

KINGDOM SPIRIT



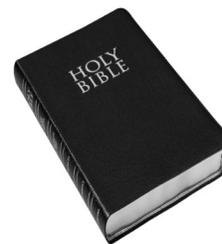
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2010

IN THE BEGINNING A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS

There are several books of the Bible that I consider foundational to a study of God's Word. By foundational, I mean that they are essential to a reasonable understanding of the Bible. This doesn't replace a study of the entire Bible, but are books that we need to review from time to time as we study so that we keep the essentials of the Word in mind always. The most foundational book is the book of Genesis. I know that we have gone through this book in the past in this venue, but I feel we need to go through it again, especially in this time when efforts to tear down the Bible are taking place in our churches, our schools, our entertainment, and our sources of daily news.

Rather than copy every Scripture that we will be looking at, I will usually put in parenthesis "Read—and then give the particular Scripture reference." This will save time in preparation and will benefit the reader in that it will require him or her to exercise their ability to look up Scriptures, thus becoming more familiar with their Bible. I will be using the King James translation, but will, from time to time, quote other translations for possible greater clarity and understanding.

The book of Genesis gives us the very foundation of the rest of the Bible. It was written by the inspired hand of Moses some 2500 years after the creation of Adam. We're told this was the first book of five that he wrote. These five books as a whole, which include Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, in addition to Genesis, is referred to as the Pentateuch.

If you have ever tried to write down all that you did last week, or what happened in the world last week, I think you can appreciate how much history and detail Moses was able to relate of the 2500 years in this book (some 80 pages in my Bible). We can also understand why many details we might would like to know are not in the book.

Without an understanding of Genesis, I submit that it would be impossible to understand either the Old or the New Testament. Because of this, the account given in Genesis has come under constant attack, especially in the last couple of centuries. The atheists, the agnostics, the skeptics are all aware that if they can destroy the credibility of this wonderful book, they can basically destroy the Bible as a whole. Unfortunately, even people with good intentions have created division among otherwise Bible believing people by insisting on certain doctrines, that when the truth be told, they cannot prove nor can others prove them wrong.

The problem, as I see it, is that, because doubt and division are created in many people's minds, facts that we really need to know and adhere to are lost in the turmoil. So as we begin a more comprehensive study of Genesis than we have heretofore presented, please understand that there may be statements made that you may not be in agreement with. I ask that you not let these become stumbling blocks, but that you study along with me and search out that which is true. You may find your opinion to be true, or you may find that you have to change your mind. I think most of us who have studied the Bible very much have had to change our minds at one time or another. There is a great deal of false doctrine being taught and we have all been influenced by some of it at

one time or another. The apostle Paul, in Romans 14:13, says, **“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brothers way.”** I certainly do not want to be guilty of this, so where possible, I will try to present both sides of arguments, but will try to give my reasons for the way I believe. I do not claim to be always totally right, though my wife and daughters may disagree with that statement. I believe that as we study, we need to take positions, but if someone, or even our own selves prove that position to be wrong, we need to be able to abandon that position and set out to prove a new one to ourselves. If we are always afraid to take a position for fear of being wrong, I doubt that we will ever learn anything. I pray that this study will cause each of us further study and create in us a greater desire to learn God’s Word. Proverbs 25:2 says, **It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.** Our goal is to be a ruler with our Christ (Rev. 20:4-6), so as a ruler or king, we should consider it an honour to search out the sometimes hidden meaning of something that we read in scripture. Not everything that we read in scripture is in plain black and white, so to say, but often requires a search throughout the scriptures to get the full meanings. We need to cherish that challenge rather than give up on it when we first read it.

So to begin our study, I would like for us to read all of chapter 1 of Genesis and then we will go back and take it a verse at a time. (Read) Going back to verse 1, perhaps the greatest thing we need to understand, possibly of the whole Bible, is that **“God created the heaven and the earth.”** This means that as creator, He automatically is the owner, thus the supreme or sovereign of all. As such He can do whatever He wants with what He has created. He leaves it to us to find out what He plans to do with His creation, and how He goes about bringing it to fruition, through study of His Word. While each of us may think He should do things a certain way, we need to keep in mind that it is He who decides what He plans and how to bring it about. We also need to keep in mind that we are part of that creation, so He is sovereign over us. While we might think that what we think, say and do are a result of our own abilities, we need to remember His sov-

ereignty.

We’re not told when the beginning was. We’re just told that **“In the beginning God.”** In other words, when ever that beginning was, God was already there. He pre-existed. It is very difficult for us as humans to comprehend a God with no beginning and no end. Time as we know it was part of His creation, thus there was a beginning of our earth and universe. On this, science and the Bible agree. But what constituted this beginning? The answer has to be, “that which was created.” But from what was it created. Again there is general agreement between the Bible and science. Romans 1:20 tells us, **“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.”** Science tells us that the ingredient (for lack of a better word) of everything is energy. With the splitting of the atom has come at least a partial understanding of how great this energy, or power, is from which Paul, in Romans, tells us everything is made. There is disagreement as to how this energy was harnessed into the things that were made. Most theories that have been advanced are only that, theories. Only God has the true answer.

The first part of verse 2 says, **“And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”** The prophet Jeremiah, in Jer. 4:23 (Read), in lamenting the coming destruction of Judah by the Babylonians, uses the same words as Gen. 1:2 as a description to which he was comparing the result of the coming destruction of Judah. Isaiah gives us the purpose of the creation in Isa. 45:18, **“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.”** The phrase **“in vain”** is from the same Hebrew word, *“tohu”* that the phrase **“without form”** in both Jer. 4:23 and Gen. 1:2 is translated. That water covered everything is evident from the rest of Gen. 1:2, **“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”**

In verses 3-5, note that light existed before the sun and the moon were created. Again, if we understand that God created everything from energy, we can at least have an idea where this light

came from. When we get to the end of the book of Revelation in our study, we will see that there will be no need of the sun or the moon as God will be our light. The concept of day as opposed to night is introduced during this creation period, even though we are told in verse 14 that when sun and moon were created, their rotations determined the seasons, days and years.

There are differences of opinion as to what is meant by the word “day” as used in the rest of this chapter in speaking of the 6 days of creation.. Some hold the very strong opinion that it means a 24 hour day, as we know it in our time

and others hold just as strong an opinion that the “day” means age, though there is a wide variation of opinions as to the length of these ages. “Day” is from the Hebrew word “yom.” Though it is most often translated “day” in the King James translation, it is also translated “time, age, life, year, years, and season” among others.

What little I know about geology leads me to think of “day” as used in this chapter, describing the time periods of creation, as “age”. I would not speculate on the length of the ages as I know of nothing that proves this one way or the other, however, it is my guess that we can rule out the use of the quantitative term, “billions.” Also, the 24 hour day as we know it was not created until the fourth “day.” Whichever way one believes, the important thing we need to accept is that it is God, or, as we are told in Col. 1:16, speaking of Christ, **“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”** If it was critical that we know more of these details of creation, I’m convinced He would have given us more details to work with.

It is interesting to me that the order of creation that we have in the Bible is basically the so called order of evolution that “scientists” in fairly recent history have come up with. I do not believe that you can separate science from the Bible but we have to be very careful that it is true science. I am convinced that there are scientific principles in the Bible that should be guidelines for true science as true science is really learning the laws of God

in nature. The greatest principle is that because God is the creator, He is sovereign. It is His creation, He has the right to do whatever He wishes with it. The good thing for us is that He, in His creating, created laws that govern how His creation works, from the sun, moon, and stars, in fact, the whole universe, to the smallest entity known to exist. True science deals with discovering what these laws are and how they work. These laws concern every realm of science from chemistry to math to physics to geology, etc. As we have stated already, **“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”**(Prov. 25:2) When man tries to be disobedient to these laws and to create ones of his own, this is false science and will fail. Like other laws of God that are violated and taught to others as fact, this only leads to confusion and suffering.

This ends the first day or time period of creation.

In verses 6-8, the firmament dividing the waters was created with water below the firmament and with water above the firmament, thus producing a very different environmental effect from what we know today. This explains the very fast, lush growth of vegetation that is evident in our coal seams today for example. These coal seams vary in thickness from a foot or less to several feet. This water above the firmament was the source of water for the flood in Noah’s time. Somehow, food apparently didn’t spoil, at least as it does today, as we will see evidenced by the fact that the wine Noah drank after the flood was fermented, thus causing Noah to become drunk, something he appeared to be unaware that such a thing could happen. We’re told that this happened on the second day, or time period, or creation.

In verses 9-13 we have our first indication of life in this new creation. Vegetation was introduced and grew on the dry land. The water above the firmament apparently caused a tropical climate, a greenhouse effect, in which vegetative growth was very rapid. Each kind of plant life yielded seed after its own kind. This last phrase is important. The plants and trees reproduced after their own kind. Man has made some changes to this in that he has mixed some kind of fruits though I doubt that it has been to any real advantage. But if the plants and trees are left to themselves, seldom will they mix.

In verses 14-19, even though there was already light and darkness, we now have the source of lights that we are familiar with today. The statement, **“he made the stars also,”** seems to indicate that the creation of the stars could have happened at an earlier period. But the rotation cycles that were put in motion put heavenly bodies in orbits that provide scientist today with a great heavenly clock that helps them look into both the past and the future. Obviously, the years, seasons, and days as we know them were not known until this fourth day, or time period. Calling the sun and the moon the greater and lesser lights helps define the diffusion of lights that would have been the case with the watery canopy above the earth.

Note that beginning with the third day, or period, we’re told that with each addition to the creation, God saw that it was good. This is important to remember as we progress through the creation process.

In verses 20-23 we find the first animal life to be created to be fowls of the air and aquatic creatures. It has been my belief that this was the time period in which the dinosaurs existed. Dinosaurs have always been a mystery to me. I don’t remember what I was taught as a child about creation, but one of the biggest shocks of my young life was when in my early teens, I made my first visit to a natural history museum and saw my first dinosaur skeleton. To say that my faith was shaken at the time would be to put it mildly. Now, after having the privilege of being in various coal and uranium mines and having a little knowledge of the oil and gas industry, I marvel at how God planned everything for us to meet the needs we have in our society today, the millenniums past, and the future. Studying the books of Daniel and Revelation has taught me that this earth will be inhabited for a very long time yet, but seeing how God has provided for our needs to present, I have no fears that the future will be provided for as well.

I might point out that God had not blessed His creation until this fifth day or period as there was no life to bless, but here He blessed the fowl and aquatic life that He created. We will see in Gen. 1:28 and 2:3 that He blessed the land based animal life including man and then He blessed the seventh day.

Verses 24 and 25 tell us this sixth day, or

period, has required considerable preparation so that life of man and animals could be sustained. Though I believe we are still seeing creation happen, the animal life was created first, kind after kind. In spite of all the credibility given the evolution theories in our educational institutions today, I think it well to point out that there has never been any proof that one species evolved into another specie. Moses, in his record of creation here, simply tells us that God created the animals so that they produced kind after kind. This is a simple thing to believe. Species have come and gone throughout history (creation is still in progress as we have said), but never has there been any evidence of one specie changing into another specie, or one specie originating from another specie.

To us, the most important creature created was that of “man.” Thus we find in verse 26, **“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”** Then in verse 27 we see, **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”** What is fully meant by **“in our image”** or **“in the image of God”** will probably not be understood by us until the first resurrection. As we will see as we study further, Adam and Eve were apparently clothed with something until they sinned and then they found themselves naked. Though I cannot define it, I submit that this “clothing” was the glory of God. Having lost this, however it might be defined, Adam and Eve became what we are now, mortals. I believe that Scriptures that we are going to study in the future will tell us that whatever that difference was between what they were and what they became will be restored to man. Acts 3:21 indicates that there will be a time when all things will be restored. I believe this is telling that this restoration will be back to the status that Adam and Eve held before their sin.

Verse 28 is a very important verse for us to know, though we won’t learn the full significance until later in our studies. But to pique our interest, God gave Adam two mandates here, one to be fruitful and replenish the earth; and the second to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. These mandates, as we will see, are passed down from Adam to his son, then to his son, etc. I believe they eventually become known collectively as the birthright, something we will discuss

at some length later. If we keep this in mind, it will help us to understand a great deal of Scripture that is not understood by most people simply because they are not familiar with this verse and its implications. Basically, Adam is the ruler of the world. We'll see this rulership passed down from father to son in various interesting ways and that it eventually ends up being passed to Jesus Christ.

To help us understand as we study, anything that God says is God's law. We will see that He spoke the Ten Commandments and we recognize this as God's law. But, we will see a number of other things that are God's law that God speaks to various individuals and nations. These two mandates are two of those laws. God is the superior law giver. But, the thing that sets God apart from all of the man made gods is that He also keeps His own law. He is not above it as are most man-made gods in man's mind. You can look at any of the world's religions from Judaism to Islam to Buddhism and you will find, even though many claim to supposedly worship the same God as we Christians, in their doctrines they set their god (who is really man himself) above the law.

We said before that true science is discovering God's laws and how they work in everything around us. As we study His Word, God's laws concerning how man is to act and function are written out for us, but it is just as important that we understand how God's law works so far as man is concerned as well as the laws of nature, i.e. the laws of chemistry, physics, math, etc.. Understanding His law is understanding His Word.

Verses 29 and 30 seem to indicate that initially, man and beast were to only eat vegetation. The word "meat" does not refer to flesh as we use the term today, but simply means food. Meat (flesh) will be added as a food for man later in Scripture.

Verse 31 makes a point that is important for us to remember, **"God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good."** Even though man is going to do some terrible things, as part of God's creation, man is very good. Keep Acts 3:21 in mind—the restitution of all things. When all things are restored back to the way God created them, it will be very good.

God completed the creation in six days, or periods, or ages and set aside the seventh as a day

of rest.

Some people want to look at the creation of man in chapter one and the forming of man in chapter two as two separate creations. This first chapter, to me, is an overall outline of the creation process. It is kind of like an inventor having an idea. He sees the finished product in his mind, but it still has to be built. His job is to actually put it together piece by piece, but in his mind he has already seen the complete machine. What we see next in Genesis is the actual building, or forming, the creation of man God has planned. I do not see Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 as two separate creations. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

In our last lesson we were looking at Ephesians, the second chapter where Paul mentioned **"the prince of the power of the air"** and we had just began an explanation of who this was. We referred to Daniel 2 and were going to look at verse 37. **"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold."** He goes on to explain the rest of the image which represents what we refer to as the Babylonian succession of empires which has lasted until recent times. Note that God gave the earth to the King of Babylon. God first gave this dominion to Adam in Gen. 1:28. He then re-affirmed this dominion with Noah following the flood in Gen 9:2,3. Basically, God gave a man the dominion over the earth. This dominion was part of the birthright that passed from father to son from Adam to Noah and then to his son Shem. From Shem it went to Isaac and then Jacob who divided the birthright giving the dominion to Judah which was ultimately held by David and his descendants until the Babylonian captivity. At this point, we see that dominion taken from Zedekiah, King of Judah and given to Nebuchadnezzar. From Nebuchadnezzar, it passed through the Babylonian succession of empires, i.e. it was in the hands of men, most of which were very wicked men. While most of these men were idol worshippers, the religion was really what we call humanism today, i.e.

men worshipping men, or themselves. This is what I believe Paul is referring to as the **“prince of the power of the air.”**

Paul says that we have all, in times past, been among those he refers to as children of disobedience which is our nature as human beings. Then the good news. **“But God....Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,...And hath raised us up together, and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”** This takes us back to Hosea 1:10, right after telling them they would not be His people and He would not be their God, **“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”** This points out to us the sovereignty of our God. He told us what was going to happen, but not how it was going to happen. Through Paul, He then tells us that even when we were dead in our sins, He had already quickened us together with Christ. Even before we might have known our need of Christ or what Christ had done for us, God had chosen us and through the risen Christ has already raised us and made us to sit with Christ as ruler of the world. Time is not a factor with God, so He sees the whole picture from the foundation of the earth. He has done this so that in the ages (plural) to come He might show us the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Paul then reminds us that it is by grace (unmerited favor) that we are saved. It is not because of anything we have done or not done, but it is strictly a gift of God. If it were by something that we have done, baptism, church membership, tithing, special act of kindness, etc. by which we are saved, we could boast. But it is not of works at all, it has all been done by Christ. Vs. 10, **“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”** Just as we have been predestined to the adoption of children by Christ, we have also been chosen to walk in good works.

(Read Eph. 2:11-22) Based on the fact that God has already ordained, or determined, our

path, Paul says to remember that in the past they were considered Gentiles in the flesh or were called the Uncircumcision by that which called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands. They were without Christ, were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, did not have the covenants of promise, had no hope and was without God in the world. But now in accordance with the prophecies of Hosea, Isaiah, and others, in Christ they who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ. Paul says that Christ is our peace, who has made both the Gentile and the Jew one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. This refers to an actual wall in the outer court of the temple that divided the Jewish men from the women and Gentiles, or non-Jews. There is nothing in Scripture telling the people to build this wall, but apparently had been built because of the arrogance and animosity that had developed between Judah and Israel. So it was not just a wall in the temple, but a wall that had been built in the minds of the people, for sure on the part of the Jews, but probably on the part of both sides.

This wall was built, whether in the minds of the people, or actually in the temple, because of the commandments contained in the ordinances. I believe this is in reference to the sacrifice and temple worship laws that I like to categorize under a heading of “Ordinances.” These are the laws that Jesus fulfilled. In fulfilling them, there is no need for them to continue to exist as laws that had to be kept. Keeping these laws now is done by putting our faith in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus says that He abolished these laws (our need to keep them) in His flesh, i.e. His crucifixion, and in doing so is making in himself of the two, one new man and making peace as a result. This had not happened in reality at the time of Paul, but in anyone who places their faith in Christ, that peace is there in their heart. He says that it was God’s intent that by the Christ’s sacrifice He might reconcile both the Jew and the Gentile into one body, having slain the enmity between them by what happened on the cross. It is by Christ that both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

So Paul tells the Ephesians, with this in mind, they are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens in the household of God and are built on the foundation of the apostles and

prophets with Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. This is the building of the new temple unto God and he tells the Ephesians that they too are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

(Read Eph. 3:1-13) Paul says **“For this cause”** referring to what we have just been discussing concerning the bringing together the Jew and the non-Jew in Christ, he considers himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. (The Companion Bible points out that chapter 3 is a parenthetical chapter with a second parenthetical statement within it in verses 2 through 13) If indeed they heard of the stewardship of the grace of God that God had given him toward them, they would have heard how by revelation God made known to Paul the mystery. We looked at this mystery at the beginning of his epistle and he says that if they read it, they might understand his knowledge in this mystery. He goes on to explain that this mystery was not known by the sons of men, but now it has been revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. Again the mystery is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ. They are being made knowledgeable of this through the gospel of which Paul has been made a minister according to the gift of grace of God given to him by the effectual working of God’s power. Considering himself to be less than the least of all saints, he says that this grace was given to him that he should preach among the Gentiles (or nations) the unsearchable riches of Christ. Read I Cor. 15:10 to see what Paul had become. His life before his conversion is what leads him to consider himself less than the least of all saints I believe. But the purpose of his preaching is to make all men see what the fellowship of the mystery is, which he says had been hid in God from the beginning of the world. The NASB translates vs. 10 as, **“In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”** As we discussed in our last lesson, principalities and powers in heavenly places appear to be entities. I’m not quite sure just exactly how we should look at them.

But Paul goes on to say that this mystery is according to the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is through him that Paul feels he has access with confidence by

the faith in Jesus. He asks that they not lose heart at his tribulations for them, for he says that the tribulations are your glory.

(Read Eph. 3:14-21) As in vs. 1, Paul again says in vs. 14, **“For this cause”** still speaking of the revelation of the mystery. He bows his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom every family in heaven and earth is named. Paul’s prayer is that God would grant the Ephesians, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might of the Holy Spirit in the inner man in order that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith. He also prays that they, being rooted and grounded in love, might be able to comprehend with all saints what the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of love is. That breadth is boundless; the length is endless; the depth is fathomless or exhaustless; and the height is measureless. His prayer continues that they know the love of Christ, which exceeds knowledge, that they might be filled up with all the fullness of God. He closes this parenthetical chapter in saying, **“Now unto him (the Father) that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”** The last part of that verse probably should be rendered **“throughout the ages of the ages.”** To think as many seem to think that the world is going to come to an end is certainly not in God’s planning. This age will come to an end to be followed by another age probably to be followed by another age. We have no idea what all God has planned, but we do know it is not in His plan to end the earth.

(Read Eph. 4:1-16) Paul then gives advice on how we as Christians should conduct ourselves. He first says to **“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”** It has seemed to me that many people do not feel they are serving God unless they are a preacher, a teacher, a missionary, or that they are witnessing directly in some form or another. I maintain that if a person is honest, trustworthy and doing the best he or she can in their job, whether it be an electrician, truck driver, teacher, housewife, scientist, soldier, chef, or whatever, you are serving God. However, unfortunately there are people who ignore their real calling and seek another for the wrong reasons. Sometimes it is money, sometimes they don’t

want to go through the training necessary to do the job they would really enjoy. I used to say that the draft called more teachers than God did. When I first started college, if you would take courses designed to prepare one to teach, they could avoid the draft. I knew several whose major was education for that very reason. I ran into one such individual recently whom I had not seen for several years. I don't know that he ever held a job for any length of time and he certainly never became a teacher. I couldn't help but feel sorry for him. Of course he was now getting old, but obviously he was a broken man.

Paul gives some advice on how we are to walk worthy of our vocation. Some of the qualities we should have, regardless of our occupation, is humility, gentleness, patience, showing forbearance for one another in love, and working to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He then defines the unity of the Spirit. He points out that each of us is one body, one Spirit, even as we are called to one hope of our calling. He goes on to point out that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in all. He then says that to each of us is given grace, unmerited favor, to do the job according to the job or gift that Christ has given us, i.e. God gives us the natural ability to perform the particular vocation He has chosen for us. Vs. 8 says, **“Wherefore he saith, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”** He is quoting King David as he wrote Psalms 68:18. This was a prophecy of Christ and reads, **“Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou has received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.”** I read an example recently that might help to explain this. Let's suppose that there was a king who set out to capture a city. He was successful and took many captives. However, another king decided he would like to capture

the city of the first king. He too was successful, but being a merciful king, he took the captives the first king had captured and gave them gifts that would help them re-establish themselves.. In this verse we could consider two scenarios. The first being that like our example, the king of Assyria took Israel captive. Christ the king then took not only the king of Assyria, but those armies he had used to capture Israel as well, and was now releasing the captives and giving them gifts, that He received from the Father when He ascended to His right hand, to help them in their particular vocation. But Paul points out that He who had ascended had also first descended into the lower parts of the earth, i.e. the grave. This is to point out that Christ has done this through His death, burial and resurrection and now has ascended far up beyond all heavens that He might fulfill all things

He then tells us that He gave to some the ability to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers for the perfecting, or equipping, of the saints for the work of building up of the body of Christ. We won't literally realize this until the resurrection, but we can have that assurance now. This so that we be no more children, and get taken in by every wind of doctrine, the result of the deception of men by their sleight and craftiness, But by the speaking of truth in love of these whom Jesus has gifted with the various gifts we just mentioned, we can grow up, or mature, into Him. Vs. 16 says, **“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”** The whole body is dependent on each person doing their part according to their ability. and talent that God has given each person. When we all work together in this manner, Paul says this makes an increase of the body . JRL

**“But, Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be
Added unto you.”** Matt.6:33