived result] each person [an answer to an unbeliever; an answer to a failing believer]."

8. In the birth procedure, salt was used as an antiseptic, Ezekiel 16:4. In the analogy of the birth of Israel, the birth of grace, we have: "As for your birth [the birth of Jerusalem], on the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed down with salt, nor even wrapped in clothes."

9. The salt of the covenant was used to express the eternal relationship between God and the believer. It is related to the Levitical offerings in Numbers 18:19, "... it is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord, to you and to your seed after you." So, the eating of salt was the basis for setting up a contract. For example, it is was used in establishing the Davidic covenant, 2 Chronicles 13:5, "Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?"

Ambassadorship, royal:

An ambassador is a high ranking-minister of state or royalty sent to another state to represent his sovereign or country. By analogy, we are spiritual aristocracy as members of the royal family of God, and Christ is the King who has sent us into a foreign country, the cosmic world. At

salvation, every believer enters the royal family of God through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and at the same time, he becomes a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Ambassadorship stems from being in union with Christ via the Baptism of the Spirit.

The Profile of the Ambassador.

1. An ambassador does not appoint himself, rather he is appointed by God Himself at the moment he believes in Jesus Christ. As the Christian grows spiritually, he acquires the capacity to handle this responsibility.
2. The ambassador does not support himself and so it is, with the Church Age believer who is provided for by Logistical Grace which is augmented at spiritual maturity by Escrow Blessings.
3. The ambassador's instructions are always in written form so he has no doubt as to what he should do. We have God's policy of grace, the Problem-Solving Devices, instructions, principles and concepts, the Mystery Doctrines and others as well, all in written form in the Scripture.
4. The royal ambassador of the Church Age has heavenly citizenship. So, from the viewpoint of his ambassadorship, does not belong to the country to which he is sent.
5. The royal ambassador does not live in the foreign country for his own personal interest, but lives on earth solely to serve the interest of his Lord. Therefore, he should subordinate all personal interest to the function of his ambassadorship which includes the Filling of the Spirit, cognition of Bible doctrine, and the execution of the Protocol Plan of God. In summary, the more a person advances spiritually, the better he will fulfill his responsibilities as an ambassador.
6. The ambassador does not treat any insult as personal for he realizes that any insult received in the proper function of his ambassadorship is an insult against the Lord. This also means that the Christian ambassador

tolerates others and holds no grudges. When he is insulted, treated unfairly, or ridiculed, he maintains his poise and dignity by the use of the spiritual life given to him. He leaves the responsibility of retaliation etc. in the Lord's hands.

7. When an ambassador is recalled, his recall is tantamount to a declaration of war. His recall is analogous to the Rapture of the Church. The Tribulation is analogous to that period of war.

The Royal Ambassadorship is Specialized and Intensified in the Gift of Pastor-Teacher.

1. All communicative gifts (evangelists, apostles, pastor-teachers) become critical and specialized in the functions of the royal ambassadorship because they communicate spiritual truth. This is why Paul said in Ephesians 6:20, “on behalf of which [gospel] I am an ambassador in chains, that in this [proclaiming of the mystery doctrine], I might communicate with confidence as I ought to speak.”

2. There is a special need for those who communicate doctrine to do so with confidence. That confidence cannot exist apart from their understanding of the spiritual life in detail, and have the ability to study and teach the Word from the original languages. Furthermore, in order to handle the difficulties, the indifference, the communicator must be a spiritual adult otherwise he will not be able to do his job as unto the Lord.

The Royal Ambassadorship Related to Evangelism.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were making His appeal through us. We invite you on behalf of Christ: become reconciled to God.”

2. This is the function of every believer who witnesses and is the special function of the believer with the gift of evangelism. We are not only to

witness through our life, but also to witness through verbal communication of the Gospel.

The Royal Ambassadorship Mandates the Function of Spiritual Self-esteem and Impersonal Love. Philemon 8-10, “Therefore, although I have much confidence [in my authority] in Christ to command you to do what is right [protocol], rather because of your love [for Jesus Christ] I encourage you, being such a one as Paul, an ambassador, and also now a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I appeal to you on behalf of my son, whom I have fathered in my chains, Onesimus,”

1. When the spiritual momentum of the royal ambassador takes him to the point of personal love for God, he then has maximum spiritual self-esteem which enables him to apply impersonal love toward all mankind.
2. While personal love for God is the function of one’s royal priesthood, spiritual self-esteem and impersonal love for man are the functions of his ambassadorship.
3. Everything the believer does in life becomes a part of his *modus operandi* as a royal ambassador. Every believer, therefore, makes a pulpit out of his circumstances in every area of life.
4. Your ambassadorship is basically made up of two factors: how you live and what you say as a result of what you think. In private, you function under your priesthood; in public, you function under your ambassadorship.

The Royal Ambassadorship is Related to the Angelic Conflict.

1. The Church Age believer is not only an ambassador to human creatures, but to angels as well. You are being watched right now just as the angels observed our Lord, 1 Timothy 3:16, “And by common acknowledgement, great is the mystery of the spiritual life [proto-type and the operational type]. He who was revealed in the flesh [Hypostatic Union]: He was

vindicated by the Spirit [Filled at birth and remained under that ministry during His 33 years]; He was seen by angels [because it was the crossroad of history]; He was proclaimed among the nations; He was believed on in the world; He was taken up into glory [resurrection].”

2. Elect angels observe and rejoice over the conversion of one person, Luke 15:7-10, “I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner [an unbeliever] who changes his thinking [regarding Christ and believes and therefore, becomes a royal priest and ambassador] than over ninety-nine righteous persons [believers with imputed righteousness] who have no need of a change of thinking [toward Christ]. (8) Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? (9) When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!’ (10) In the same way, I tell you, there is happiness in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner [unbeliever] who changes his thinking [regarding Christ and believes].”

3. Fallen angels are organized to resist and oppose your ambassadorship and your growth in grace, Ephesians 6:12, “Because our warfare [as royal priests and ambassadors in spiritual combat] is not against blood and flesh [human beings], but against the rulers [demon generals and commanders such as Abaddon (Apollon)], against the authorities [demon commissioned officers], against the world rulers of this darkness [demon possessed ambassadors and rulers of the world], against the spiritual forces of evil [rank and file demons] in the heavenly places [in the atmosphere around the earth].”

4. The fact that angels are watching you as an ambassador is found in 1 Corinthians 4:9. “For I think God has exhibited us apostles last of all as men condemned to death [last ones into the Colosseum], for we have become an amphitheater to the world, both to angels and to men.”

5. Ephesians 3:10, “In order that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to rulers and authorities in the heavenlies [angels learn from Church Age believers].”

6. 1 Timothy 5:21, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His elect angels [elect angels constantly watch Church Age believers] to maintain these doctrines without bias; do nothing on the basis of partisan strife.”

The Concept of the Believer-Ambassador.

1. While the priesthood of the believer emphasizes the daily intake and application of God’s word and advance to spiritual maturity, the ambassadorship of the believer emphasizes the production of the Christian way of life.

2. This ambassador’s service can be a function of one's spiritual gift or obedience to a command related to service as taught in the Word.

3. Since maximum production involves spiritual maturity, it is obvious that the attainment of spiritual maturity results in maximum effectiveness in the area of your royal ambassadorship.

4. The Filling of the Spirit is an absolute necessity in the function of the ambassador. Any Christian service or works apart from the Filling of the Spirit is wood, hay and stubble, a good to be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ (the Evaluation Platform of Christ).

5. Everything the believer does in life becomes a part of his ambassadorship, for in effect, the believer makes a pulpit out of his circumstances.

6. The Lord uses ambassadors in business, professions, homes, academic life, and in local churches. Your circumstances are your full-time Christian service whether you work in the military, in labor, or in

management etc. In the Roman Empire, many believers fulfilled their ambassadorship as slaves.

The Concept of the Weeping Ambassador.

The weeping ambassador expresses the regrets of wrong thinking and the failure of the believer or unbeliever to orient to history. Disorientation to history means distraction from the Christian way of life. Isaiah 33:6-7, “And He [Lord Jesus Christ] will be the stability of your times, a wealth of deliverance, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear of [respect for] Lord is his treasure [in 721 B.C. there was no knowledge or respect for the Lord in the Northern Kingdom] (7) Behold their brave men [the army of the Northern Kingdom of Israel] cry [from patriotism over the loss of their fellow soldiers, their freedom and over the destruction of their nation] in the streets, the ambassadors of peace [the liberal politicians] weep bitterly.” The faithful ambassador in contrast to the weeping ambassador: Proverbs 13:16-17, “Every wise man [believer] acts with knowledge of doctrine, but a fool [a believer who rejects the spiritual life] spreads foolishness. An evil messenger falls into adversity [the law of volitional responsibility], but a faithful envoy brings healing [is an effective witness for Christ].”

4:7. As to all my affairs [Our life is made up of things, not just materialistic things but experiences, circumstances, all kinds of activities.], **Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord, will bring you information** [Tychicus will make a report to the Colossians regarding Paul’s activities, situation etc.].

Τὰ κατὰ ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ,

The greatness of the men we are going to study is all based upon one adjective, faithful; something they all had in common; something that God prizes in the believer. For example, in the middle of verse 7, Tychicus is called “faithful” regarding his service or ministry; Onesimus is called a

“faithful” brother in verse 9. Wherever you go in the Scripture one of the things that is so important is the virtue of faithfulness. By implication, the use of this adjective twice indicates also that Aristarchus, John Mark, Justus in verse 11, and Epaphras in verse 12 were faithful, stable, and consistent.

Tychicus “a beloved brother”

1. Tychicus was loved means that he was respected. They respected him for his strength of character; to the contrary, this love was not based upon any personality trait.

2. Furthermore, this means that he was a relaxed person; he wasn’t arrogant and so he wasn’t trying to prove anything and making an issue out of himself.

3. He was this way because of what Bible doctrine accomplishes in the soul of the believer. He was consistent in his intake of doctrine and stability came out of this consistency. Great character manifests itself through stability.

4. Note that the Bible emphasizes the character of Tychicus, not his personality. Personality is all right as long as there is character to stabilize it. However, it is character that counts.

5. Tychicus was a happy person, well balanced, well oriented to grace. He had great stability and great capacity for life. Therefore, he was a great person to be around.

Tychicus, a faithful minister [the Greek word for ministry or service is *diakonia*, not to be confused with *diakonos* which can be used for communicators or deacons]:

The Greek noun, *diakonos* means minister, servant, or waiter. The translation is minister; the transliteration is deacon. This Greek noun was

originally used for those who waited on tables and served food. It came to mean a servant regarding spiritual matters. A good translation is “minister” when it applies to the pastor-teacher. When it applies to a deacon, it is roughly transliterated from *diakonos* to deacon. A deacon is an office in the local church, held by a man serving on the deacon board. Regarding the Greek word *diakonia*, it can mean service or ministry which both women and men participate.

Some passages of Scripture to clarify the Issue:

1 Corinthians 3:5, “What [a neuter interrogative] then is Apollos? And what [a neuter interrogative] is Paul? Ministers [the Greek word is *diakonos*] through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.”

Ephesians 3:7-8, “Through which Gospel I [Paul] have become a minister [the Greek word *diakonos* denoting the pastor as the chief administrator] according to the gift of the grace of God which was given to me on the basis of the function of His divine power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace has been given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches [wealth] of Christ.”

Colossians 1:7, 23, “Even as you also have been taught [the constative aorist tense indicating the consistent teaching of Epaphras] from the ultimate source of Epaphras, a beloved fellow slave [a fellow pastor loved by Paul] who is a faithful minister [the Greek word is *diakonos*] of Christ [because he studied and taught etc.] on behalf of you.” (23) “If you [congregation] persist in the doctrine, having laid the foundation [after basic doctrine is learned, more complex doctrines can be learned] both stabilized [from a foundation of doctrine] and not being swayed [because of one’s stability] from the source [Jesus Christ] of confidence in the Gospel which you have heard and was publicly proclaimed to all creation [homo sapiens] under the heaven [planet earth], in which I, Paul, have become a minister [the Greek word is *diakonos*];”

Colossians 4:7, “As to all my affairs [Our life is made up of things, not just materialistic things but experiences, circumstances, all kinds of activities.], Tychicus, *our* beloved brother and faithful minister [the Greek word *diakonos* is used] and fellow servant in the Lord, will bring you information [Tychicus will make a report to the Colossians regarding Paul’s activities, situation etc.].”

1 Timothy 1:12-14, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has poured the power into me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into the ministry [the Greek word *diakonia*]. (13) Though I was formerly blasphemous [a slanderous critic of God], and a persecutor, and full of hubris [having excessive pride and arrogance] nevertheless, I have been graced out, because I was ignorant, I acted in unbelief. (14) and the grace of our Lord has super-abounded with doctrine and love [occupation with Christ] which are in Christ Jesus [our positional relationship is perfectly secure].”

Hebrews 6:10, “For God is not unjust to disregard your work [the intense study and teaching of the pastor-teacher] and also the love [for the congregation and the Lord Jesus Christ] which you yourselves have demonstrated toward his Person [if the pastor doesn’t love Christ, he doesn’t love his congregation], having ministered [the Greek verb *diakoneo*] the Word with reference to the saints, and continue to minister [the Greek word *diakoneo*] the Word of God.”

Acts 6:2-4, “So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables. (3) Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task [establishing deacons], (4) but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry [*diakonia*] of the word.”

1 Timothy 3:8-13, “Deacons [the Greek word *diakonos* used for the spiritual gift] likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued [deceitful and hypocritical], or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid

gain, (9) but holding to the mystery of the doctrine [faith] with a clear conscience. (10) These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons [the Greek verb *diakoneo*] if they are beyond reproach. (11) Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate [function with moderation and self-restraint], faithful in all things. (12) Deacons [the Greek noun *diakonos*] must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. (13) For those who have served well as deacons [the Greek verb *diakoneo*] obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the doctrine [faith] that is in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 12:7, “If service [the Greek noun *diakonia*], then serve in the gift of service [*diakonia* as a spiritual gift to men and women]; if teaching [a reference to the pastor-teacher], then teach in the gift of teaching,”

The Greek noun *diakonia* is translated “service or ministry” in better modern translations. (Some confusion arises because *diakonia* resembles *diakonos*, translated as minister for a pastor as the chief administrator, transliterated “deacon” which actually refers to the gift of administrative leadership.) *Diakonia* is a spiritual gift of service given to both men and women (However, it may refer to the ministry of a communicator as per 1 Timothy 1:12 in which case it is not a gift). *Diakonos* is either a reference to the pastor or to an office in the local church, held by a man serving on the deacon board. This gift (*diakonia*) functions in the administration of the local church. It means ministry or service; it does not refer to the office of deacon in the local church. Those who have this spiritual gift should serve on committees and in specific administrative functions in the local church, on mission boards, in Christian service organizations etc. This makes for effective, administrative function in the local church and other Christian organizations. This spiritual gift is strictly administrative without the leadership function provided by the Holy Spirit.

Tychicus as part of the Pauline team:

1. He was first associated with Paul on the third missionary journey as per Acts 20:1-5, “After the uproar had ceased [the mayor in Ephesus through his brilliant speech shut-down the mob], Paul sent for the disciples [the believers in Ephesus], and he embraced them [most likely just the men; Paul had developed a tremendous rapport with them] and having taken his leave of them, he left to go [the Greek *poreuomai* means to go from one place to another, to follow an established itinerary] to Macedonia. (2) When he had gone through those districts [north west of Macedonia in the Balkan states: Romans 15:19: “as far as Illyricum (Dalmatia)”] and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece [back to southern Greece]. (3) And there he spent three months, and when a plot [conspired in Jerusalem to assassinate Paul] was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria [to the city of Tyre so that he could be in Jerusalem during the Holy Days], he decided [possibly discovering that the ship would have assassins on board] to return through Macedonia. (4) And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus [a second Gaius] of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus [remained behind at Miletus possibly to take a pastorate] and Trophimus of Asia [his traveling seminary]. (5) But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troy.”

2. When Paul went to Jerusalem in 58 A.D. in violation of the commands of God the Holy Spirit, Tychicus remained behind in Asia. He rejoins the apostle Paul during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment as per Ephesians 6:21, 22, “Now in order that you also might come to know about my circumstances, what I am doing, Tychicus, a highly regarded brother and a faithful servant [the Greek word *diakonos*] will make all things known (reveal everything) to you. (22) Whom I have sent face to face with you for this very purpose, that you may come to know our circumstances, and that he might encourage your right lobes [through his teaching].”

3. During Paul’s second imprisonment in Rome [when he was in the Mamertine Dungeon] he sent Tychicus to Ephesus on a special mission, 2 Timothy 4:12, “For I have sent out Tychicus to Ephesus to replace you

(so Timothy could come to Paul in Rome). He was to take over the Ephesians church. Tychicus appears to have been an Ephesian as per Acts 20:4, “And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia (Trophimus was from Ephesus as per Acts 21:29; so apparently also Tychicus.).

Faithfulness:

1. God requires faithfulness from all believers, and if God requires faithfulness from every member of the royal family, much more so He requires faithfulness from the pastor-teacher or minister.
2. God doesn't ask the minister to be sensational, spectacular, or scintillating [to dazzle or impress with liveliness or wit], but He does require faithfulness.
3. There is no substitute for plugging, for plodding. The pastor-teacher must be a plodder to continually study and teach.
4. Pastors must be consistent and faithful to the assigned task of the minister which is the communication of doctrine to his entire congregation.
5. The self-centered, egotistical, supercilious [behaving or looking as though one thinks he is superior to others] member of the congregation who demands attention from the pastor either in the sense of counseling or visitations is in the wrong church. It is imperative that the pastor avoid being sidetracked by self-centered people.

4:8. Whom [Tychicus] I have sent to you [face to face with you] for this very purpose [to give a missionary report; to provide Biblical teaching in the absence of their pastor], that [purpose] you might know about our circumstances also that he might encourage your hearts [your stream of consciousnesses through Biblical teaching];

ὃν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέσῃ τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν,

Tychicus is the epistle bearer, reporter and teacher. Tychicus was a citizen of the Roman Empire and so a free man; his companion on this trip to Colossi was Onesimus, a Greek slave. Social status is not an issue in spirituality.

4:9. and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved [respected and admired] brother, who is from among you [a fellow believer from Colossi]. They [Tychicus & Onesimus] will inform you about the whole situation here.

σὺν Ὀνησίμῳ τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ, ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν· πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσουσιν τὰ ὧδε.

The Background of Onesimus:

One of Philemon's slaves was Onesimus; lazy and poorly motivated for Paul mentions that "he was formerly useless" (Philemon verse 11). He was not only useless, but also entered into crime when he stole a lot of money from his master. Then, with that money, Onesimus made the long journey from Asia Minor to Rome where he probably squandered it on high living and licentious behavior. Totally broke and desperate, he remembered what Philemon had said about his good friend Paul and so decided to contact Paul who was presently under house-arrest in Rome. The Scripture does not give us all the details, but with a little common sense and a practical understanding of human nature we can still make an accurate deduction of what probably took place. Under normal circumstances, the last person Onesimus would want to meet would be a close friend of his master, but being broke and hungry, and remembering the many kind things that Philemon had said about the great apostle Paul, Onesimus decided to seek him out.

God knew about Onesimus' situation billions and billions of years ago in eternity past, and knew that Onesimus desired the truth. If an unbeliever wants to know the truth, God will always provide him with Gospel information. Therefore, God had decided in eternity past to use Paul as His agent to communicate the gospel to Onesimus, who responded by believing in Jesus Christ (Philemon verses 10, 16). After his salvation, Paul taught him the spiritual life, perhaps for a year or two. It is quite probable that Paul supplied Onesimus with some funds while Onesimus provided administrative services for Paul in return (Philemon verse 13). Eventually, as Onesimus grew spiritually, he realized the need to return to Philemon since he legally belonged to Philemon under the Roman Law, and as a runaway slave could be punished severely under that law.

Paul not only loved Onesimus as a great friend, but also benefited much from the service which Onesimus provided for him. So, Paul would have liked to have kept Onesimus with him as a constant companion even after his release from prison. However, since Onesimus was a fugitive-slave, he would have to return to Philemon, his legal owner under Roman Law.

A short brief on Slavery in the New Testament:

In the New Testament, the Church did not issue any decree abolishing slavery, even though many early church believers were slaves. Furthermore, Paul never commanded Christian slaves to rise up and overthrow their masters, but to the contrary for they were to serve their masters honorably.

The responsibility of a slave to a master is taught in Ephesians 6:5-9, "You slaves [employees today] be obeying your lords [management] according to the standards of the flesh [the Laws of Establishment] with respect for authority and maximum effort, by means of integrity from your right lobe, as unto your Christ, (6) not according to the standard of eye service as men pleasers, but as servants belonging to Christ, constantly doing the will, purpose and design of your God from the heart [the seven compartments of the stream of consciousness]. (7) With loyal enthusiasm

[good will] performing the duties of a slave [rendering service] as unto the Lord, and not to men. (8) Knowing that each believer, if he has done anything good, he shall receive with interest this same [will be rewarded] from the source of the Lord, whether he is a slave or a freeman. (9) Also, you lords [management] keep doing the same things [do your job as unto the Lord] toward them [slaves, by analogy employees today], be desisting from bullying; knowing that both their Lord and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.” Colossians 3:22-23, “Slaves, obey your human masters [Labor, obey management] in everything not with eye service as men pleasers, but with the virtue of the stream of consciousness respecting the Lord.” There were millions of slaves at this time in the Roman Empire, and they functioned as labor. If Paul were writing this today, he would address it to those involved in labor, those under management.

What should be your attitude toward social problems as they occur today? Does the Bible take up and advocate the social gospel, becoming involved? Absolutely not. Slavery is not a theological issue in any sense of the word. Both kinds of people, slaves and free men, were saved. Here are two men on their way back to the Lycus valley. They are traveling from Rome to Colossi, Tychicus, a Roman citizen and with him Onesimus who is a slave belonging to Philemon, a wealthy Christian living in Colossi. The situation is a very simple one. The Word of God never took the attitude of down with slavery. The Word of God did not become involved, it did not advocate believers becoming involved in social action. For the Word of God takes the correct position that the answer is not in social action for social action always creates greater problems than it solves.

4:10. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner conveys his greetings to you [to his many friends in the Lycus Valley]; also [John] Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received orders [the orders were in the form of an entreaty: instructions]; if he comes to you [on his way to Alexandria], welcome him with open arms);

Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου, καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ [περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολὰς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δέξασθε αὐτόν],

The following information regarding Aristarchus was taken from Ungar's Bible Dictionary.

“ARISTAR´CHUS (a-ris-tar´kus; “the best ruler”). A native of Thessalonica and a faithful adherent of the apostle Paul in his labors. He became the companion of Paul on his third missionary tour, accompanying him to Ephesus, where he was seized and nearly killed in the tumult raised by the silversmiths under Demetrius (Acts 19:29), A.D. 59. He left that city accompanying Paul to Greece, then to Asia (20:4), and subsequently to Rome (27:2), to which he was sent as a prisoner, or he became one while there (Philem. 24), for Paul calls him his “fellow prisoner” (Col. 4:10). Tradition makes him to have suffered martyrdom in the time of Nero.”

Regarding John Mark: Mark was the son of Mary of Jerusalem. Her home was the original place where the church in Jerusalem first met (Acts 12:12, 25). He was the cousin of Barnabas possibly through Mary. Mark was converted under the ministry of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). He was scheduled for the Jewish priesthood, but upon conversion, immediately cut off the tip of his finger, disqualifying him for the priesthood. He however failed on the first missionary journey, but later recovered by the time of the 2nd Missionary journey. Though he recovered, Paul refused to take him on his second Journey. So, Barnabas separating from Paul, took John Mark with him on a separate missionary journey. Later Paul admitted his error regarding John Mark to all the Churches by telling them to receive John Mark as a great believer on his way to Alexandria as per our passage, Colossians 4:10. At some point, he was martyred in that city.

4:11. also Joshua [Hebrew: Joshua; Greek: Jesus] **who is called Justus** [a title for his function as a lawyer]; **they who are from the circumcision** [Jewish believers in Rome with Paul: Aristarchus, John Mark, Justus],

these are the only fellow Jewish workers [not afraid to associate with Paul] **with reference to the kingdom of God** [the family of God] **who** [a special group of Jewish believers who befriended Paul in his time of need in contrast to the rest of the Jewish believers in Rome] **have become a source of encouragement** [a comfort] **to me** [It is great to have real friends].

καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰοῦστος, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς οὗτοι μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία.

Three faithful believers with great integrity: Joshua, a Jewish lawyer apparently was Paul's legal representative in his first trial before Nero. Undoubtedly, this was the encouragement which he had provided for Paul. These three namely Aristarchus, John Mark, Justus were the only advanced Jewish believers in Rome and so were the ones who stood by the Apostle Paul in his trial. They were neither embarrassed in the accusations against Paul nor were they afraid. Because the apostle Paul was persona non grata in the Roman empire, in other words a very controversial person, most of the Christian Jews had deserted him and only these three had stood by him during that difficult time.

The Thinking and Attitude of Great Believers:

1. Great believers are never embarrassed by controversy started over grace.
2. These great Christian Jews had stability generated by doctrine resident in their souls. They were not ashamed of Paul's chains, nor did they fear for their own personal safety. They were courageous, made strong by doctrine resident in their souls. They therefore moved around Rome in a completely relaxed manner and associated themselves with Paul.
3. As advanced believers they understood that God had a plan for their lives and that no evil or legalistic force on earth could remove them from the scene until God was ready to call them home.

4. Of course, the majority of believers in separating themselves from Paul were wrong, reversionistic, cowardly, hypocritical, depending on Roman politics for their existence instead of the grace of God.

5. The “kingdom of our God” here refers to the Church as the royal family of God. This same phrase is used for regenerate persons, Jews or gentiles of the Old Testament as well as the believers of the Tribulation and Millennium.

4:12. Epaphras, who is one from among you, a bond slave of Christ Jesus [he was their pastor, and an excellent one] salutes you; at all times he is contending [retroactive present tense: began at his separation] **on your behalf by means of his prayers** [since he is in prison, he cannot teach: Philemon 23] **in order that** [purpose, objective] **you may hold your ground** [a military word for not retreating], **mature ones, also having been completely filled with all the will of God** [The content of the prayer of Epaphras for these Christians in the Lycus Valley].

ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ], πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ.

4:13. For I testify [solemn testimony under oath] **with reference to him that** [content of his evaluation] **he** [Epaphras] **has a great concern for you** [Colossians] **also for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis** [Christians in these other two location in the Lycus Valley].

μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει.

In verses 12-14 we have a roster of the Christian Gentiles in Rome who are standing by the apostle Paul namely Epaphras, Luke and Demas. The first of these is Epaphras mentioned in three passages: Colossians 1:7; 4:12 and in Philemon 23. Epaphras, the pastor of the Colossian Church faithfully and constantly taught the Word of God. In Philemon 23, it

mentioned that Epaphras was sharing in Paul's Roman imprisonment. Apparently, the Romans were seizing quite a few people associated with Paul. This explains why Epaphras had not come back to his pastorate. Eventually he would be released with Paul and returned to Colossi, but he would die in the ministry at Colossi, a martyr executed by the Roman Empire.

The pastor is the servant of the congregation in the sense of providing spiritual food, but to be the servant of the congregation you have to be the slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. He salutes his congregation because during his absence they have been remaining faithful to the Word of God. He recognizes the nobility of his congregation, the tremendous way they have handled the situation in his absence. They developed this nobility because Epaphras fought for them in Colossi by teaching them the Mystery Doctrines of the Church Age and in Rome, he is fighting for them through his prayers.

4:14. Luke, the beloved physician, sends you [those in the Colossian Church] his greetings, also Demas.

ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ Δημᾶς.

The information on Luke is taken from Ungar's Bible Dictionary. "LUKE (lūk; Gk. Loukas; Lat. Lucanus). The evangelist and author of the gospel bearing his name and the Acts of the Apostles. See Gospels; Bible, Books of. The materials found in Scripture referring to the life of Luke are scanty and seem to yield the following results: (1) Luke was of Gentile origin. This is inferred from the fact that he is not reckoned among those "who are from the circumcision" (Col. 4:11; cf. v. 14). When and how he became a physician is not known. (2) He was not one of the "eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (Luke 1:2). (3) On the supposition of Luke's being the author of the Act, we gather from those passages in which the first person 'we' is employed that he joined Paul's company at Troas and sailed with them to Macedonia (Acts 16:10–11). He accompanied Paul as far as Philippi (16:25–17:1) but did not share his persecution or leave the

city, for here the third person ‘they’ is used. The first person we does not reappear until Paul comes to Philippi at the end of his third journey (20:6), from which it is inferred that Luke spent the intervening time—a period of seven or eight years—in the city or neighborhood; and as the ‘we’ continues to the end of the book, that Luke remained with Paul during his journey to Jerusalem (20:6–21:18), was that apostle’s companion to Rome (27:1), sharing his shipwreck (28:2), and reaching the imperial city by way of Syracuse and Puteoli (28:12–16). According to the epistles he continued to be one of Paul’s “fellow workers” till the end of his first imprisonment (Philem. 24; Col. 4:14). The last glimpse of the “beloved physician” discovers him to be faithful amid general defection (2 Tim. 4:11). Tradition since the time of Gregory of Nazianzus makes Luke a martyr, yet not unanimously, since accounts of a natural death slip in. Where he died remains a question; certainly not in Rome with Paul, for his writings are far later.”

Luke was not only a great doctor but also a historian and the closest companion that Paul ever had for both Luke and Paul had the mentality to enjoy one another. Also, he was Paul’s medical adviser and personal physician, and so kept Paul healthy up to his execution by Nero.

Demas is the shortened form of Demetrius. He was a gentile believer in Rome along with Luke. Since he is mentioned with Luke, he was probably a very advanced believer at that time. However, when Paul wrote 2 Timothy, he had gone into Reversionism. 2 Timothy 4:10, “Demas has deserted me, having loved the now age, and has gone to Thessalonica.” So, we learn that between Paul’s first and second imprisonments something happened to Demas. It appears that some frantic search for happiness caused him to depart Rome for Thessalonica. However, there is one more passage on Demas found in 3 John 12. John explains that Demas was no longer the Demas that Paul wrote about in 2 Timothy 4, but became Demetrius, a recovered believer. The reversion recovery of Demas was noted in one of the last things that John ever wrote, “Demetrius had received “a good testimony from everyone, and from

doctrine itself, and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.”

We see in Colossians 4:14 two kinds of spiritual greatness. Luke who had great stability, who never faltered, who did not ever go into reversionism but kept right on going. Demas went down and then back up. These are two different kinds of greatness. The believer with stability-greatness has a fantastic life and eliminates a great deal of sorrow and misery simply by his stability. However, Demas was also great in a different way, a person who refused to give-up even in great failure. So, Demas became great because he never let his failures keep him down.

4:15. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and especially Nympha and the church which is in her house.

Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατὰ οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν.

John greets Nympha as a great believer in 2 John 1, “The pastor [with emphasis on his authority; the apostle John is functioning as the non-resident pastor at this time] to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth.” John singles out Nympha as a great believer. She undoubtedly was the greatest believer in Laodicea. Paul also shared this same view of Nympha.

4:16. When this letter is read in your presence [the non-face to face teaching of Paul], have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my epistle [teaching through writing] that is coming from Laodicea [implication: the Ephesian epistle is now being read in Laodicea].

καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρὶ ὑμῶν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε.

The pastors of these local churches will read and explain this epistle to their respective congregations. In the absence of Epaphras, the pastor of the Colossi Church, Tychicus will do the teaching; in the Laodicea Church, Archippus its pastor will do the teaching.

Assembling for Learning the Word

Hebrews 10:25, “Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as is the habit of certain ones, but for the purpose of encouragement [the telic participle], even so much the more, as you see the day [Rapture] approaching.”

μὴ ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, καθὼς ἔθος τιςίν, ἀλλὰ παρακαλοῦντες, καὶ τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον ὅσῳ βλέπετε ἐγγίζουσιν τὴν ἡμέραν.

This verse states only one purpose of assembling namely to be encouraged. (The two words ‘one another’ are not found in this verse.) If the Christian has an ounce of doctrine in his soul, he knows that the only true, meaningful, and lasting encouragement comes from God’s truth metabolized in the soul.

Some may maintain that believers must assemble in one local area in order to provide opportunity to use one’s spiritual gifts. Providing opportunity for the function of spiritual gifts is the Lord’s responsibility and no one else. If there is no opportunity in a local church, then the Lord will provide something else for that believer.

In general, the larger the group, the more the need for a variety of spiritual gifts; the smaller the group, the less need for a lot of spiritual gifts. For example, if a family of five is meeting in their home in compliance with the verse above, they do not need to appoint a board of deacons and a chairman of the board. (The purpose of having administration in the first place is to allow the pastor time to study and prepare his lessons. So, if a family or two are meeting in a home and listening to a pastor by MP3s,

DVDs or through some other media, then obviously the need for deacons is a moot point.)

Even so, some contend that Christians must attend a local church to support the group and encourage the functioning of spiritual gifts. The argument goes like this, “We need a large church to support many spiritual gifts, many deacons etc. so let’s force all to attend under the same roof.” An interesting idea, but not found in Scripture. Again, the Lord adjust the spiritual gifts to fit the size of the group assembling. Furthermore, the size of the group and the number of spiritual gifts within a group is the Lord’s responsibility, and I am reasonably sure that He can handle this task.

Must Christians assemble in an ecclesiastical structure called a church? Well, in the first two hundred years of the church age there were no churches. Generally, believers met in homes to learn the word and to worship. The church is a classroom of Christians with a professor called a pastor or minister. The classroom can take on many different forms. So, it doesn’t make any difference whether the pastor teaches in a home, office building or an ecclesiastical structure. The key is not the type of building, but the qualification of the pastor.

What causes spiritual growth? The assembling in a church, a home or some type of building must include a qualified pastor. Through the accurate teaching of the pastor, the congregation comes to accept his authority. If a member of the congregation accepts the pastor’s authority and listens consistently, he can grow spiritually. How far a member is seated from the minister is not the main point. He may be seated fifteen feet away from the pastor in a church, or while listening to his pastor, he may be seated in his home ten thousand miles from the pastor, it makes no difference. What is the issue then? Does he accept the authority of his pastor, and does he listen consistently to him.

The pastor can communicate to his congregation through different medias such as: face to face communication, written material, audio, video, radio, television and online. Paul and John for example, communicated to many

churches through written material. So, as long as the Christian accepts the authority of a qualified communicator, he can grow. I for example, lived most of my adult spiritual life thousands of miles away from my pastor even so, I grew all the same.

One does not have to attend a church in the same geographical area of his residence. In many geographical areas there are no pastors qualified to teach and explain the spiritual life. If a Christian had to attend a Church in such a local area, he would have no hope of spiritual growth. For example, what if you were attending a church in the city of Pusan, South Korea under the ministry of a wonderful minister. Suddenly, you become very sick and are taken to a hospital in Seoul and are told that you will be there for at least 6 months. Let's say that you have a choice of either attending the chapel services in the hospital or receive Biblical instruction online from your pastor in Pusan. Let's assume that the minister conducting the chapel service in the hospital knows nothing about the spiritual life and thus listening to his teaching would be a total waste of time. What should you do? Should you attend the chapel services in the hospital and destroy your spiritual life, or should you listen to your pastor's online ministry and continue to grow spiritually?

What if one had to work in a foreign country where there were no pastors. Obviously, one would have to listen to a pastor from another country by some means other than face to face. If God would not permit Biblical communication through various ways, then this believer living in a foreign land would have no hope of advancing in his spiritual life. However, the method by which a pastor communicates to his congregation is not limited to face to face. Therefore, a man and his family living in a foreign land would have to assemble in their home and learn from their pastor through such means as the written page, MP3s, DVDs or some other type of media. If the children are too young to listen to the pastor, then the parents would be responsible to break down the material and communicate it to the little ones in an interesting and enjoyable way.

The assembly of believers in a church is for the purpose of perception, and metabolization. This must be paramount. Friendship and social life with other believers are optional choices, but never mandatory. This passage is usually misunderstood because two words have been added to many translations that are not in the original language. The Greek does not say that you should assemble to encourage *one another*. The words *one another* do not exist in the Greek. The Greek word '*parakaleo*' is a telic participle and should be translated "for the purpose of encouragement". The Telic Participle gives the purpose for the action of the main verb which is "to assemble". Why do we assemble? We assemble to be encouraged from hearing and learning God's word.

It is true that sometimes social life with other believers can be encouraging, but it is not the source of encouragement. Occasionally, a believer may associate with a mature believer and be encouraged by that believer because the mature believer expresses divine viewpoint. It is always divine thinking and expression that is encouraging, not social life with believers.

We assemble to learn the Word and develop social life with God. In the other hand, social life with Christians many times distracts believers from the spiritual life and can be counter-productive for the following reasons:

1. Many times, Christians establish wrong priorities in the Christian life through the influence of ignorant, and confused reversionistic Christians. If you associate with Christians who are ignorant of God's plan, they will affect you with their ignorance. These same believers are controlled by their sin natures and so will have a negative influence on you.

2. Many believers are distracted from learning and applying Bible doctrine through preoccupation with friendships, romance, and people in general. A good relationship with God must be established before one can have a good relationship with people. Unfortunately, people who are preoccupied with people never develop a good relationship with God.

3. If you associate with legalistic believers (believers adhering to a pseudo spirituality), you must either follow their legalism or be condemned by them. If you associate with believers who claim that the spiritual life is a series of “don’t” such as: don’t drink, smoke, dance or go to movie theaters, then you either must accept this system of pseudo spirituality or be in conflict with such believers. In either case, this association will probably place you out of fellowship.

4. If you associate with antinomian Christians, you will likely become antinomian namely if you associate with those who consistently drink heavily, fornicate or are involved in criminality, then you also will be influenced by this type of behavior. The type of people we associate with will have an influence on us. Can you put a hot coal in your pocket and not get burned?

5. Some Christians use other Christians as a means of advancing themselves in business or in a profession. In other words, they attend a church where there are influential believers who can help them in their profession or business. These believers are functioning under the lust of inordinate ambition and competition. Obviously, social life with these believers is terrible.

6. Many Christians substitute social life with believers for fellowship with God. True Christian fellowship is fellowship with God, not with people. If you have many Christian friends and perform many acts of Christian service with them, but if you do not love God, you are nothing and you accomplish nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Generally, when we sit down in some location to learn God’s word, we do so with other Christians. That is what this passage is saying. However, having family members or others sit around you as you learn the Word does not contribute to your spiritual growth. Whether you sit in your home with family members to listen to your pastor on television or on radio or some other media, or you attend a large church and are surrounded by a

thousand other believers makes no difference. People cannot cause one to grow spiritually; it is the message that causes spiritual growth.

Some Christians think that walking into a church automatically makes them spiritual. If a believer attends a church where the pastor is totally ignorant of the spiritual life, that believer cannot learn the spiritual life. Worse yet since that pastor does not understand the spiritual life, he will teach a pseudo spiritual life. In effect by attending that church, the Christian goes backward in his spiritual life.

If a person should study engineering under a professor who is totally ignorant of correct principles and concepts of engineering, the student will learn false information about engineering. Before the student was just ignorant, but now he is not only ignorant of true principles and concepts of engineering, but in addition to that, he has acquired false principles and concepts. He has become worse than he was before. Now, he is not only ignorant, but also arrogant. He thinks he understands engineering, and therefore will not even listen to a good professor. This is what happens to Christians when they attend a church where the pastor is ignorant regarding the spiritual life. They think they understand the spiritual life; they think they are growing spiritually, but in reality, they have gone backwards in their spiritual life and have become very arrogant.

This passage is not commanding Christians to attend the nearest geographical Church building where the pastor is allegedly teaching the Word. This passage is commanding all believers to learn the Word of God consistently from a qualified pastor, a qualified spiritual professor. “But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Growth does not come through interaction with other believers. Growth does not come through sitting next to another believer in a church. “So, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the communicative word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The spiritual life is not developed through seeing your pastor in a local church, but rather through hearing his message. Your faith is not increased through social life with

other Christians, rather through hearing the accurate message of your pastor.

4:17. Say to Archippus [the master of the horse], **“Pay attention to your ministry** [Archippus was failing to study and teach] **which you took charge of because of the Lord** [the Lord calls and assigns pastors], **that you may fulfill it** [your ministry since he was failing in his responsibilities].”

καὶ εἶπατε Ἀρχίππῳ, Βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς.

The Pastor-Teacher, Leader or Manager?

In the local church, the leadership of the pastor is related to his faithful and consistent study and teaching of Bible doctrine. The leader-pastor teaches the Word of God with much inculcation so that his congregation might become dependent upon the principles and doctrines accumulated in their memory. He recognizes the privacy of the royal priesthood of each believer and avoids counseling or dictatorial functions that create dependency on the pastor. Through his teaching, he encourages dependency upon the Father’s plan, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and one’s relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The leader-pastor teaches the Word to his congregation and does not violate the privacy of the individual members by asking them individual questions about their spiritual lives. The leader respects and defends the privacy of every member of the congregation. The leader-pastor does not encourage dependency upon him, nor does he set himself up as a role model. Rather, through his teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ will become the role model for the members of his congregation who are positive to his message, growing in grace and in knowledge of our Lord by means of the Word and the guidance and counsel of the Holy Spirit. The leader-pastor encourages dependency on God.

On the other hand, the managerial pastor may or may not teach Bible doctrine, but seeks to regulate, to control and to gain power over the members of his congregation. He encourages counseling, leaning on him for advice, thus creating a dependency on himself rather than a dependency on the Word of God. When a congregation is under the ministry of a managerial pastor, either they will react to his control and regulations, or over-respond to his fatherly authority. If the congregation reacts, they will seek to malign, criticize, or judge him. If they over-respond, they will depend upon him as their role model. Both scenarios are detrimental to the local church and the individual believer.

Principles:

1. The only role model in the Christian way of life is Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus Christ cannot become the role model without consistent cognition of Bible doctrine.
3. No believer can reach spiritual maturity without a leader-pastor and without the free function of his volition.
4. Leadership requires authority. The leader-pastor establishes his authority through his faithful teaching of accurate Bible doctrine. The managerial pastor establishes his authority through regulating control and his demand to be recognized as the authority of the Church.
5. The leader-pastor sets up policy and delegates authority to others for the administration of the local church. The managerial pastor cannot trust others, and so is constantly interfering in the function of his deacons.
6. Through the teaching of a leader-pastor, the members of the congregation are motivated by their respect and love for the members of the Godhead to do God's will. Through the counsel and the exhortations of the managerial pastor, church members are motivated to do the pastor's will, namely: to come to his worship service and prayer meetings, join in

Church activities, and above all to give ten percent of their earnings every week.

7. The leader-pastor is concerned about the spiritual growth of the souls of his members, not the size of his congregation. The managerial pastor is concerned about the size of his congregation and how far his church buildings penetrate the skies. So, the managerial pastor often brags that his church is growing, meaning that new edifices are being constructed and more people are attending.

8. The leader-pastor explains through doctrine how to become experientially righteous. The managerial pastor encourages self-righteousness associated with hypocrisy by teaching legalism.

9. The leader-pastor seeks to protect the privacy of his congregation. The managerial pastor seeks to invade the privacy of his congregation.

10. The leader-pastor emphasizes the importance of knowing doctrine and having a love for God. He teaches his congregation the importance of correct thinking, motivation, decision making and how to apply the Word of God to every phase of the Christian life. The managerial pastor doesn't teach the spiritual life but emphasizes only the importance of Christian morality. In other words, the leader-pastor teaches every phase of the spiritual life, whereas the managerial pastor doesn't. The managerial pastor does not place an emphasis on study and teach so the content of his message is not deep, but he vigorously exhorts his congregation to be good and moral.

11. The leader-pastor demonstrates his love for his congregation by his dedication to study and teaching. The managerial pastor demonstrates his lack of love for his congregation by his failure to properly teach the spiritual life to his congregation.

4:18. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Keep remembering [through intercessory prayer] my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου. μνημονεύετε μου τῶν δεσμῶν. ἡ χάρις μεθί ὑμῶν.

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Based on the scholarly work of R.B. Thieme Jr.

I recommend downloading 'THIEME'S BIBLE DOCTRINE DICTIONARY' from this website: rbthieme.org