

KINGDOM SPIRIT



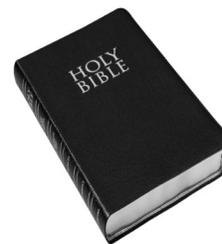
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2012

IN THE BEGINNING A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS (Part 3)

The reason that I hear the most as to why people don't like to read the Bible is that they don't like genealogies. I have to admit that they can be boring at times, however, there is always something that can be gleaned from them that will usually come in handy later on in Scripture. With this said, let's read Genesis 5. There are a couple of things that we can learn from this genealogy. First is the length of time from the creation of Adam to the birth of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. If I have added right, this comes out to 1556 years.

In verses 21-24 we have a very short story of the man named Enoch. Whereas most of these men that we have read about lived 800 to 900 plus years, Enoch only lived 365 years. It is fairly commonly taught that because of Enoch's righteousness, God took him to heaven without him dying first. There are at least two reasons that I don't believe this to be the case. First off, he was mortal and being mortal, he was not perfect. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was the only mortal that was perfect. If he went to heaven, not being perfect, he could not have stayed in the presence of God. Second, John 3:13 says, "**And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.**" I believe that Enoch simply died at what was then an early age, possibly in accordance with a statement made in Isaiah 57:1, "**The righteous persisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken**

away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

The apostle Peter tells us in II Peter 2:5 that Noah was the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness. If we count the men listed in this chapter, starting with Seth (in whose days men began to call upon the name of the LORD, i.e. became preachers of righteousness) we find nine men listed. The reason Peter calls Noah the eighth is that this title passed from Jared to Methuselah leaving out Enoch, because Enoch died before Jared, so when Jared died, the title was passed to his grandson, Methuselah. As we mentioned in our first lesson, this title probably had to do with the two mandates, or the birthright that God gave to Adam that then passed from father to son until the time of Shem.

(Read Gen. 6:1-4) The previous chapter brought us the genealogy up to Noah. Now, these verses take us back in history. In the Hebrew text, the word "men" in verse 1 is singular with an emphatic article, i.e. "the man." This would refer to Adam with the "them" meaning Adam and Eve. There is controversy as to what is meant by "the sons of God." Some feel this is just descendants of Adam while others believe it refers to angels. There are some other scriptures that might support the theory that it refers to angels. Let's look at this theory and then you can make your own determination. The phrase, "son or sons of God" is used elsewhere to refer to Adam (Luke 3:38 though the word "son" has been added by the translator); to one who is "in Christ" having the "new nature" (Rom. 8:14; I John 3:1); or to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 89:6; Dan. 3:25). In each of these three cases, the "son of God" is created directly by God, not born of, or created by man. Logically then, we need to assume that these

“sons of God” in Gen. 6:2 are directly created beings by God, not born of man.

Again in verse three, the word “man” has the emphatic article in the Hebrew text which again would refer to Adam. This being the case, the 120 years would refer to the remaining life span that Adam had.

Verse 4 tells us that giants were the progeny of these marriages between the “sons of God” and the daughters of men. The word giant comes from the Hebrew word, *nephilim*, which means “fallen ones.” Keep in mind that Moses is writing this with the benefit of later history as well, so when he says in verse 4, **“and also after that,”** he is first talking about the days of Noah, and then he says that the same thing happened after those days. In Numbers 13 & 14, we find the story of the spies that were sent by Moses into the land of Canaan, who when they returned, told of the giants that were in the land. Numbers 13:33 says **“And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”** Again the word “giant” is from the Hebrew *nephilim*. So this “coming into the daughters of men by the sons of God” apparently happened a second time prior to the children of Israel coming into the land of Canaan, in fact it could have been before Abraham came to the land of Canaan the first time.

In the book of Jude, Jude is reminding his readers of judgments God has carried out in the past, such as Sodom and Gomorra, and in verse 6 he includes, **“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”** “First estate” is from the Greek, *arche*, meaning beginning, principality. So this tells us there was for sure a group of angels who left their proper domain. The apostle Peter tells us in I Peter 3:19-20, speaking of the Holy Spirit, **“By which also he (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water.”** Then in II Peter 2:4, speaking of the sureness of God’s judgment, he says, **“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (tartarus) and delivered them**

into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” This confirms what Jude says. It would be reasonably logical to put these verses together with the events of Genesis 6 and Numbers 13 to conclude that they are all talking about the same thing. There are many who believe that the reason for the flood was to destroy these nephilims and also the reason that God commanded the Israelites to destroy all of the Canaanites. That the Israelites did not do their job completely is evidenced by the fact that there were still giants of the descendants of Anak in David’s time.

(Read Gen. 6:5-7) If the assumption of many that the wickedness of these *nephilims* is the reason for the flood, this would explain these verses.

(Read Gen. 6:8-13) The word “perfect” is from the Hebrew *tamim* meaning “plain, whole, complete.” So, **“perfect in his generations,”** means without blemish as to breed or pedigree. This would mean that probably Noah and his family were the only ones who’s pedigree had not been contaminated by these *nephilims* because Noah had walked with God.

We’re again told that Noah and his wife had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. All of the non-Negroid and non-Mongoloid races of the world claim to be descendants from one of these three sons.

God tells Noah that He is going to destroy all flesh from the earth, with the exception of Noah and his family and gives him instruction on building an ark. (Read Gen. 6:14-22) **“Pitch it within and without with pitch”** means to cover it with asphalt. This was a pretty accessible product that could be found in surface pools at that time. There are different measurements for a cubit, but the smallest that I know of is 18 inches per cubit. Based on this, the ark would have been 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. To put this in perspective, today’s Nimitz class aircraft carriers are about 1100 feet long and 250 feet wide.

Noah is instructed to take the animals on board in pairs, but in the next chapter, we’re told that the clean animals were to be taken on board by sevens. We’re told that Noah did as God instructed.

(Read Genesis chapters 7 & 8) The text of these chapters is pretty self explanatory. There is controversy over whether the flood was universal,

or whether it was primarily limited to the Mesopotamian basin. Strong arguments can be made on both sides of the controversy, but since neither side can really prove their arguments, I feel we have to make our own decision and continue studying. I don't believe it is a point that changes the intent of the overall Bible story.

Noah was 600 years old when he entered the ark so this would have been 1656 years after the creation of Adam. We're told Noah and family were in the ark a year and 10 days. When they left the ark, Noah built an altar and offered a burnt offering of every clean animal and fowl. When God smelled the sweet savour, He said in His heart that He would never again curse the ground any more for man's sake, nor would He smite anymore every living thing as He had just done by the flood.

(Read Gen. 9:1-7) God gives Noah the same dominion mandate that He gave to Adam and the same charge to multiply and fill the earth. One major difference appears in that God adds the animals to be food, whereas only vegetation was given to Adam for food. Eating blood, however, was forbidden as the life is in the blood. Verse 4 is the foundation of the doctrine of "substitution" and "atonement,"—"life for a life." We're told in Romans 6:23, "**For the wages of sin is death.**" In Hebrews 9:22 we find, "**without the shedding of blood is no remission,**" i.e. without the giving up of life, there is no remission, or sending away of sin. We will discuss this more when we discuss the law, but this is a very important doctrine that we need to learn.

As we have said before, we don't know for sure where the Garden of Eden was nor where Noah lived prior to the flood but it is assumed by most that it was in the Mesopotamian area, i.e. the area where Iraq, Turkey, and Iran are today. Following the flood this is where they came to when they left the ark. We often hear this area referred to as the "cradle of civilization." All of the races, or nationalities of the Caucasoid race came from this area. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. All of the Caucasoid race claim lineage from one of these three sons. For example, the Mongolian (not Mongoloid) race that makes up the majority of the Russian population claim to be descendants of Japheth, the Egyptian from Ham; the Arab and the Anglo from Shem, just to name a few.

(Read Gen. 9:8-17) This covenant, that God would never again cut off all flesh by the waters of a flood, is an unconditional covenant in that only God is responsible to it. The rainbow is a token, or a sign that God has made this covenant.

(Read Gen. 9:18-29) I believe that the removal of the water that was above the earth, by way of "**the windows of heaven were opened,**" (Gen. 7:11) to help bring about the flood, made an atmospheric change that made fermentation possible. If this is right, it would explain why Noah became drunk after drinking the wine he made from the grapes he had grown. At least it would appear that Noah had not expected this to happen.

To understand verse 22, we need to look at Leviticus 20:11 which says, "**And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness.**" Based on this, we're told in verse 18 that Ham was the father of Canaan, thus it would appear that Ham's mother was the mother of Canaan. For this reason, Noah cursed Canaan to be a servant of both Shem and Japheth. Keep in mind that a curse such as this did not just apply to the individual, but to his descendants as well.

Noah lived to be 950 years old before he died. From this point on, we see a considerable reduction in the lifespan of man begin to take place. I would speculate that the atmospheric change that obviously took place following the flood could have at least been a contributing factor.

As we have mentioned, most people hate to read genealogies, so they pass over them in Scripture. However, I want us to read Genesis 10, even though it is genealogies. There are some important names and points in these genealogies, that we will need, to later understand other scriptures. For example, we're told in verses 2-3 that the sons of Japheth are Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer are Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. In the book of Ezekiel, there is a prophecy concerning the enemies of Israel that will come against her in the last days. See how many of these same names you see. It is important that we understand these aren't just names, but names of men who are the foundation of various nations of the world today.

Note that Ashkenaz is a son of Gomer. Today, over 85% of the people who call themselves Jews consider themselves to be Ashkenazim Jews, i.e. they claim to be descendants of Ashkenaz, or from Japheth, not Shem from whom Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, thus Judah descended. Understanding some of these genealogies, and who they apply to, will help us understand our world situation today much better.

Nimrod, son of Cush, son of Ham, was basically the founder of Babylon as well as a number of the beliefs associated with the Babylonian system that we have with us today. We will study more about him in our next chapter.

God has a plan for the whole world, but we will see His intent is to implement that plan primarily through one family. So as we continue in our study, we will see Him begin to narrow the focus of the Scripture toward this one family. The first narrowing of that focus will be to the family of Shem, the son of Noah. It further narrows to the family of a grandson of Shem, Eber, from whom the name "Hebrew" probably comes from, then to the family of one of his sons, Peleg. We're told in verse 25 that in the days of Peleg the earth was divided. If you recall, we discussed earlier that it could have been in the beginning that all of the dry land of the earth was one land mass. It is the thought by some that the dividing of the earth mentioned in verse 25 could refer to the dividing and separating of the continents as we know them today.

I should mention that some think that Jobab, one of the sons of Joktan mentioned in verse 29 could be the man Job of the book of Job. The book of Job is considered to be the oldest book of the Bible.

(Read Gen. 11:1-9) As we mentioned above, the city and tower of Babel was the beginning of the city of Babylon and of the Babylonian system. Nimrod was a rebel from God. He was the leader of those who began to build the city of Babylon. It appears that his object was to prove himself greater than God.

Dr. Bullinger, in his Companion Bible suggests that the words "may reach" that have been added by a translator in verse 4 should not have been added, but rather should read, " 'and its top with the heavens,' i.e. with the Zodiac depicted on it, as in ancient temples of Denderah and Esneh in

Egypt."

The object, we're told, was to establish for themselves a name. It is kind of like we see today in big business where we have companies that are "too big to fail." If they could make for themselves a name prominent enough, they would be too big to fail, in their minds. To do this, they felt they would have to make themselves a name that showed their independence from God, i.e. they would have to be greater than God. If you read about Nimrod, this was his attitude. It has been the attitude of the Babylonian system from its very beginning here until today. I believe that they had advanced scientifically enough that what God said in verse 6, "**now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do**" I would not be surprised that they were as far advanced scientifically as we are today. However, God stopped their progress then by confounding their language so that they had to separate from each other due to the language barrier, thus their efforts were greatly weakened.

(Read Gen. 11:10-32) Again this is mostly genealogy, but is important in at least a couple of ways. First, it helps us determine timing and dating. Second, we see again the narrowing of God's focus as He proceeds to focus on the one man and his family that He will use to implement His plan for all mankind. We meet this one man in verse 27, Abram.

As we begin Genesis, chapter 12, God has narrowed His focus to just one man and his family. The rest of the Bible is to, for, and about this man, Abram, and his family. However, we need to understand that this is not because of anything special about this man, or anything special that he did, though he was a very righteous man, nor is it because he or any of his descendants are superior to others, but because it is God's plan to use this man and his family through the ages to accomplish His purpose for mankind on the earth. His plan is to return man to the status of Adam before Adam sinned, but in the process God is including all the millions of people who have been and will be born before the Great White Throne of Judgment we find in Rev. 20. God is choosing Abram and his family for His use in implementing this plan. As we continue our study, we need to always keep this purpose in mind as we learn how God works His plan. We will see several instances where we will think that God's whole plan has been a com-

plete failure. But, keep in mind that we are seeing the mind of God at work, and that it differs from the mind of man. It is difficult for man to grasp the whole picture with our finite minds, but if we can do so, the wonders of how God brings His whole plan to fruition is truly something awesome to behold. We will see the sovereignty of God on full display as we study, if we try to keep the big picture in our minds always.

I suggest that you study the next few chapters in preparation for our next lesson. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Paul lists the parts of that armour in Eph.6:14-18: girdle of truth to protect our loins; righteousness as a breastplate; preparation of the gospel of peace for our feet; shield of faith; helmet of salvation; the sword of the spirit (God's Word); and prayer. Note that there are seven parts of this armour. Three to protect the body, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the preparation of the gospel of peace for our feet. There are two defensive parts: the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation. There are two offensive parts: the sword of the Spirit (Word of God) and the spear of prayer.

Paul asks that we pray always, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. He asks for prayer for him that he might boldly be able to continue to make known the mystery of the gospel for which he is an ambassador in bonds.

(Read Eph. 6:21-24) He is sending this epistle with Tychicus that he might tell them how he is doing and to comfort their hearts. He finishes the epistle with his salutation. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

Our next epistle to study is the epistle to the Philippians. Philippi was a fairly old city by the time that Paul first preached there. It was a pretty wealthy city due to gold mines in the area. It was about 8 miles from the coast and was the terminus of the Egnatian Way, a major military road which joined Rome and the East as a much

valued line of communication. The town derives its name from Philip of Macedon, who took it from the Thasians about 300 B.C. Quoting from The New Bible Dictionary, "He enlarged the settlement, and fortified it to defend his frontiers against the Thasians. At this time the gold-mining industry was developed, and gold coins were struck in the name of Philip and became commonly recognized....In 42 B.C. the famous battle of Philippi was fought with Antony and Octavian ranged against Brutus and Cassius. After this date the town was enlarged, probably by the coming of colonists: the title Colonia Julia is attested at this time. This prominence was enhanced further when, after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C., in which Octavian defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra, the town received a settlement of Italian colonists who had favored Antony and had been obliged to surrender their land to the veterans of Octavian (Lake and Cadbury, p.187)."

Paul's first preaching on European soil was at Philippi. To review Paul's relationship with this city, read Acts 16:9-40. He visited Philippi two more times, but we have no Biblical record of what happened during these visits. This epistle was probably written from Rome where Paul was being held pending his trial before Nero. The letter was written approximately ten or twelve years after Paul was first at Philippi.

Paul had a special affinity for the Philippians, probably for several reasons. They had a special concern for him and provided considerable for his needs as he ministered to them and to others. Probably because Philippi was not on a major trade route, there were not very many Jews there, thus Paul was able to teach more with less agitation than in most other places he went. Philippi was the first city on the European continent that Paul preached and taught at and it appears that they were quite receptive and remained so to the time of Paul's letter to them from Rome. (Read Philippians 1:1-11) Timothy and probably Luke were with Paul when he wrote this letter. Seldom do we have evidence of Luke's presence, probably because he wrote the letters and intentionally left himself out of salutations such as we see in vs. 1, 2. Paul has very fond memories of the Philippian people and thanks God for them every time he thinks of them. His prayers for them is always offered with joy in view of their fellowship in the

gospel from the first day he taught them until the time of his writing of this letter. He says that he is confident that He who began a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, or the day of Christ's return. He says it is only right that he should think this way as they are in his heart inasmuch that even in his current situation in bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, they have been partakers of grace with him. God is his witness that he longs for them with the affection of Jesus Christ. He prays that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment that they may approve the things that are excellent and that they may be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ, or again until the return of Jesus. Also his prayer is that they be filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

(Read Philippians 1:12-26) He wants them to know that his imprisonment and all that led up to it has been used by God to spread the gospel further and further. His imprisonment for the cause of Christ is well known throughout the whole Praetorium guard, or palace guard and to all other places. His situation has emboldened others to speak without fear. He says that some are speaking out of love knowing that he has been appointed for the defense of the gospel. Others are preaching for their own selfish ambition with the intent of adding to Paul's affliction. Either way, the gospel is being preached, so Paul says that he rejoices in this. He says he knows that this will turn out for his deliverance through their prayers and the provision of the Holy Spirit. It is his hope and expectation that he will not be accountable for anything that would bring shame on him, but rather that with all boldness, as always, Christ will be magnified in his body whether he lives or dies. In vs. 21, he says, **"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"** to which we could add, based on vs. 20, the gain would be to Christ. If Paul were to be martyred he says that this would be a substantial boost to the cause of Christ. If he is to live, it would be more fruitful labor on his part which would also be a boost to the cause of Christ. He does not know which would be the most profitable to the cause of Christ. He says in vs. 22 he doesn't know which one to choose. In reality, he has no choice, whether he lives or dies is up to the Caesar, or maybe we should say it is up to God as

to which way He would cause the Caesar to rule. He says that he is hard pressed between the two. But then in vs. 23 he adds a third element, or a third choice, if the choice were his, **"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better"**. Far better than what? It would be far better than the two options Paul has been referring to, to die or to live. As we have mentioned before, Paul and most of the other apostles were expecting Jesus to return at any time. Already in this chapter Paul has mentioned the day of Christ twice, referring, I believe, to the return of Christ. If this were to happen, this would be far better than either one of the first two choices of living or dying. The word "depart" is from the Greek word "*analuō*" which appears only twice in the Bible and is translated "depart" once and "return" once. It appears several times in the Apocrypha and is usually translated "return". In classical Greek, the word is equal to "unloose, as of a ship weighing anchor." After considerable study on this verse, my opinion is that Paul is referring to the change that will occur to those alive when Christ returns. (Read I Cor. 15:51, 52; I Thess. 4:15-17) Whether we die and are resurrected or we are changed in a twinkling of the eye, we have to depart from this mortal body to take on the spiritual body such as Christ had following His resurrection. If we used "return" instead of depart, our mortal bodies return to the dust from which they came, (Gen 3:19) **"for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."** The Ferrar Fenton Translation renders vs. 23, **"Now I am possessed by the two, having the desire to be freed and to be with Christ, by far the better."** While Paul doesn't really have a choice of dying or living, his real desire is to be freed (from his mortal body) and to be with Christ. To him, this is the far better option than either dying or living.

(Vs. 23 is used by many to teach that a person goes to heaven to be with Christ when they die. To teach this is to totally take this verse out of the context of Paul's teaching. He obviously teaches that we sleep when we die until the resurrection, he obviously believes in the two resurrections. To teach that a person goes to heaven when he or she dies is counter to both of these doctrines. However, as we've pointed out, he did believe that that first resurrection could happen at any time and looked forward to it.)

Getting back to reality, Paul says it is more needful for the people to whom he has been teaching that he abide in the flesh. With this confidence he says that he knows that he will abide and continue with them for the furtherance of their joy and faith that their confidence in him may abound through Christ Jesus in his coming to them again. (Though we have no record of Paul going to Philippi again, I believe he probably did so as he returned from his trip to Spain, the British Isles and Europe.)

(Read Philippians 1:27-30) Regardless, he asks them to conduct themselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether he comes to them or not he might hear that they are standing in one spirit, one mind, working together for the faith of the gospel; in no way being frightened by their opponents in any circumstances--which to their opponents is a sign of destruction, but to the Philippians a sign of salvation, and that from God. He tells them that it has been granted to them for Christ's sake to not only believe in Him but to suffer for His sake experiencing the same suffering they saw in Paul and that he is currently suffering.

(Read Philippians 2:1-11) The King James translation uses the word "consolation" while other translations use the word "encouragement" in vs. 1 which is kind of a rhetorical question. If there be encouragement in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, or affection and compassion, Paul says to make his joy complete by being of one mind, having the same love, united in spirit and having the same purpose. I don't think Paul doubted that these Philippians lacked in any of these characteristics, but rather was himself encouraging them to be like minded. Because it is human nature to be more concerned about self than of others, Paul further instructs them on how to be of one mind. He says to not do anything driven by selfishness or conceit, but rather to consider one another better than oneself; to not just look after one's own interest, but to look after that of others as well. He says that this was the mind of Christ and should be ours as well. Though Christ was in a form of God, He did not consider His equality with God as something He should reach for, but rather emptied Himself, or made Himself of no reputation. The Companion Bible has the following short commentary that

I feel is appropriate to repeat. "Of what He divested Himself is not stated, but George Herbert's words, 'He laid His glory by', i.e. the outward attributes of Deity, well suggest the meaning here. It is assumed by some that when taking the form of a bondservant, He not only divested Himself of His Divine powers, but became as His fellows, and limited Himself (or *was limited*) to the knowledge and 'mental status' of the age in which He lived. In support of this Luke 2:52 "and Mark 13:32 are adduced, but neither affords any warrant whatever for such assumption. The Lord's wisdom and knowledge were astonishing to the Rabbin (Luke 2:47). He came only to accomplish the work the Father gave Him to do (John 17:4) so He only spoke the words the Father gave Him (John 3:34; 7:16; 8:28 ;12:49, 50; 14:10, 24; 17:8, 14). His perfect obedience (as far as death, vs. 8) was shown in that He did and said only what was appointed Him to do and say, not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (Heb. 10:5-7)."

Because of what Christ did, Paul says that God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name. He then says that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven, on the earth, and beneath the earth and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, "**to the glory of God the Father.**"

It is interesting in vs. 7-8 Paul lists 7 steps to humiliation that Christ took: made Himself of no reputation; took upon Him the form of a servant; was made in the likeness of men; was found in the fashion of man; He humbled Himself; became obedient unto death; even the death of the cross. In vs. 9-11 we see 7 steps to glorification: God hath highly exalted Him; gave Him a name above every name; at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow; in heaven; in the earth; under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

(Read Philippians 2:12-18) Because of what God has done with and through Christ, Paul urges the Philippians to obey, not in his presence only, but more so in his absence. He then tells them to "**work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**" Again we need to be sure we know the meaning of words, or we might be misled into false doctrine. According to Young's Analytical Concordance the Greek word or words that are translated "**work out**" mean "to work-down, against, thoroughly." We might say "work

fully” or “accomplish fully”. This would be in the same sense as “**done all**” in Eph. 6:13, “**Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**” “**Work out**” is not meant to mean we have to work for our justification. As we have pointed out the steps of salvation in the past, justification, sanctification, and glorification with justification being totally free through the blood of Christ and sanctification being something we do, our maturing or learning obedience in Christ. What Paul is saying here, I believe, is to complete the process, to not stop with justification alone, but to work to be sanctified that we might in turn be glorified, i.e. to accomplish the whole process. He says to do so with fear and trembling. The reason for the fear and trembling is because it is God that works in us “**both to will and to do of His good pleasure.**” If I am reading this right, we see both God’s *thelema* (His desire) and His *boulema* (His purpose) in this sentence. It is sometimes difficult to know and understand that God is working in us to carry out His will, His desire, but even more so to understand that He is working His purpose, that which we cannot resist, in us. But Paul says to do all things without complaining or arguing, that they may be blameless and harmless, “**the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights to the world holding forth the word of life.**” In doing this, Paul says he can rejoice in the day of Christ and know that he has not run in vain or labored in vain. Paul will rejoice with them if he is poured out as a drink offering on their sacrifice and service.

(Read Philippians 2:19-30) As soon as Paul knows how things go with him in his appearance before Caesar, he is going to send Timothy to them. He says that he has no one who will sincerely care for their state as Timothy will. He wants them to know what is to happen to him and

he wants to know what their state is as well. Timothy has been like a son to him as they know, so they can know that he is like minded with Paul. Paul is in hopes that he too can soon return to visit them. But in the mean time he is sending Epaphroditus to them with this letter. Epaphroditus had come from Philippi with gifts and support from the Philippians and had apparently become very sick. Paul knew they were concerned and part of the reason that he is sending him back to them is so that they can know that he is okay now, and of course, to take the letter.

(Read Philippians 3:1-16) For Paul to write to the Philippians is no trouble he says, but it may be a safeguard to them. I would assume he is saying that even though he has spoken these things to them already, it is no trouble to write to them again with the same things, but his letter may be a source of remembrance of what he has already told them. He says to beware of dogs. Based on Christ’s conversation with the woman of Canaan, that came to Jesus to ask Him to heal her daughter (Matt. 15:26-27), that dogs here would refer to non-Israelite who were primarily idol worshippers. They were to also beware of evil workers, men with evil intent in all that they did. Finally, he says to beware of the concision. In the margin of my Bible, concision is translated mutilation. He is referring to those Jews who insisted that one had to be circumcised in the flesh to be justified. For, he says, “**we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,**” i.e. are circumcised in the heart.

We will continue with Philippians 3:1-16 in our next issue. JRL

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Proverbs 26:22

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