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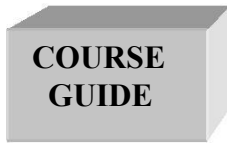
**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE CODE: CTH 813**

**COURSE TITLE: PAULINE THEOLOGY AND  
EPISTLES**

*CTH813*  
*GUIDE*

*COURSE*



**CTH813**  
PAULINE THEOLOGY AND EPISTLES

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Published By:  
National Open University of Nigeria

First Printed 2012

ISBN: 978-058-539-7

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## **Introduction**

Pauline Theology and Epistles CTH813 is a three-credit Masters course. This course is offered in the first semester of the first year to students who are offering Christian Theology. There are no prerequisite courses for this course. Pauline Theology and Epistles, however, is a course that should be taken as a branch of the New Testament studies. Some of the things you would study in this course are things which you might undertake at the doctoral level. This course consists of three Modules with units that have been developed using various scholarships.

This Study Guide contains the required information about the entire course. It guides you through the course content and the number of required assignments that you would do. There is also an assignment file. This file prescribes the course requirements as well as the grading system. This Study Guide is intended to help you as a distance learner to aid you in your study of this course at National Open University of Nigeria. The aims and objectives of this course are stated in this Course Guide. This Course Guide will help you to know at the beginning of the course what you should expect from the study of the course, and what you are expected to learn from the course. The Study Guide is not the only resource for you. Its goal is to help you pass the course.

There are other resources that can also help you to pass your course such as text books, the course material itself and facilitation class sessions, which are optional. Another very important use of the Study Guide is the plan and use of time. It states on a weekly basis how you should proceed with your studies. If you pay attention to this plan guide, you will surely complete your study of the course successfully on time before the examination date. Take advantage of the time guide in this Study Guide.

This Course Guide tells all that is obtainable in this course and the relevant materials that would help you expand the understanding of the course. This would provide you a guide on how to proceed with your study of the materials and the time frame for a successful completion of the course. This guide will also help to direct you in your tutor-marked assignments and materials for further readings.

It is important to go through this Study Guide very carefully before beginning your study of the course material. The temptation to jump to course materials without going through the Study Guide for the sake of saving time is high but also a wrong decision. Students who go straight and study course materials without first going through the Study Guide

## *CTH813* Pauline Theology and Epistles

usually end up not doing well at the end of the course. Going through the Study Guide is part of studying the course material. Complete the feedback form at the end and submit it with your first assignment to your tutorial facilitator.

You may ask the student counselor at your Study Centre about your tutorial facilitator and where to find him/her. I believe this would be helpful if you heed to this useful advice.

### **Course Aims**

The general aim of this course is to introduce you to major issues and developments in Pauline studies. This will also orientate you towards understanding its connection with theological issues in other courses in Christian Theology such as the Old Testament and Systematic Theology.

The aims of this course would be achieved by:

- Introducing the students to Pauline Theology and Epistles as a discipline that shapes their thinking on past and current developments.
- Ability to contribute to the Pauline theological debate for the growth of the church.
- Educating and also creating opportunities for students' participation in Pauline studies from an African perspective that is biblically sound.
- Helping students apply their faith to the gospel proclamation.

### **Course Objectives**

When you have successfully finished the course, you should be able to:

- Define Pauline Theology and Epistles;
- Account for the historical development of Pauline Theology from the early church to the present time;
- Describe ways of engaging in more effectively in developing Pauline Theology; and
- Explain how Pauline Theology can answer to needs of global Christianity.

## **Working through This Course**

You are required to walk through the course content, unit by unit in order to complete the course. It is also a requirement for you to do all the self-assessment exercises for each section of the unit and tutor-marked assignments at the end of each unit. The tutor-marked assignments will form 30% of your final grade while there is a final examination which you will take electronically. This constitutes 70% of your final grade.

## **Course Materials**

The major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File

## **Study Units**

There are three Modules in this course. Each Module has seven units totaling twenty one units for all the Modules. The modules are designed to cover three major aims of the course.

### **Module 1 Paul as Pastor-Theologian**

- Unit 1 Paul as Pastor-Theologian 1
- Unit 2 The Center of Paul's Theology
- Unit 3 The Kingdom of God
- Unit 4 God's Redemptive Plan
- Unit 5 Created anew in Christ
- Unit 6 The Authenticity of Paul's Gospel
- Unit 7 The Ministry of Reconciliation

### **Module 2 Pauline Eschatology**

- Unit 1 Eschatological basis for Reconciliation
- Unit 2 Theology of the New Creation
- Unit 3 Eschatological *Content* of Paul's Preaching
- Unit 4 The Church and its Faith in the Eschatological Context
- Unit 5 The Future Eschatology
- Unit 6 Paul as Pastor-Theologian 2
- Unit 7 Paul's Concept of Sanctification

### **Module 3 The Resurrection and the Christian Life**

- Unit 1 The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers 1
- Unit 2 The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers 2
- Unit 3 The Place of the Holy Spirit in Eschatology
- Unit 4 The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8-9
- Unit 5 The Concept of the Christian Community and Giving to the Gospel
- Unit 6 The Christian Life Part 1
- Unit 7 The Christian Life Part 2



## **Textbooks and References**

### **Assignment File**

The Directorate of Examinations and Assessments of the National Open University of Nigeria will mail an assignment file to you through your Study Centre Manager. This assignment file is part of the course. This file contains the assignments that you have to submit to your tutor. These assignments will be marked and recorded and they will count towards your final grade. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor at the stipulated time that he or she decides. The assignments account for 30% of the total course work. At the end of the course you are required to sit for a final semester examination of 2 hours which accounts for 70% of the total marks for the course.

### **Assessments**

There are two kinds of assessment for this course. One is tutor-marked assignment and the other is a written examination. There are twenty one units of tutor-marked assignments in all the three modules. You are expected to submit all assignments but only the best three will be counted. Each of these is worth 10% marks and together constitutes 30% of your total course marks. These assignments require application of the information, knowledge and experience acquired in the study.

CTH813 Pauline Theology and Epistles

Unit	Title of the Study	Weeks Activity	Assignment
	<b>Course Guide</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Course Guide Form</b>
	<b>Module 1</b>	<b>Paul as Pastor-Theologian</b>	
1	Paul as Pastor-Theologian 1	1	Assignment
2	The Center of Paul's Theology	2	Assignment
3	The Kingdom of God	3	Assignment
4	God's Redemptive Plan	4	Assignment
5	Created anew in Christ	5	
6	The Authenticity of Paul's Gospel	6	
7	The Ministry of Reconciliation	7	
	<b>Module 2</b>	<b>Pauline Eschatology</b>	
1	Eschatological basis for Reconciliation	8	Assignment
2	Theology of the New Creation	9	Assignment
3	Eschatological Content of Paul's Preaching	10	TMA to be submitted
4	The Church and its Faith in the Eschatological Context	11	
5	The Future Eschatology	11	Assignment
6	Paul as Pastor-Theologian 2	12	
7	Paul's Concept of Sanctification	13	
	<b>Module 3</b>	<b>The Resurrection and the Christian Life</b>	
1	The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers 1	14	
2	The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers 2	14	TMA to be submitted
3	The Place of the Holy Spirit in Eschatology	15	
4	The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8-9	16	
5	The Concept of the Christian Community and Giving to the Gospel	16	Assignment
6	The Christian Life Part 1	17	
7	The Christian Life Part 2	17	
	<b>Revision/Examination</b>		

	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	
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### **Summary**

This course is designed to help you gain some insights into the Pauline Theology. This course explores into the scholarly development of Pauline eschatology within different cultural and philosophical contexts.

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## **MODULE ONE**

### **UNIT 1: Paul as Pastor-Theologian**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Paul as Pastor-Theologian

- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References for further Reading

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This piece is explored to divulge to students the comprehensive theology of Paul as it is contained in his epistles and the Bible. It appears that the centre of Paul's theology is "to preach Christ crucified." We are called upon to emulate Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith. In his constructive Christology he looked at Jesus as the second and the last Adam who never sinned and cannot sin. The appraisal to Pauline doctrine of epistemology, eschatology, trinity, sin and so on has portrayed how Paul is seen as the genius of the greatest constructive mind ever at work on the data of Christianity.

#### **2.0 Objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- i. Realize that the constructive theology of Paul is overwhelmingly rooted in Christ.
- ii. Appreciate Pauline theology as regards sensitive doctrinal tenets like the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith, eschatology and its fulfillment.
- iii. Grasp with the centre of the gospel theology as shown in Pauline epistles.

#### **3.0 Main content**

##### **3.1 Paul as Pastor-Theologian.**

The theological entry consideration for Paul's writings was prompted by 2 Pet 3:16--Peter's statement about Paul, the things difficult to understand. That is what prompted us to survey the history of the wrestling with Paul. The more one studies the teaching of Paul, the more you are bound to become impressed that you are dealing with a systematic thinker, an orderly thinker. The more you deal with

the writings of Paul, the more you (ought to) know yourself to be dealing with teaching that reflects deep penetration, and is carefully structured. We encounter a structure of thought characterized by careful reflection, penetrating analysis, and even a certain amount of conceptual rigor. As Vos puts it, in Paul what we have to deal with is "*the genius of the greatest constructive mind ever at work on the data of Christianity*" (p 149). It is the fruitfulness of Vos' approach that has enabled him to recognize this in Paul, and to deal with him along these lines. Though Paul's writings provide us with a tome for doing systematic or doctrinal theology, they are pastoral in the sense that they are letters, and as letters, they are directed to concrete life problems and condition, and specific church situations.

The letter to the Galatians is truly to the Galatians. A pastoral or hortatory concern is always present in Paul. And that is true even in sections of the book of Romans, where the theoretical reflection, and the penetrating analysis is the most apparent. We are highlighting the occasional character of Paul's writings. In a word, the letters of Paul are occasional, as that word is sometimes used in the discourse, in a specific, technical sense, that is, addressed to a particular situation. Although, at the same time, as we emphasize the occasional nature, we don't want to suggest that Paul wrote them simply to be read and discarded. So, we can go on to let the other shoe drop again; Paul's writings are not a tangled mass of ad hoc formulations. They are not an amalgam of unrelated conceptions. They are not in that sense "doxological" in the sense of being non-theological. Most everyone has learned by this time, you simply can't get away with doing what the 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal interpretation tried to do, to separate Paul's religion from his theology; it just doesn't work to try to free up a core of religious conviction or doxology from a disposable shell made up of all sorts of confused and contradictory theological viewpoints. Rather, there is present reflected in the letters of Paul, in all of their occasional character, and, yes, in all of their pervasively doxological tone, there is a unified structure of thought, the coherence of theological thinking. As we could illustrate here to give a couple of examples: Eph 1:3-14, Rom 8--are they doxology or theology?

Albert Schweitzer here again proves quotable, "Paul is the patron saint of thought in Christianity." Of course you can run with that statement in the wrong way; it is not to suggest that everyone else was mindless. Schweitzer and we would have decidedly different opinions on Paul's thought. These observations bring into the mix the relatively substantial quantity of material we have from Paul; all this provides warrant for viewing Paul as the first Christian thinker, the first Christian theologian.

From the perspective that we have just been bringing into view, we can identify the real problem of Pauline interpretation, or the proper problem, in distinction of all problems we the interpreters bring to the text, and that mar our interpretation of Paul, we can speak of the real or proper problem. And that, we can say, is bound up with the occasional factor we have noted. The real difficulty is that in his writings we encounter a thinker of constructive genius, a thinker with a decidedly doctrinal disposition. Also, we encounter him only as he directs himself to specific situations and problems, only as he addresses himself in an occasional or pastoral fashion. We can note this in 2 Cor 9, where Paul is interested in the collection from the church. [And this brings up a correlated factor: we find the apostle, at least in many instances, expressing himself against the background of previous contact, and extensive personal instruction, and that is no longer known to us in detail.] He talks about a collection for the Jerusalem church, but questions come to mind to which answers are elusive, because Paul is building on this previous contact. A perennial issue is his teaching on the man of sin, mentioned in 2 Thess. 2:5-6--"now you know." Don't you remember what I said when I was with you, and now you

know what it is that restrains. And it is just what Paul banks on his immediate readers to know that subsequent readers wish they knew.

### 3.2 Eschatological Structure

That prompts the wry comment of Vos, after one of the longest chapters in the *Pauline Eschatology*, that the best interpretation is going to be its fulfillment. So the true problem in Paul is that we have a theologian only accessible through his letters and sermon records--only through a largely non-theological idiom, or in informal idiom: a theologian expressing himself in a non-systematic, non-topical format. So an analogy that has suggested itself, which is helpful in representing the overall situation here we are addressing, is that we can compare the epistles of Paul to the visible portion of an iceberg; in other words, what projects above the surface is a small fraction of what remains submerged, and also the shapes and contours which we might take in upon first glance, may upon further examination prove to be deceptive. In other words, there is a mass of which a small proportion is above the surface. Or to put things in a less pictorial fashion, a concept that has little textual support may in the end, upon examination, prove to be basic or fundamental or of constitutive significance. An example is Paul's referring to Christ (only twice) as the second or last Adam, but which proves to be one of his most basic Christological expressions.

### 4.0 Summary

Inevitably, concern with the letters of Paul, as a whole and as we bring in Acts, that overall concern with Paul gives rise to the question of structure, to the underlying framework of thought. Or in the categories of linguistic, structural analysis, what are the deep structures that give rise to the surface manifestation? What is the *competence level* of which the letters are a performance? What is the generative matrix out of which the letters emerge? Or in more traditional categories what is good and necessary consequence in the case of the explicit statements of Paul?

### 5.0 Conclusion

We are going to make sense of Paul only if we are ready to wrestle with such questions. It is not a matter of trying to make some kind of end-run around the text. We are solely and totally dependent upon the text. But it is what the text brings us to recognize and propose. It is this state of affairs, wrestling with these questions, that makes extensive interpretation of Paul arduous; I don't want to ignore the difficulty. Peter says some things are difficult to understand in Paul (but not that all things are difficult to understand in Paul.)

### 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- i. What qualifies Paul as a theologian, according to Vos?
- ii. Explain how Paul's writings are both pastoral letters and theological.
- iii. What is the basic eschatological structure in Paul's theology?

### 7.0 References for further Reading

- i. Vos Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1948.

- ii. Cousar, B. Charles. *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters*. Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1990.
- iii. Jaroslav pelican and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works*. St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955.
- iv. L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand: Eerdmans, 1955) 192-98.
- v. M. J. Harris, *2 Corinthians* (EBC. 10; Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1976) 353.
- vi. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 195; and Hughes, *2 Corinthians*, 199-200.
- vii. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915) 168.
- viii. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 48; Waco, TX: Word, 1986) 137.



## **Unit 2: The Center of Paul's Theology**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content: The Center of Paul's Theology
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignment
7. References for further Reading

### **1.0 Introduction**

The significant question in the study of Paul is "How ought we to begin?" in the study and interpretation of Paul? Is it in the doctrine of justification by faith? Or is it the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Paul? We ought not to minimize the seemingly inevitable tendency to constrict, to limit the impact of the apostle's teaching. And how do avoid--given our prior understanding each of us has of Paul--so that our study together will broaden our understanding? And our understanding particularly what it means to be a Christian, and what goes with it, how will our experience of Christian religion go deeper?

### **2.0 Objectives**

The objectives of this unit are to guide the student to:

- i. Discover the center of Paul's theology in his epistles
- ii. Understand the eschatological position of Christ in relation to the Old Testament prophecies.

### **3.0 Main Content: The Center of Paul's Theology**

Following the cue of Ridderbos, he compares Paul's teaching to a vast building. It has a number of ways through which one can enter and even force entry. So Ridderbos asks: What is the main entry, or the main set of entries? How do we enter in such a way as to discover the floor plan, to get a sense for the whole, so that we can proceed to move about with a minimal amount of stumbling? Undoubtedly there are a variety of angles with which to valuably approach Paul. But what we are getting at is the question: Does Paul's theology have a center? That does seem a profitable question to pose--a question we can answer. And we should note that this is a question that a number of Pauline scholars find problematic (which then makes this perhaps even more of an important question to ask).

Despite the reservations of some, it seems difficult to deny that his teaching does have a center--particularly if that notion of center is not maintained too rigidly. We are not saying center as if there is one central key concept from which everything else should be deduced. We wouldn't want to do that, say, with election, his notion of salvation, or even his concept of God. So we wouldn't want this center to be unduly restricted. At the same time, however, we ought not to allow the ad hoc nature of Paul's letters, their occasional nature, to then provide us a wax nose, so that we can make out of them whatever we want, based on our experience today. In his teaching as a whole, there is an overall set of concerns that we can identify, and in that set, some matters are plainly more important than others.

Many concerns, but each one is not equally important and of concern. To extend the metaphor, that points to a circle of interest in Paul, a circle in which each concern is more or less central--relative centrality. Assuming this, what is it? What is his locus and centering concern, and how do we go about identifying it properly. While there is probably more than one way to approach answering this question, we do so most safely, it seems, by identifying certain passages that have a summarizing purpose, a kind of synoptic outlook. We can see that Paul does that in places, using either his own words or, as we'll find, where he may be using some already existing formulation, certain creedal fragments, e.g. We want to find passages that express more or less clearly what are Paul's core concerns. Without trying to provide a complete survey here of such material, let me draw attention to several of these, and maybe we can see how these function along the lines we are trying to get across.

### 3.3.1 Initial Probe: 1 Cor 2:2

*"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."*

And we can just remind ourselves that this statement is in the broader context of 1:18-3:22. And that's useful to point up because this is a passage in which Paul highlights factors that are basic to his apostolic ministry as a whole. He is giving an account of what he's all about as an apostle. And what that includes is what we may fairly term his theological epistemology. How he knows in his teaching, his theology. And see it's in that context that he says 1 Cor 2:2. Paul is here affirming his exclusive and comprehensive epistemic commitment. That in a word is Christ. That is to say, the crucified Christ! In a similar vein, we can note Gal 6:14: "may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (NLT). And then Gal 3:1: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified." This reinforces as it captures the central element of his preaching. Or we could bring into consideration here 2 Tim 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel." Perhaps here we can see some creedal formulation here; I don't know that we can. But notice here how the resurrection comes into consideration, inevitably connected with the death. As the NIV translates, "This is my gospel."

- 1 Cor 15:3-4: Those passages having provided us with an initial probe, we can look with somewhat more detail at a passage we are bound, it seems to give attention to in this line of thinking: 1 Cor 15:3-4. The statements we have just been looking at we have been looking at with an eye toward clarifying the center of Paul's theology. And what would seem to be particularly useful would be a statement that would be sufficiently "nuclear"--bringing the center into view--and yet doing that with enough detail that would allow us to identify what is the circumference of Paul's interests (in an adequate way). And in that regard, it does seem to me that what is most helpful and most forthcoming is 1 Cor 15:3-4.

*1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.*

We are going to focus on verses 3-4. Commentaries debate about whether this is a pre-Pauline fragment. Again, I don't know how you can be decisive about that, but what is the critical issue here is that we have Paul here being decisive about it and affirming it his own. In the overall context of Paul's teaching--and we know that this is always the case in doing exegesis or making interpretive

observations, you always have to be focused on the center that that passage represents but you are doing that in a broader context, and there is inevitably a back and forth.

1. The prepositional phrase "en hotois"--"among first things." But almost all commentators agree that this has to have a qualitative meaning (not a temporal sense). These are things of first importance. So Paul is telling us here explicitly that his paramount concerns have their focus, their center in what is Christ's death and resurrection. And we can deepen this consideration by going on to note this. Look back at verses 1-2. He is going to remind the brothers of the gospel that he preached to them. So are we not then surely on sound ground in saying that our verses 3-4--centered on cross and resurrection--is plainly in view as the center of Paul's gospel? And that promotes a broader observation: Paul is here fairly and best read as reflecting on his ministry as a whole to the Corinthians. So in view here of these vv and the context as a whole, Paul is not just concerned with a part of his teaching but his message, his teaching in its entirety. So that we could say that Paul's teaching as a whole is gospel. His, we could say, is a gospel-theology. Or if that runs the risk of being reductionistic, viewing things in terms of co-centric circles, we could say that the center of Paul's theology is the gospel and at the center of that gospel is Christ's death and resurrection.
2. We must be sure not to miss that the death and resurrection here not in view as bare, isolated, uninterpreted facts. This is unmistakable. We can note two things. For one thing, death and resurrection are "according to the Scriptures." It describes both death and resurrection. What does that mean to say? Probably we could open up a very profitable line of explanation here. As an aside, one could profitably write an entire Pauline theology as Paul's use of the OT. That would run the risk of a bit of overstatement; but you could write a substantial amount of Paul's theology as Paul's use of the OT. So cross and resurrection have their meaning as they involve fulfillment of the OT Scriptures. That fulfillment is nothing less than eschatological fulfillment. So Paul is telling us here that the meaning of the OT is this fulfillment. Then notice also as to indication of significance here, the death of Christ is here said to be "for our sins." And in passing here, keep in mind the redemptive-historical focus that we have here, an *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) dimension comes in unmistakably and inseparably. A death for our sins. We could say that at the center of gospel theology, Christ's death has its significance, together with the resurrection, with relation to *our* sins, to our sins, and we can surely anticipate, human sins in all its consequences. In other words, the soteriological focus is unmistakable here. So this brings us to the following baseline conclusion. Following from 1 Cor 15:3-4 and reinforced by the preceding passages we looked at, at the center of Paul's theology, constituting that center as much as anything are Christ's death and resurrection, or more broadly, messianic suffering and glory, the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. And we may accent again, messianic suffering and glory, death and resurrection in their Scripture-fulfilling and saving significance. These observations in discussion of the center of Paul's theology.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

In Paul's epistles the crucifixion story reveals a God who is free and in no way bound by human categories or anticipations. However, God in Christ chooses to be engaged in the very depths of the human predicament. The message of the crucifixion is that God's power is manifested in weakness,

not in strength. So this weakness as strength should be the focal point of the church's identity. In Pauline soteriology the death and resurrection of Christ signifies that believers in Christ at the close of this age shall rise from their sleep to eternal glory which is being at home with Christ.

## **5.0 Summary**

According to the theology of the cross, a proper insight of God comes only "in the cross and suffering". Perceiving God purely as the omnipotent creator is only a partial understanding of God and cannot avert man from lapsing into foolishness (Rom 1.20-22). For a sinner to stand before a righteous and almighty God necessarily means damnation, unless he knows of the cross of Jesus Christ. The knowledge comes not through human reason or any other human sense, but only through the "folly" of what we preach "to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1.21). The perception of God understood in this way is perception of salvation. A theology based upon the cross of Christ perceives salvation as a gift from God, not something achieved by human efforts. We could say that the center of Paul's theology is the gospel and at the center of that gospel is Christ's death and resurrection. Or we could bring into consideration here 2 Tim 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel." Perhaps here we can see some creedal formulation here; I don't know that we can. But notice here how the resurrection comes into consideration, inescapably linked with the death. As the NIV translates, "This is my gospel."

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

- i. Discuss the centre of Pauline theology
- ii. What is the significance of the death and resurrection of Christ as in Pauline epistles?
- iii. Explain the main focus of Paul in his teaching on eschatology

## **7.0 References for Further Reading**

Vos Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1948.

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## Unit 3: The Kingdom of God

- 1.0 Introduction
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### 3.1 The Kingdom of God

- 4.0 Conclusion
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#### 1.0 Introduction

If we keep tethered of the issue of entre into Paul, another angle that would suggest itself, a ground-level consideration, if you will, that would be of such an order that it would guard us from unduly foreclosing or being too limited in our consideration, would be to raise the more formal q of Paul's place in the history of revelation--his *apostolic function* w/in that larger history, and more particularly, his function as an apostle as he is an instrument of revelation. And on that line, the most immediate q to address is the relationship between the teaching of Paul and the teaching of Jesus, in the unfolding organism of the history of revelation. (Recall what we said previously as the central axis of NT revelation, Jesus-Paul. Don't use that to fail to give due attn to other parts of the NT.)

#### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- i. Understand the description of the concept of the kingdom of God as taught by Jesus and Paul.
- ii. Differentiate the dualistic nature of the kingdom of God.
- iii. Explain in details the Pauline usage of two aeons as rooted in Judaism and its implications on man.

#### 3.0 Main content: Paul and Jesus: the Kingdom of God

##### 3.1 Paul's letters: Rom 14:17

Particularly using Jesus' teaching as a point of reference, that calls us to give particularly attention to the teaching of the *basileia*, the kingdom, in Paul. The central conception in Jesus'--the integrating category--is that of the kingdom of God. Remember the ambivalence that attaches to that Greek term, meaning either the rule of God or the realm of God. The dynamic or static aspect. Power or turf, if you like. And as we can remind ourselves again, particularly as historical critical developments as well as a larger outlook has been widespread throughout the history of the church--the *basileia* is not simply a matter of the providence of God, God's rule over creation as it has been from the beginning. Surely that is the case. But it is not the concern of the kingdom as Jesus proclaims it. Nor is it a matter of timeless morality or an ideal

moral order. Which again is not to deny the abiding validity of this teaching. But rather, the abiding concern of Jesus is the eschatological rule of God. The rule of God that has finally arrived in his creation in the person of Jesus. So it is, as Jesus looks at it, the final order inaugurated in the coming of Christ. That which has happened and will be consummated in his return. Eschatology as the controlling viewpoint in the teaching of Jesus is one that involves both realized and unrealized, both present and future.

Now as we come to the letters of Paul it is kingdom language *received*, and it is not as central as it is in Jesus. Now this lexical state of affairs has been taken--and I think particularly of the Paul-Jesus controversy that we have talked about--as the basic difference or even a conflict, a fundamental divergence between the teaching of Jesus and Paul. But now as we look into Paul, while it is the case that basileia language is much reduced in its currency, nonetheless the language is there and, more importantly, the concept is there and there with the same present-future pattern that we see in Jesus' teaching. Most distinctive is the basileia concept where it is connected with the language of inheritance (pleronomia), where the basileia is in view as a future inheritance of believers. And the statements I have in mind are 1 Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:21 and Eph 5:5. And if you were to look to these passages, you'd see that these have a negative statement in view--those who will not inherit. So these have a plainly eschatological, future reference. But also in Paul you have statements that affirm that the basileia is present. Again, not many, but unmistakable in their force.

Addressing the church, Paul says in *Colossians 1:13* "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." Also Rom 14:17. And here we could also cite 1 Cor 4:20, where Paul says that the kingdom is "not in word but in power." That is an affirmation that is true in the present. No matter how minimal the use of the language, we have the same state of affairs in Paul that we have in Jesus. Basileia is a comprehensive category. As such, it is an eschatological reality that is both present and future. Specifically, it is the realm of redemption. The realm where God's redeemed people are gathered. Rom 14 is especially instructive for the lines of connection that there are between Paul and Jesus' teaching.

*Romans 14:17* For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

It seems we are being instructed here as we read the context Paul is zeroing in on questions of dissention, decisions that need to be made with regard to the strong and the weak, addressing certain issues of Christian conduct--it seems the way he is getting at that is that he is going way up above the particular problems of the church and giving an overall picture of what's instructive, pointing to a significant factor toward getting. And he's saying that the basileia will be amplified by what he has to teach about righteousness, about peace, joy and the HS. And that is further in the context of the ecclesia, the church. So seeing the affinity between righteousness as well as joy and the HS, it is particularly the categories of righteousness and the work of the HS that are basic to Paul. These amplify his understanding of the rule and realm of God. If you have any question that these are basic categories for Paul, you can take a concordance and see their abundance in Paul. And note here how the work of the HS is set w/in a kingdom context. The work of the HS is spoken of in nothing short of eschatological terms.

For background in the language Jesus, we can reference: Matt 6:33--the kingdom and his righteousness will be added to you; 12:28--by the Spirit of God I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. So, here we can reference what is a very helpful statement by Ridderbos (from the assigned essay, p48-49), that "Paul does nothing but expound eschatological reality that in the proclamation of Jesus is called the kingdom of God." So we have seen at least in a preliminary way the appropriateness of that generalization.

Summary: Paul explicates Jesus' kingdom proclamation in its already/not yet eschatological structure by centering his attention on the death and resurrection of Christ in *their* eschatological significance. And he will do that primarily by amplifying the themes of righteousness and the work of the Holy Spirit in the context of the church. So with that we have mapped out a terrain for working within the teaching of Paul as a whole.

2. Acts 20:25: In swift, broad strokes I want to address Paul's words in Acts 20.

*And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.*

As oft termed, this is his farewell speech to the Eph elders. He's looking back and reflecting on his ministry as a whole. What is instructive here is the object of what are co-relative expressions used to describe Paul's speaking or communicating. The verbs of discourse: "I did not hesitate to declare to you; testifying; and preaching." Then let us go back and look at the objects of these discourse verbs: everything profitable; repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; to the gospel of the grace of God; and then it's not holding back in any respect the whole counsel of God. Paul, we've seen, can sum up his whole teaching ministry in the kingdom of God, and it entails these things; this is what it means to declare the whole counsel of God. The whole counsel of God has sometimes functioned as a Shibboleth, and rightly so. In its sole occurrence in Scripture, it's given this redemptive-historical, kingdom focus. Paul understands himself, in his own words here, to be preaching the kingdom as a whole.

### **3.2 Paul's Use of the Two-Age (Aeon) Construct (or Schema):**

1. **Background.** We are looking at Paul's two aeon construct. We should note that that notion of aeon has its origin in the Judaism in the 1st C BC. So we have an instance of how the historical background of the NT does serve to amplify and clarify. We want to look at how this construction came to be formulated and utilized. Basic to this thinking is a basic distinction between this age and the age to come. A distinction that encompasses the whole of history from creation up to and including consummation. So this is quite a comprehensive construction. Now what needs to be accented here is the antithetical juxtaposition or the contrast between the two aeons. On the one side, "this age" is the pre-eschatological era. It is, all told, provisional. And given the fall, it is now the age of the world order of sin and characterized by imperfection and death. In contrast, the coming age is the final world order; it's the eschatological age, which is marked just in contrast to the present age by righteousness, perfection and life--life that is nothing less than eschatological life. So alternatively, this age to come functions interchangeably in the literature to the malcouth, the basileia and the new heavens and new earth. So, to sum up, the two ages in 1st C Judaism are comprehensive, consecutive and antithetical. The division point is related to the coming of the Messiah (with some differences of view of exactly when). With that sketch of things, let me just

note that this is a construct that emerges in Judaism just before the time of the NT. As this is taken over by Jesus and Paul, and the writer of Hebrews, though to a lesser extent, where it is a fundamental, controlling element--in that sense, it can be said that the NT incorporates a 2nd Temple Jewish theological development. And we should not hesitate to say that. But at the same time, as Jesus and Paul take over this concept, what is at stake here is whether this development is consistent with the OT. That is the issue. And, as we go on here, we can say that it is. Faithful exegesis of the OT can show that. And, I would say, that Jesus and Paul by their incorporating it ensure us--presupposing the fully revelatory character of their teaching--that this construct *is* true to the OT. And as Vos affirms, they do that by revelation. I refer here to Vos in ch 1 in the *Pauline Eschatology*, the long footnote--note 36 on pp27-28, which is very balanced and thorough handling of this.

2. **Olam:** Certain things need to be spelt out a little more thoroughly with regard to the use of "olam." Vos, again, is helpful here in ch 1. Subsequent materials, I think, don't really modify his observations. As you are aware, "olam" is one of the fundamental Hebrew words for time, esp. as it brings into view long duration, long periods, so that it is used in certain locutions to indicate eternity. You can see that in the OT. What we can go on to observe is that Hebrew and then Aramaic did not have a single word to refer to the created order as a totality, the universe. When reference needed to be made to this, certain phrases and more roundabout were used. So, "God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1); and Jesus reflecting that sort of language in Mt 24:35--"Heaven and earth may pass away, but not my word." So, it seems we should hypothesize that when Heb and Aram come into contact with other languages in the 2nd Temple period, it would be desirable to have a word for the whole of creation, and the word that was pressed into service was "olam." So what was a comprehensive time designation became a comprehensive space designation. So in this respect, "olam" became somewhat an ambivalent, or multifaceted may be a better word. Temporal and spatial senses can be closely associated and blended. So in many instances it can be difficult to decide if the time-age sense or the spatial-world sense is intended. The *olam* made definite--*ha olam*--means this present world, that has a fixed duration to it. And it appears that this development particularly provides the basis for the full development of the Semitism of the two *olamim*. The distinction between this world-age and the coming world-age; between this present order (in terms here of Judaism) and the restored creation.
3. The implications of this on the NT and particularly Paul is that in Hellenistic literature the time-word *aion* is used regularly to express the two *olamim* conception in the Greek. So in NT usage, *aion* comes to show the same ambivalence--duality--that attaches to the word "olam." And what is semantically significant, this happened even though the writers had at their disposal separate terms. I am thinking of "cosmos" or "ktisis"--world or creation. *Aion* does the same double-duty as *olam*, with the result that *aion* can be a comprehensive space term or a comprehensive time term *or it can give suggest both* and have the sense of "world-age." The only question here may be with regard to *aion* having a spatial sense. I think what puts it beyond dispute is usages in Heb 1:2 and 11:3--"through whom he made the world" (or universe).



4. We were pointing up the way in which in the process of linguistic development, the Hebrew "olam" takes on a spatial as well as a temporal sense, and that duality carries on into the Greek of Hellenistic Judaism, in the Greek "aion," and then into the Latin "saeculum." Now more specifically, the two-aeon construct is something at hand for Jesus and Paul and taken up and employed by them in a way that clearly structures their teaching. Let me just give you a couple examples; these are the clearest, most explicit examples in the NT of the two-aeon construct stated fully. Matt 12:32: "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." There you have an explicit use of the full distinction. Or in Mk 10:30 talking about the blessing that comes to the disciples for following Christ; "in the coming aeon"; you find *kairos* rather than *aeon*; a distinction btwn the present and the future. And in Paul: Eph. 1:21. "...far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in *this age (this present aeon)* but also in the one to come (*the one coming*)." Paul is speaking about the exalted Christ. I have said however that this structure not only occurs, but is a fundamental structure. Now we are going to see that in many other places the structure is clearly present, even though only *one* member is mentioned or explicit. And we should also point out that "sunteleia"--"the end of this aeon"--that noun occurs only in this sense, as part of the two-aeon construct; cf. Matt 24:3, Matt 28:20, Hebrews 9:26. This NT usage points up the eschatological state of affairs that it is concerned to maintain. The end of the age is present but it is also future. [We see the already-not-yet structure attaching to the two NT uses outside of Paul. On the one hand, the end of the age is still future for the church; on the other hand, the church looks back on the end of the age, at Christ's death. The end of the age is associated with both the first and the second coming; it is already the end of the age, and not yet.]

D. Key Passages: Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:2; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 1:18ff; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 1:2; 16:25-26; Col. 1:26-27; Eph. 1:10; Gal. 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Cor. 6:2; Gal. 3:23, 25.

We want to see in detail how this eschatological structure functions in Paul.

- Gal. 1:4

[1] Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— [2] and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: [3] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, [4] *who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father*, [5] to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

We can see in the closing doxology here what is undoubtedly a Semitizing effect of the OT *olam*. Just a comment here on the context. Vv. 1-5 are part of a stereotyped letter form of this period, sometimes termed the exordium, that has 3 elements to it. The exordium is defined by the *sender* in the nominative, the *addressees* in the dative, and a *greeting*, which in its most elemental form is "chairein," greetings. You find this simple greeting in James 1:1. Paul follows the basic form, but not in any formalistic pattern, but in a highly distinctive, and quite specifically Christian way, he elaborates in an apostolic fashion on the form to highlight certain themes that are important to him. Vv. 3-5 provide an elaborate greeting, that is Christianized. Very often in his opening of each letter Paul highlights and anticipates things he will speak of later in the letter. His apostleship is on the line;

it is not of human source; it is direct, like on the road to Damascus. And Christ, the source, is mentioned. And also what is notable by way of contrast with his other letters, in which he commonly has something positive to say, is his terseness. "So quickly turning away." What we have then, looking at the expression that draws our attention here, is the expansion in his salutation in vv 3-5, where Paul is certainly intending to provide a summary description of salvation, to capture in one expression what is at the heart of the salvation that is revealed in Christ, that is effected by His death, but also the resurrection is in purview, in v. 1. And what is especially important to point up is the dimensions of this salvation.

Salvation is described as deliverance from this present evil aeon. That could raise the question, is Paul is not talking here of something that will take place in the future. It is something that is present. Which raises the question that if they are delivered "from," what are they delivered "to." That's not covered here, but is anticipated for his readers, and he'll address it. What we want to point up is the broad, aeonic dimensions of the salvation that has been effected in the death of Jesus Christ for sin. It is within this cosmic dimension that Paul wants us to understand the forgiveness of sin--a transition in being forgiven, a deliverance that has been experience that is nothing less in dimension than cosmic, in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Gal 1:4 Cf. Gal 1:13-14, re: Paul's having once been advancing with respect to his Jewish contemporaries.

Eph. 2:2

*[1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

"And when you were dead...following the course of this aeon." Paul is looking at believers in terms of their past. That language occurs again in verse 5. Those dead in their trespasses, what they have experienced is nothing less than *resurrection*, being made alive again (5-6); but that resurrection from the deadness of sin, he tells us, is nothing less than a deliverance from their former walk--way of life--which Paul says is characterized as "kata ton aiona tou kosmou toutou", according to the aeon of this cosmos. What believers are released from is the life of this age. The redundancy here brings out the spatial dimension. Salvation in Christ has a cosmic dimension to it. And, if you will, salvation has aeonic proportions. Now here we have a clear suggestion, clearer than in Gal. 1:4, what Paul has in view describing this salvation with its aeonic proportions, is a life in which believers have already been raised, into which they have already been introduced by resurrection. A new aeon, a new world age, a new creation. [It is the new creation, or as Paul says it, we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. The new walk of the new age, the new-creation existence of believers in Christ. This is what Paul puts in other

terms in Col. 1:13-14, that believers have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Kingdom and age language can be used more or less interchangeably.] But this passage is fairly pointing to total inability--being dead in our sins. We have a life from the dead that is not resident in us in any way before being raised.]

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

While it is the case that two-age construct originates in contemporary Judaism, ultimately rooted in OT revelation, and it is taken over then *by* revelation--by Paul from that Judaism--as we compare those two--the Jewish outlook and that of Paul--they are plainly not identical. This is so in a number of ways; but here I want to focus on the formal difference, that is not difficult to recognize. You see for Judaism--including that of the present, particularly in Orthodox Judaism--the *sunteleia*, the turning point of the aeon, that is, in other terms, the coming of the messiah, is still something in the future; but for Paul, that is something--the crucial coming of the Christ--that has already taken place; it is in fact an event in the past that he can look back on, and it as something future. So that for Paul, as he disputes repeatedly with the Jews from Scripture that this messiah is Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and resurrected, that involves then a correspondingly fundamental pattern of modification for Paul's use of the two-aeon construction, a modification we'll spell out in part "E."

#### **5.0 Summary**

The kingdom of God reveals the rule of God in creation in this age and the age to come. In Pauline thought and Jesus dualism, this present age of evil the kingdom of god is partially fulfilled but in the future age to come the eschatological kingdom of God would reach the peak of its fullest fulfillment where the kingdom of darkness and Satan shall be defeated in totality. In the final consummation of God's kingdom righteousness and peace will reign and death to be annihilated.

#### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

- i. Explain vividly the theological concept of the kingdom of God in Jesus and Pauline teaching.
- ii. Describe the dividends obtainable in the final consummation of the kingdom of God.
- iii. What is the Jewish background of the concept of *basileia*

#### **7.0 References for further Reading**

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### **3.1 Unit 4: God's Redemptive Plan**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

### **3.2 Redemption and the Present Christian Life**

4.0 Conclusion

6.0 Summary

7.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

8.0 References for further Reading

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Paul's first imperative is an urging to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, wholly and acceptable. This is to entail that our sacrifice, however is a response to God's mercy. We do not sacrifice ourselves to obtain God's mercy, but because we have received it. Sacrifice therefore is a response to our justification. Christ sacrifice satisfies God's wrath on our behalf. We are no longer under the punishment of death. That is why it is a living sacrifice. Those who do this no longer conform to the world's standard but are rather sanctified in Christ.

#### **2.0 Objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Give an account of Paul's teaching on 'presenting a body as a living sacrifice'.
2. Clarify the distinction between the wisdom of God and that of the world.
3. Grasp with Paul's distinction between Spirit and flesh is correlative to his distinction between this age and the age to come

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **Redemption and the Present Christian Life**

- Rom 12:2

Here we have vv. 1 and 2, and we are at the transition point of the overall flow of the discussion in Romans, where Paul having developed things to the climactic point at the end of ch. 11, with the doxology closing off God's saving purposes with respect to both Gentile and Jew; against that background, he turns to address the church, and says:

*[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

With respect to being living sacrifices, Paul says, "Do not be conformed to this aeon." Paul is looking in a comprehensive way at the sanctification of the believer. Looking at the Christian life, sanctification, seen on its negative side, Paul is saying that believers are *not* to be conformed to this aeon. We've been delivered from that aeon; we aren't to continue in it. I can go on to say that this carries the suggestion when Paul puts it that way and goes on to juxtapose the renewal of the mind, that this transformation of the mind is a transformation that will be of similar aeonic proportions. What Paul brings into view is that what is involved here is a renewal that is of the age to come. This renewal of the mind is eschatological in nature, in character, so it is for good reason that many commentators see here enunciated the "New Creation ethic" of Paul.

- 1 Cor 1:18ff (until 3:23)

In the section that begins here, Paul takes his point of departure in the division that is created by the gospel, particularly the preaching of the cross mentioned in v. 18, but also in v. 23, the division that is created by Christ crucified. In doing that, he expands on the *true* nature of gospel-creating division, to contrast it with the false division that has entered into the Corinthian congregation through the divisive party spirit mentioned in 10-17. This division, among other things, the gospel creates division, that division arises because of the conflict that exists between the wisdom or the sophia of unbelief, and the wisdom of God. With the result that the gospel is heard as foolishness, *moria*, by unbelievers. So the dimensions of the argument, to the end of ch. 3, is in terms of the polarity of God - believers - unbelievers. What defines that is a polarity between wisdom and foolishness, or as Paul will also use correlative terms, power, *dunamis*, and weakness, *asthenaia*. What one perceives to be power and wisdom, the other perceives to be foolishness and weakness. We want to point up the way Paul characterizes the wisdom of unbelief over against the wisdom of God. The gospel, then which is wisdom of God is perceived to be foolishness in the eyes of the world; and what is wisdom in the eyes of the world is perceived to be foolishness in the eyes of God.

*1 Cor. 1:20: Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this aeon? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*

What is correlative with the wisdom of the world, the personal subject embodying the wisdom of the world is the disputant of this aeon. The debater of this aeon. Or looking ahead to 2:6, Paul makes reference to the wisdom associated with the gospel, and there the gospel is described as wisdom which is not of this aeon nor of the rulers of this aeon--the movers and shakers of this aeon. Similarly, as you get to 3:18, with culmination of this whole section of argumentation, Paul says, "let no one deceive himself; if someone thinks himself to be wise among you in this aeon, let him become foolish, in order that he might become wise, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." This is what it means to become a believer, we could say--becoming foolish in order that you may become wise. Now you can see how these statements that bracket the passage and everything it says about wisdom, say that to be wise in this aeon is a matter of the wisdom of this world. So the terms "world" and "aeon" are closely correlative. What is of interest here in terms of the language used for this construction, is the explicit indication of what we might describe as the *temporalizing* or historicizing of the notion of the world (*kosmou*). The world is glossed with *touto*, this world, in contrast to "that" world. The two-aeon construction shapes Paul, disposes him to write here with the explicit *touto*. The simple ho

kosmos, the world, is more pointedly, houtos ho kosmos; this world. The scheme of this world, the structure of this world, is passing away. The other coming, that world, is certainly implied.

Surely there is here then the plain suggestion: the wisdom of God which believers have received, the wisdom and the power that Christ *is* (1:24)--not just wisdom about Christ--that wisdom differs from the wisdom of the unbeliever, not merely in an experiential or individual sense, but the difference exists in that what is opposed is the wisdom that is nothing less than a differing aeon; an opposed world order, that is the difference between the wisdom and knowledge of the believer and the unbeliever; the difference is on the order of two opposed aeons. What we are saying here is that the determination of the believer's knowledge, the determination of the believer's very existence, has aeonic dimensions, so that it is the case that in contrast to the unbeliever, the believer's knowledge is of a different aeon, in terms of eschatological structure. In a very real sense, believers and unbelievers are living in two different worlds; in the truest sense, believers and unbelievers operate in two different universes of discourse. The believer's knowledge is eschatological, knowledge of the final aeon, new creation knowledge. To bring in an important qualification immediately, in our present possession, we see but in a mirror dimly, 1 Cor. 13:12. We see but a poor reflection. That qualification needs to be kept before us. At the same time, what underlies that poor perception is the present eschatological possession, so that Paul can say as he does that the believer judges and discerns all things (2:15), and in fact has the mind ("nous") of the exalted Christ (2 Cor. 2:16). We have the mind of Christ. Read the closing statement of the section that begins at 1:18: 3:21-22: "So let no one boast in men.

For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, [23] and you are Christ's, and Christ is of God." In this passage we have a very clear iteration of the radical difference in the knowledge of believers and the knowledge of unbelievers. We have a cleavage between two ages. We have particularly strong exegetical support here for what was such an important characteristic emphasis in Dr. Van Til's work: the difference between belief and unbelief involves a difference, a cleavage, between two ages. Insofar as point of contact is concerned, which does exist, in terms of the common situation of sinners ever in need of a Savior--in terms of point of contact, there is no epistemological common ground. Whether in the speculative wisdom of the Greeks, or the empirical signs the Jews seek, there is no epistemological common ground. It is true categorically that we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5), and clearly that has to do with the sight that we receive by virtue of the resurrection. As for new aeon mind, considering our body, we need to be careful not to go Platonic direction; Paul has in mind re: resurrection that that resurrection has touched the core of our whole being. It does not mean a dualism in any sort. We have been raised in the core of our being, but we are only relating in terms of our outer person. (Cf. 1 Cor 15.)

- 2 Cor 5:17-19

*[15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. [16] From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

This has key interests regarding soteriology and eschatology. (The "all" for whom Christ died is evidently the ones....) Is the "kata sarka" to be understood adverbially (how we understand) or adjectivally (to describe Christ as a fleshly being, as Bultmann)? The point is an epistemological one. He's concerned about a way of knowing--"according to the flesh." We'll highlight later in the course Paul's distinction between the spirit and the flesh. But as an advance point, Paul's distinction between Spirit and flesh is correlative to his distinction between this age and the age to come. (ESV gets 19a better than NIV--God reconciling in Christ.) Verse 15, Paul makes the assertion. It leads to conclusions--Paul drawing them out in 16 and 17. Reconciliation is a key theme here. What focuses our attention here is the expression kaine ktisis, and our concern is about how this should be translated. Both Ridderbos and Vos have discussed this in the reading I've had you do. Vos, 46ff. In the immediate context, Paul is involved in describing the turn of events that has taken place for believers in the death and resurrection of Christ. We see that death and resurrection at the end of v. 15. Therefore, Paul says, with a further *hoste* (therefore) in v. 17. The point we want to bring into view here is that the *kaine ktisis* mentioned in v. 17 is almost certainly not to be understood only in an individual sense; that is, the *kaine ktisis* is not merely a description of a change that has occurred in the believer; it is not simply a category of personal renewal. Or, to put it pointedly, in contrast to the way in which some translations take it, and particularly the KJV, the idea is not that of a "new creature." It is not to be understood in a strictly individual sense. Although, certainly dimensions of personal and individual change are in view here. It's involved, but not the point. This is not simply a proof text for regeneration.

Rather, in contrast to that new creature understanding, *ktisis* here is to be translated "creation." And more importantly, the reference is to the "new creation." The reference is to the new eschatological world order, to which the one in Christ already belongs, in which the believer already exists. We can propose then that the *grounds* for this "new creation" translation, and this comprehensive understanding, can be seen in several dimensions: lexical, syntactical, and, most importantly, contextual. From a lexical angle, we can point out that Paul uses *ktisis*, and not *ktisma*, creature. That observation by itself is not conclusive, because in Rom. 8:39 Paul uses *ktisis* in the sense of an individual creature, so there is some semantic overlap between the terms. But surely, we need to keep in mind that *ktisis* is largely the word used to describe the totality of created reality, of creation in the broad, comprehensive sense. We see that in Rom. 1:20, Col. 1:15, and Rev. 3:14. The word choice is not decisive, but provides for a comprehensive creation and not just creature reference.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Believers in Christ offer their bodies as a living sacrifice. Paul gave a command to committed believers not to be conformed to this aeon. This is the sanctification of the believer for they had been saved from it. In Pauline work he linked this with the renewal of the mind, which is transformation of the mind. The significance of this renewal is eschatological in nature and character i.e "New Creation ethic" of Paul. Paul in his teaching emphasized the division that is created by the gospel, chiefly the preaching of the cross, but also, the division that is created by Christ crucified. This division arises because of the conflict that exists between the wisdom or the *sophia* of unbelief, and the wisdom of God. But to believers it is wisdom and power. Paul characterizes the wisdom of non-belief over against the wisdom of God. The gospel, then which is wisdom of God is professed to be foolishness in

the eyes of the world; and what is wisdom in the sight of men is seen to be foolishness in the sight of God.

In this section we have an apparent repetition of the radical difference in the knowledge of believers and the knowledge of unbelievers. We have a cleavage between two ages. Paul teaches that that resurrection has touched the core of our whole being. It does not mean a dualism in any kind. We have been raised in the core of our being, but we are only relating in terms of our outer person. (Cf. 1 Cor 15). Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. God, through Christ reconciled us to himself that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. Thus, the lust of the flesh lost in Christ.

## **5.0 Summary**

Paul urged believers that by the mercies of God, to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is their spiritual worship. They had been admonished not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of their mind. With respect to being living sacrifices, Paul is looking in a complete way at the sanctification of the believer. The Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q.35) says sanctification is “the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” The concept is not of sin being totally eradicated (that is to claim too much) or merely counteracted (that is to say too little), but of a divinely wrought character change freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christ like affections, dispositions, and virtues.

Sanctification is a continuing transformation within a maintained consecration, and it engenders real righteousness within the frame of relational holiness. Relational sanctification, the state of being enduringly set apart for God, flows from the cross, where God through Christ purchased and claimed us for himself (Acts 20:28; 26:18; Heb. 10:10). Moral renovation, whereby we are ever more changed from what we once were, flows from the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:11, 19-20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 13:20-21).

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

1. What is the theological implication of an expression “offering your bodies as a living sacrifice”?
2. Describe the qualities of a man who is in Christ as a new creation
3. Explain briefly the doctrine of sanctification

## **7.0 References for further reading**

Ladd, Eldon George. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Willian B. Eerdmans, 1974.  
Hargreaves, John. *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*. London: SPCK, 1991.  
Bowen, Roger. *A Guide to Romans*. London: SPCK, 1996.

## **Unit 5: Created anew in Christ**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives



- 3.0 Main Content: God's New Creation in Christ
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References for further Reading

## 1.0 Introduction

The Pauline theology of the new creation in Christ implies that all such who are secretly in Christ from everlasting, though as yet some of them may not be new creatures, yet they shall be sooner or later; and those who are openly in him, or are converted persons, are essentially so; they are a new "creation", as the words may be rendered: , "a new creation", is a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors, and is applied by the apostle to converted persons; and designs not an outward reformation of life and manners, but an inward principle of grace, which is a creature, a creation work, and so not man's, but God's; and in which man is solely passive, as he was in his first creation; and this is a new creature, or a new man, in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, the corruption of nature; and because it is something anew implanted in the soul, which never was there before; it is not a working upon, and an improvement of the old principles of nature, but an inauguration of new principles of grace and holiness; here is a new heart, and a new spirit,: old things are passed away: the old course of living, the old way of serving God, whether among Jews or Gentiles; the old legal righteousness, old companions and relationship are dropped; and all external things, as riches, honours, learning, knowledge, former sentiments of religion, are renounced: behold, all things are become new; there is a new course of life, both of faith and holiness; a new way of serving God through Christ by the Spirit, and from principles of grace; a new, another, and better righteousness is established and accepted.

## 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Comprehend the theology of being in Christ is "a new creation".
2. Describe the characteristics of the man who has become a new creation in Christ in contrast to the old life.
3. Grasp with Paul's theology of "unity in Christ" as regards salvation

## 3.0 Main Content: God's New Creation in Christ

**Syntactical:** there is no explicit verb in the apodosis. This makes the connection loose between the protasis and the apodosis; there is no verb that has clearly been elided here. There is a less circumscribed association between the two, a more sweeping association in thought or scope, that has to be determined by the context. We might render it: "if anyone is in Christ, there is new creation." This is what some translations, such as the NAS, have in the margin. Or, "it is a matter of new creation." The most decisive considerations, though, are contextual. The context surely runs against restricting the reference in v. 17 to subjective renovation as that is experienced by the individual

believer. Consider first of all the latter part of v. 17: what we have here are neuter plurals used substantively--old things, and then the "new things." Those expressions, those neuter plural subjects, in the contrast between old and new, point to a broader scope, an environmental scope of things. The latter part of 17 is surely intended as an expansion of 17a. We need further to consider the main theme of the passage, the emphasis we find in the immediate context, on reconciliation and on the comprehensive scope of the reconciliation that has been brought in Christ. All things are of God, who reconciles us, all things are brought into the scope of the reconciliation. What God was in Christ reconciling was *the world*. We could also point to Col. 1:19-20, where the cosmic scope of the reconciliation is accented by Paul: "all things, whether in heaven or on earth." Then there is, in v. 16, there is the kata sarka.

Paul makes reference to knowledge that is kata sarka, a knowledge of Christ kata sarka. The kata sarka here is not adjectival, but is adverbial, it qualifies the knowing, knowing according to the flesh; it is not as if Paul is no longer interested in the historical Jesus. It is describing the mode of knowing. The reference here is to knowing according to the flesh, the knowledge of believers is no longer according to the flesh. You compare 1 Cor. 1:20 with v. 26, and the long and short of that is to point up that this wisdom, or the wise person according to the flesh, is identical to the disputant of this aeon. Kata sarka and tou aionos toutou are interchangeable; to speak of no longer knowing according to the flesh is to speak of no longer knowing according to the standards of this aeon. The expression kata sarka brings into view the broader two-aeon perspective, that of the person of this aeon and that of the believer as a new creation in Christ. As we look at the only other instance of kaine ktisis ("new creation") we have in Paul, Galatians 6, this will confirm what we have been saying about 2 Cor. 5.

*Galatians 6:14-15: [14] But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [15] For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.*

Note the similarity in syntax; again you have a clause that consists of 3 words, no verb, as in 2 Cor 5. It is this situation described in v. 14, where neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matter, which Paul juxtaposes with the kaine ktisis. Kaine ktisis is in contrast with the world (in 14), the world to which the believer has been crucified through the cross of Christ. Here you have an echo of Gal 1:4, so that he might deliver us from this present evil age. The believer has been crucified to the world. Further, the new creation is not only contrasted with the world, but also with circumcision and uncircumcision at the beginning of v. 15, which don't matter, and no longer matter though they once did. In other words, the new creation is contrasted with the old order, under the old covenant, in which these things did matter very much. Which points up about circumcision that like baptism, it is not a merely personal sign, but has national, corporate, covenantal, historical, redemptive-historical significance; it is not merely an emblem of personal faith, but makes a redemptive-historical statement. As Paul draws a contrast between old and new here, the scope of that contrast is cosmic and historical, rather than only experiential or individual. Let us come back to 2 Cor 5 then with these observations: The contrast between old and new at the end of 17 is not to be taken only in an individual or experiential sense; it is not simply a statement that has its sense as part of an ordo salutis, although it will surely bear on that, but as we have been trying to show, the contrast between old and new is historical in scope, eschatological in nature.

The contrast between old and new in 2 Cor. 5:17 is a contrast between two worlds, two creation orders. When Paul says ta archaia, the old things, what he has in view is the old fallen creation, those

things that belong to the unredeemed world, of sin and misery. The old things are the things of this aeon. Correlatively, kaina, which we are here to see as definite, are the new things of the new creation, the eschatological order inaugurated at Christ's death and resurrection--the new things of the age to come. The old things that have passed away, they have passed away for *me*, the one in Christ, but it is more than just my individual past that has passed away. So that if you want to use this verse to give your testimony, don't only talk about the way your life individually used to be; there is much more that has passed away. So v. 17 means more: the one united to Christ is of the new creation; that one is already participant in some sense in the final eschatological order for the creation. The kaina are the things of the aeon to come.

"For anyone united to Christ, there is a new creation; the old order has gone, the new order has already begun." The English Standard Version says "*he* is a new creation," so there is an individualistic sense. I might just want to modify that, to maintain the clause, "for if anyone is united to Christ, there is the new creation, the old order has gone; the new order has already begun." If I might juxtapose with that how NOT to translate, let me un-commend the New Living Translation: "What this means is that those who become Christians are new persons; they are not the same anymore, a new life has begun." The issue is the way that this constricts the perspective here. That is American Evangelicalism's individualism come to a very definite expression. Even if for some reason we should decide that ktisis should be taken in an individual creature translation, we would still have to take into consideration what we have seen in the immediate context, the corporate, cosmic dimension. We would still have to stress the broader, aeonic connotations/implications of the statement.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

The expression in Christ denotes the fact that a Christian is regenerated through the perfect life attains to mystic union with Christ. A new creature emanated as remarked a new creation (Gal. 6.15). It is learnt that the phrase is borrowed from the rabbis who used it to express the condition of a proselyte. However, the meaning is not mere Jewish arrogance and exclusiveness, but the unfathomable truth of spiritual regeneration and the new birth (Jn. 3.3; Eph. 2.10, 4.23, 24; Col. 3.3 etc). The old things entail literally the ancient things all that belong to the old Adam. The word expresses the writer's vivid recognition of the truth he is uttering. The clause implies the old order has gone; the new order has already begun.

### **5.0 Summary**

In Pauline theology the renewed man acts upon new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new companionship. The believer is created anew; his heart is not purely set right, but a new heart is given him. He is the handwork of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Though the same as a man, he is transformed in his character and ways. These words must and do mean beyond an outward reformation. The heart of the unregenerate is filled with hostility against God, and God is fairly offended with him. Nevertheless there may be reconciliation. Our snubbed God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. By the inspiration of God, the Scriptures were written, which are the word of reconciliation; depicting that peace has been made by the cross. Though God beseeches sinners to put

aside their enmity, and acknowledge the salvation he offers. Christ knew no sin. He was made Sin; not a sinner, but Sin, a Sin-offering, a Sacrifice for sin. The end and design of all this was, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, might be justified unreservedly by the grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

## **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

- i. Explain Paul's idea of being created anew in Christ.
- ii. Explain your understanding of union with Christ.
- iii. Explain the contrast between the old man and the new man.

## **7.0 References for Further Reading**

- ix. L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand: Eerdmans, 1955) 192-98.
- x. M. J. Harris, *2 Corinthians* (EBC. 10; Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1976) 353.
- xi. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 195; and Hughes, *2 Corinthians*, 199-200.
- xii. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915) 168.
- xiii. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 48; Waco, TX: Word, 1986) 137.

## **UNIT 6: The Authenticity of Paul's Gospel**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Nature of the authenticity of Paul's Gospel
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References for further Reading

### **1.0 Introduction**

This unit is one of the most outstanding sections of the NT. R. P. C. Hanson refers to it as "one of the charters of the Christian ministry in the New Testament." C. K. Barrett calls it "one of the most pregnant, difficult, and important in the whole of the Pauline literature." Calvin's remark on 5:18 is also stunning: "Here, if anywhere in Paul's writings, we have a quite remarkably important passage and we must carefully examine the words one by one." As the present author is in consideration with Calvin's remarks about the necessity of cautiously studying this notable passage, this study does not look at its words one by one. Relatively the goal is to build up Paul's teaching on reconciliation in the literary context of 2 Corinthians. This necessitates cautious thought to the syntax of 5:11- 6:2 and to the argument of the entire letter. There is also a brief review of reconciliation elsewhere in Paul, along with a concluding theological synthesis of Paul's doctrine of reconciliation. The doctrine of reconciliation incorporates individual, corporate, cosmic, and eschatological dimensions which make it

really challenging theologically. Still, the actual verification of our understanding of it is our fitness as agents of reconciliation in this hostile world.

## **8.0 Objectives**

By the end of this unit the student should:

1. Grasp the nature and origin of the authority of Paul's gospel.
2. Analyze the background that prompted Paul's epistle to Corinthians

## **3.0 Main Content: The Authenticity of Paul's Gospel**

### **3.1 Background Considerations**

The argument of 2 Corinthians is a fiercely debated issue, mostly due to main questions about the unity of the letter. Hasty changes in tone and subject matter in 6:14-7:1 and particularly 10:1-13:10 have caused many to believe that the letter contains interpolations, perhaps relating the letters alluded to somewhere else in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 2:4). While these and other related questions are not determinative of the exegesis of 2 Cor 5:11-6:2, the positions adopted in answering them indirectly sway that exegesis. This study will continue on the assumption that 2 Corinthians is a literary unity from the hand of Paul and that the hasty changes evident in the letter may be adequately explained by the apostle's emotional state and personal distress over the Corinthians' spiritual problems.

One more complicated question is the occasion of the letter in view of Paul's earlier contact and correspondence with the Corinthians (Acts 18:1-18; 1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 2:4). This is related to the identity and views of the party which was promoting the crevice between Paul and the Corinthians. One may propose answers to this question by attempting a "mirror reading" of the epistle (cf. 2 Cor 2:11; 3:1; 4:2-4; 5:12; 6:14; 10:1-2, 10-12; 11:3-4, 12-15, 18-23), but there is no agreement as to whether this party emphasized gnosis, law, or a syncretistic blending of many false ideas. It is obvious that Paul saw his opponents as false apostles, agents of Satan whose stress on fleshly show, rhetorical flourish, and self-commendation was opposing to the message and ministry of the true gospel.

In spite of these difficulties the epistle's argument is apparent. In chaps. 1- 7 Paul is appealing to the Corinthians to know that his is a true gospel ministry. Chaps. 8-9 encompass his instructions and encouragement concerning the offering for the saints in Judea. Feelings which had obviously been held in check up to this point blow up in chaps. 10- 13, where Paul feels compelled to boast about the authority and power of his ministry. This polemic is written sarcastically (cf. mainly 10:1; 11:4, 19-21; 12:13, 16; 13:3) in order to get the interest of the Corinthians and to stimulate them that he loves them and that he seeks only their spiritual well-being (10:14-15; 11:2, 12; 12:14-15, 19).

In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul is in the core of his appeal to the Corinthians to identify his personal integrity and apostolic authority. This appeal and defense is developed in between references to time spent in Macedonia pending the advent of Titus (2 Cor 2:14; 7:4). Martin is correct in saying that this section is not a parenthesis or a rehearsal of the past. Rather it is an annex of

the same spirit he [Paul] had shown them in calling them to repentance (2:2; 7:8-11) and obedience (2:9), and it is an enthusiastic yet reasoned appeal to any who were still unbending to the pressure of his earlier appeal and whose sociable attitude toward himself he still has reason to hesitate. The plea is a renewed call to them to leave their hostile dispositions and suspicions of both his message and his ministry and embrace his proffered reconciliation, before now given to the leader of the pack (2:5-11; 7:12).

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The piece is deeply theological and remarkably personal, for Paul's theology and his manner of ministry will stand or fall together. Paul presupposes that it is unfeasible to disconnect the gospel message from the messenger of the gospel. *Exegesis of 2 Cor 5:11-6:2*. This begins with the note that Paul's attempts to influence people are motivated by awe of Christ's judgment seat (5:11). Paul admits that his life and ministry is an "open book" before God (cf. 1 Cor 4:4) even though it is essential for him to convince people of his sincerity. He will not get involved in self-commendation (5:12; cf. 3:1-2; 10:12, 18; 12:19; but on the other hand cf. 4:2; 6:4; 12:11); he is not interested in outer appearance but in internal integrity. Whether he is in an ecstatic state of mind before God or in a grave state of mind before the Corinthians, they have no reason to distrust his uprightness (5:13).

#### **5.0 Summary**

Paul's chief concern was to educate the Corinthians on the authority that he had received from the Lord to preach the great mysteries of salvation. Paul wrote to confront the Gnostic teachers who were bringing confusion and another gospel that did not relate to Christ's life, teachings and work. They were to also know the nature of the gospel to which they were called and as such opportunities for divisions among believers should not be allowed. The Christian body remains one despite the various parts in terms of racial, social, ethnic and all kinds of diversities that human beings are created with. Such diversities should always be overcome by reconciliations just as God has done towards his church in Christ Jesus.

## 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments

- i. Why did Paul boast of his ministry?
- ii. Describe the activity of the Gnostic philosophers who Paul confronted.

## 7.0 References for further Reading

J. L. Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Cor 5:16," *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 269-87;

J. I. H. "Paul and the Preaching Ministry," *JSNT* 17 (1983) 35-50; M. E. Thrall, "2 Corinthians 5:18-21," *ExpTim* 93 (1982) 227-32.

J. W. Fraser, "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus: II Cor V.16 once more," *NTS* 17 (1970-71) 293-313; R.

Martin, "Reconciliation at Corinth," *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 90-110;

D.Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970) 422-41.

P. E. Hughes makes a good case for the unity of the letter in *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) xxi-xxxv.

## **UNIT 7 The Ministry of Reconciliation**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main content

### **3.1 Pauline Ministry of Reconciliation 1Cor. 5:11-6:2**

4. Conclusion
5. Summary
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for Further Reading

## **9.0 Main Content: Pauline Ministry of Reconciliation: 1Cor. 5:11-6:2**

### **3.1 Background: Adam-Christ Structure**

The view of appearing before Christ's judgment seat is a strong drive, but it is not Paul's sole motive for ministry. In 5:14 he explains that he is also controlled by the retrospect of Christ's love verified by his death. This restraint of the cross is due to Paul's conviction that the death of Christ stands for the death of all. More so (5:15), the death of Christ entails that those who live should live not for themselves but for the one who died for them and again. The theological framework behind this is that the Adamic order, portrayed since the fall by selfishness and death, and has been superseded by the order of the second Adam, typified by selfless living for Christ. Paul's ministry is demonstrated not by living for himself but by living for the one who died for him and rose again. Paul sees believers dying with Christ in the past and standing before him at the future judgment. Thus life in between these two epochal events can never be the same again. Self-commendation and pride in outward show cannot exemplify those who are controlled by love of their redeemer and future moderator.

It is shown that 2 Cor. 5:14-15 has stressed Christ's death as a representative act and as an act of renewal. Due to Christ's representative death, Christ-centered rather than self-centered living is obligatory of those who would identify with the gospel. Paul next in 5:16-17 describes two consequences of Christ's death. First, Christ's death means that from now on a radically different way of viewing reality is present. No one is to be viewed according to the old order with its "fleshly" priorities and values; Even if Paul has known Christ in this manner, those days are gone forever. Further (v 17), the past fleshly worldview has been substituted by a typically Christian one.

Christ's epochal death and resurrection is the crucial motivation for Paul's ministry. The universality of Paul's commission and message would appear to demand that the whole human race has been impacted by the cross, and yet that every human being must come to terms with it individually in order to experience its benefits. Those who come to be "in Christ" by faith in the gospel are part of a new order for the world. The former Adamic order is vanished and a new order has come to exist. The



cross has once for all totally changed Paul's view of reality by its power to begin the renewal of the universe by renewing individuals within it (5:16-17).

This individual and cosmic renewal which has ever more changed Paul's view of life is not attained without human instrumentality. In 5:17 Paul alludes to the divine origin of the new order and its mediation through Christ, but he also plainly speaks of his own part in the ministry of reconciliation. The mention of ministry returns to the main theme of 2 Corinthians 2-7, the appeal to the Corinthians to identify Paul's ministry as authentic (cf. 3:7-9; 4:1; 6:3). Verse 17 describes the origin of reconciliation in the Father, the mediation of reconciliation through the Son, and the actual accomplishment of reconciliation through the ministry of Paul. At this instant it will be useful to center on the vocabulary and conceptualization of reconciliation. When Paul describes his ministry of the gospel as a ministry of reconciliation, he uses a known image from human interpersonal relations. Anyone who undertakes a study of soteriological reconciliation in the NT shortly discovers that it is a Pauline concept. Certainly Paul is the principal NT author to use the word group which is normally linked with the concept of reconciliation. Obviously, the concept of reconciliation is broader than anyone word group. Louw and Nida state that "meanings involving reconciliation have a presuppositional component of opposition and hostility, and it is the process of reconciliation which reverses this presuppositional factor." Therefore any NT teaching which deals with God's gracious redemption as overcoming the hostility of sinners and establishing peace is implicitly dealing with reconciliation.

The use of this word group in extra-biblical Jewish literature is noticeably dissimilar than its NT usage. Josephus argues that David was being asked to be reconciled to Absalom. Also in 2 Maccabees God is beseeched to be reconciled to his erring people Israel in thought of the merit of their suffering and the effectiveness of their prayers. This contrasts with Paul's usage here and elsewhere in that God is always the subject and never the object of reconciliation. Human beings need to be reconciled to God, not vice versa. God is the initiator and people are the receptors of reconciliation. Though L. Morris tends to minimize this distinction, its validity will be supported in later discussion.

Morris is concerned to illustrate that God is not passive in relation to sin but rather is vigorously wrathful against it. His wrath against sin must be satisfied. This of course is true, but the fact remains that Paul uses the term "propitiation" (Rom 3:25), not the term "reconciliation" to describe the satisfaction of God's wrath against sin.

Paul's explanation of the ministry of reconciliation is lengthened in 5:19. This verse begins with the complex double connective word variously translated "namely" (*NASB*), "that" (*NIV*), "that is" (*RSV*), "to wit" (*KJV*), "for indeed" (*DV*), and "what I mean is" (*NEB*). All of these are exegetical translations meaning that 5:19 over-explains the thought of 5:18. Two other questions deal with the exegete of this verse. First, should the prepositional phrase in Christ? Be understood adverbially ("God was reconciling in Christ," *NIV*) or adjectivally ("God-in-Christ was reconciling," *KJV*, *NASB*)? The first alternative is preferable due to the common usage of prepositional phrases as adverbs, not adjectives. Again, Paul's highlight is not upon incarnation but upon reconciliation, and it is his habit to mention Christ as the means of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18; Rom 5:10; Col 1:20). The second question concerns the periphrastic verbal construction (imperfect plus present participle). The issue is why the simple finite verb was not used, and also why the progressive rather than the aorist (as in v 18) appears. Maybe the best reply is that Paul wished to emphasize here the element of unforeseen event in the

ongoing process of reconciliation through the ministry of the gospel. It is striking that the middle clause of v 19, "not counting their sins against them," also uses a progressive tense (present participle) to depict God's reconciling action. Though there is an historic, objective sense in which reconciliation was finished at the cross, there is also the subjective accomplishment of that objective truth as the gospel is preached and people believe.

Paul's statement in v 19 is that in Christ God was reconciling "the world" (cf. Rom 11:15) to himself, not "us" as in v 18. While some take the world as tantamount to "all" (people) in 5:14-15, it is more probable that a cosmic meaning is projected. Though people are primarily in mind (note the middle clause of the verse, "not counting their trespasses against them,") Paul's thought cannot be restricted purely to human beings. Paul has been speaking of the new creation in Christ as superseding the old creation ruined by Adam's fall (5:17). Thus it is expected that he does not mean simply all people (believers?), or even the Gentiles as opposed to merely Israel (as in Rom 11:15), but rather the universe as a whole. "All things" are in the process of being reconciled through the cross of Christ. The effects of the second Adam's obedience can be no less than the effects of the first Adam's insubordination. As Adam's disobedience wreaked havoc throughout the entire created order, so Christ's obedience will eventually harmonize the universe in the new heavens and new earth. The entire cosmos will ultimately be at peace with God due to Christ's redemptive mediacy (cf. Rom 8:18-21; Eph 1:10; Phil 2:9-11; Col 1:20). This is not to be confused with soteric universalism, since many will only bow the knee reluctantly. Nevertheless, recognition of a sort of cosmic universalism is essential if we are to grasp the glorious fullness of Christ's work of redemption. Paul seems to portray this process of reconciliation elsewhere through a military motif (2 Cor 2:14; 10:3-5; Col.1:3; 2:15). It is as if the critical battle of the war has already been fought, and it is only a matter of time until the defeated foes lay down their arms. In God's wisdom the ministry of reconciliation already is calling his enemies to surrender. Finally this will result in the total victory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In v 20 meditation of the glorious truth of God's agenda to reconcile the world to himself through the gospel of Christ brings Paul to a conclusion. In vv 20-21 Paul takes the general truths which he has been explaining and applies them in a straight line and exclusively to the condition in Corinth. As Christ's diplomat, and as the very spokesperson of God, Paul pleads with the Corinthians in Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God. Though some take this to be a sample of Paul's missionary preaching directed to no one in particular, it is better to realize it as Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to renew their peaceful relationship to God and his messenger. In addition, the presence of noun at the beginning of 5:20 implies that Paul is now drawing a new inference from his prior general statements about reconciliation. Similarly, the urgent, emotive, personal tone of 5:20 makes more sense if it is directed to the Corinthians than if it is simply an example of what Paul would preach if he had an audience for evangelism. Most significantly, the context must be given its due. Since 2:14 Paul has been making an appeal and defense to the Corinthians regarding his message and ministry. Their gap with him carried with it threatening implications of defection from the gospel. The messenger and the message cannot be alienated, as is underlined in Paul's warning in 6:1-2. Paul is God's diplomat, speaking in Christ's stead. Refutation of the diplomat is tantamount to rejection of the King of kings and calls into question the reception of the King's message (cf. 2:9; 6:1; 1:1; 8:8, 24; 9:3; 11:3-4; 12:20; 13:5).

The necessity of Paul's appeal for the Corinthians to renew their relationship with God is emphasized by the striking asyndetic addition of v 21. Here Paul explains how reconciliation can be attained: the

sinless Messiah became sin so that sinners might become righteous in him (cf. Rom 3:21-22; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:9). The language is once more (cf. 5:19b) suggestive of justification. Barrett's suggestion of a chiasmic structure for this verse is unpersuasive, but he is correct that the verse "is set out in a carefully balanced pair of parallel lines." Through the years this striking statement has been the basis of a great deal of theological debate as the relationship of Christ to sin was pondered. Harris properly comments that these words "defy final exegetical explanation, dealing as they do with the heart of the atonement." This passage reaffirms and defines the central truth Paul has just alluded to in 5:14-15: the representative, substitutionary character of Christ's death.

Paul affirms in stability with many NT passages that Christ "knew no sin"<sup>43</sup> (cf. John 8:46; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22, citing Isa 53:9; 1 John 3:5). However, Christ branded himself with sinners in order to redeem them (Matt 3:13-17; Luke 23:40-41; Rom 8:3; Gal 3:13). Paul does not say that God made Christ a sinner, but that he made (appointed?) him to be sin. While some have argued that sin means "sin offering," it seems better to view this as compressed, almost hyperbolic language intended to say that Christ completely identified with sinners. Harris expressively explains that it was Paul's intent to say more than that Christ was made a sin-offering and yet less than that Christ became a sinner. So complete was the identification of the sinless Christ with the sin of the sinner, including its dire guilt and its dread consequence of separation from God, that Paul could say profoundly, "God made him. . . to be sin for us."

The condensed statement of 5:21 concerning the substitutionary basis of reconciliation now gives way to an express appeal to the Corinthians in 6:1-2. The chapter division is ill-fated, since the flow of thought runs continuous from the intensity of Christ's identification with sinners to the appeal for the Corinthians not to receive God's grace in vain. Most scholars agree that in 6:1 speaks of Paul as God's co-worker. This striking thought fits the context, chiefly the thought of 5:20 (cf. 1 Cor 3:9; 1 Thess 3:2). Paul does not mean to lord this over the Corinthians since he uses the same word to illustrate his relationship with them (2 Cor 1:24). Even so, in his apostolic vocation he is exclusively endowed for ministry (2 Cor 2:14; 3:4-6; 10:14; 12:11-12), and this heightens the obligation of the Corinthians to respond submissively. Coming as it does after 5:11-21, this appeal is perhaps the most direct and urgent of the entire epistle. Paul urges (5:20) the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain (cf. Gal 2:2; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 3:5). This phrase has been taken in two different ways. Some think that Paul warns the Corinthians so that their authentic reception of the gospel will not be without beneficial purpose.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

It is correct that "acceptance of the gospel is an action or state which continues. If this is established, Paul must be warning the Corinthians to think whether their acceptance of the gospel has been shallow and counterfeit. In other words, the offer and acceptance of God's grace is an ongoing process. The old order is past; the new order has dawned; and the opportunity for salvation must be grasped now, at the "acceptable time," during the "day of salvation." Paul thus applies Isaiah's oracle about the Servant and postexilic salvation to the gospel era of messianic salvation (cf. Isa 61:1-2 in Luke 4:19).

Consequently the Corinthians are participants in the age of opportunity, and this heightens their accountability to Paul's appeal. They must renew their original faith in the message and messenger of

God's reconciliation. Their hostility to the messenger is tantamount to hostility to the message. Paul models God's reconciling activity by opening his heart to them, and they must respond (6:11-13).

## **6.0 Summary**

Reconciliation in Christ is basis of the gospel the ushers believers into new life and it is a continuous process. The hostility that created the gap between the church at Corinth and Paul has finally been resolved. Christ is seen as the mediator between man and God.

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## **Module 2 Pauline Eschatology**

### **UNIT 1: Eschatological basis for Reconciliation**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Reconciliation in the Eschatological Frame

- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References for further Reading

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Besides the Corinthian background Paul has a lot of theology to offer as regards the doctrine of reconciliation.

#### **2.0 Objectives**

The objectives of the study in this unit are:

1. To explore more on the concept of reconciliation in other Pauline epistles
2. To unveil the necessity of the teaching on reconciliation
3. To survey the impact of reconciliation in Christ and in relation to believers

#### **3.0 Main Content: Reconciliation in the Eschatological Frame**

There are several scholarly works which present meticulous studies of the Pauline material on reconciliation. Certainly the theme is repeatedly treated by systematic theologians and ethicists. Here only a concise survey of the major passages is potential. Besides 2 Corinthians 5, four other Pauline passages articulate directly of reconciliation. Rom 5:6-11 speaks of reconciliation as God's loving act toward undeserving sinners in which Christ died for the vulnerable enemies of God. Since this reconciliation has been received, the believer may celebrate in his salvation from God's eschatological wrath. Paul's words here take the form of two arguments, the first "lesser to greater," and the second "greater to lesser." If dying for a righteous or good man is commendable, how much more is Christ's death for feeble sinners (5:6-8)? This magnifies God's mercy in providing reconciliation through Christ's death. Second, if Christ went so far as to reconcile his enemies, will he not in the end save his friends (5:9-11)? This provides guarantee that God will finally complete what he has begun in Christ. It is interesting to note the close correlation between justification and reconciliation in the protases of vv 10 and 11 respectively. Eschatological salvation is the consummation of redemption already begun. The "already" (justification and reconciliation) gives surety believers of the "not yet" ("we shall be saved").

In Rom 11:15 Paul turns again to the language of reconciliation in his justification of the wisdom of God's plan for the Jews and Gentiles. If the present national unbelief of Israel has ended up in the

reconciliation of the Gentiles, the stunning upshot of Israel's national repentance can only be described as life from the dead! Paul has been speaking of his ministry to the Gentiles as a means of provoking Israel to jealousy (11:11-14). He goes on to demonstrate the redemptive historical process with the olive tree (11:16b-24). The phrase in 11:16 is plainly an objective genitive describing the universal prospect for Gentiles to receive salvation through faith in the Messiah of Israel. While reconciliation in Rom 5:6-11 was something received individually (5:11), here in Romans 11 it has more of a mutual reference to Gentiles having the opportunity to receive salvation. This opportunity results in "the fullness of the Gentiles," receiving salvation which in turn spells the consummation of national Israel's salvation (11:25-26). Corporate reconciliation is also the theme of reconciliation language in Ephesians 2. Here Paul emphasizes the grace (2:5, 7-8), mercy (2:4), and kindness (2:7) of God who reconciles (2:16) those who deserve wrath (2:3). Here the state of alienation from God (2:1) is also portrayed as a state of satanic influence (2:2) and alienation from God's Messiah, covenant promises, and covenant nation (2:12-13). The enmity or hostility removed by Christ's redemption is not simply *vertical* but is also *horizontal*. The stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant fashioned a barrier between Jews and Gentiles which Christ abolished (2:14-15) when he created the church (1:22) as "one new man" (2:15), and "one body" (2:16) in which the same access to God is opened up to all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike (2:18). It is significant that Christ, not the Father as normally acknowledged somewhere else in Paul, is the subject of the act of reconciliation in 2:16. This is not a point of nervousness or contradiction since the Father is acting to reconcile through, his chosen Messiah. The familiarity of reconciliation through Christ fundamentally redefines vertical and horizontal human relationships as there is now peace between mankind and God and peace between Jew and Gentile (2:14, 17). Both are built into one dynamic place of abode of God through the Spirit (2:19-22).

In the write up in Colossians there is less of the accent upon Jew-Gentile equality which has just been noticed in Ephesians (cf. 1:27; 3:11). To a certain extent, the stress can only be called cosmic. Paul is not interested so much in individual reconciliation, or in redemptive history, or even in the corporate unity of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ. He is more concerned to point out that the reconciliation shaped by Christ leaves nothing outside its impact. The whole world, including both visible and invisible beings, has in some way been reconciled by the blood of the cross (1:20). Paul's chief goal in Colossians 1 seems to be the intensification of Christ as the all-sufficient Lord of the universe. This truth is then applied more directly in Colossians 2 to the false teaching which has put the church in danger. As a result, Paul speaks of Christ as creator and sustainer of the universe (1:16-17) and as the head of the church (1:18). The Father was pleased for divine fullness (cf. 2:9) to dwell in Christ and to reconcile the universe to himself through Christ (1:19-20). Here the familiar terminology of alienation (1:21) crops up again as the presupposition of reconciliation, as Paul moves from the universe in general to the Colossians in particular (1:22). It is remarkable that the stress is primarily upon the reconciliation of the universe; particularly the supernatural powers (1:16, 20). This is obviously due to the false teaching about the powers which has been troubling the Colossians (2:8, 10, 15, 18, 20). They required knowing that not only did Christ in the beginning create the powers but also that consequently his cross whitewashed them when they rebelled against their Creator. The term reconciliation describes both the defeat of the evil powers (1:20) and the redemption of the Colossians, who are now exhorted to stand firm in their freedom from the defeated powers (1:23; 2:8, 16, 18, 20).

While there are some who wind up that the reconciliation of things involves the annihilation of evil powers and unbelieving human beings, this seems to go beyond Paul's statements and to inconsistency

with other biblical truths. The doctrine of eternal punishment does not conflict with the reconciliation of the powers and even of those who reject Christ's redemption. Rather their conquer in the cross of Christ leads to the appeasement of the universe. Their eternal punishment is the means by which eternal peace is attained on the renewed earth for the people of God (cf. Rev 21:7-8,27; 22:14-15).

In essence the survey, a few lines of continuity between 2 Corinthians 5 and the other Pauline passages may be drawn. It is apparent that Paul's concept of reconciliation was related to his concept of justification (2 Cor 5:19, 21; cf. Rom 4:8; 5:9-11). Barrett and Davies disclose that these two terms do not describe separate acts but are simply diverse ways of explaining freedom from sin. Nevertheless, despite some overlap it does seem that distinct truths are expressed by reconciliation and justification. For one thing it has been rightly recommended by Buchsel and Cranfield that reconciliation is the more personal term of the two. Not purely a right legal standing but a harmonious relationship of mutual personal love is the result of reconciliation. In addition, Ridderbos notes that the eschatological, cosmic scope of reconciliation is lacking from justification, which seems to be concerned only with individual mankind.

Another line of continuity is the inevitability of reconciliation being received independently by faith (2 Cor 5:20; cf. Rom 5:11). People are not passive in the realization of reconciliation on earth. There is a ministry to be fulfilled, a message to be proclaimed, a Lord to be received. The message is that people must be reconciled to God, not that they are so already.

It is important to note other matters that call our attention. The horizontal aspect of reconciliation so emphasized in Ephesians 2 was threatened by Paul's strained relations with the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:20; cf. Eph 2:16). The cosmic aspect of reconciliation found in Colossians 1 is connected in 2 Corinthians 5 with the renewal of all things (2 Cor 5:17; cf. Col 1:20). And finally, it is repetitively evident that reconciliation is a state which must be maintained by the believer's perseverance (2 Cor 5:20; 6:1; cf. Rom 11:22; Col 1:23).

## **5.0 Conclusion**

A brief synthesis now concludes this study. The reality is some hopelessness of the idea of a NT doctrine of reconciliation, that pessimism is unwarranted. The doctrine can be elucidated by numerous contrasts and by four perspectives. First by way of contrast, the literature on the biblical theology of reconciliation indicates that Paul's teaching may be explained as follows: Reconciliation is both objective and subjective, accomplished and applied, indicative and imperative, vertical and horizontal, already and not yet, personal and cosmic, God's act and a person's state.

This arrangement for conceptualizing reconciliation attempts to show that it is a duality. The sovereign work of God in Christ accomplished reconciliation objectively, but God also sovereignly designed to apply this reconciliation to individuals through the work of the Spirit in the proclamation of the message. Individual reception of the message changes both vertical (God ward) and horizontal (human ward) relationships as peace permeates the whole of one's life. Those who receive reconciliation have already received a flavor, symbol, or guarantee of God's future work in their lives and in the universe as a whole.

They also individually begin to model the kind of peaceful relationships in every area of life which God has ordained for the eschaton. Paul's strained relationship with the Corinthians is a serious aberration from this ideal, and he desperately desires to resolve the hostility. A second way of conceiving Paul's doctrine of reconciliation is from the four perspectives of initiation, mediation, proclamation, and actualization.

## 6.0 Summary

God the Father is the originator of reconciliation: (2 Cor 5:18). This emphasis on the Father as the ultimate source of reconciliation is also seen in 2 Cor 5:19, Col 1:20, and in Rom 5:10. Though the Father did not lack the means to destroy all those who snubbed his rule, his grace initiated a plan to get rid of the hostility between himself and his unalterable children.

Second, God the Son in his death on the cross is the mediator of reconciliation: (Rom 5:10) Christ's salvation as the mediating dynamic of reconciliation may also be noted in Rom 5:11, 2 Cor 5:18, Col 1:20 and 2 Cor 5:19 (*EV*). The two passages which speak of Christ as the subject of the verb "to reconcile" also speak of him as mediator of reconciliation (Eph 2:16; Col 1:22). The Father gave the Son who knew no sin as a substitute for sinners so that they might become righteous before God. Christ branded with sinners so that there would be a redemptive basis for sinners to be acknowledged with God through him. The cross did not simply offer an example by which sinners were morally influenced to turn to God. Rather it provided a sinless substitute for sinners by which they could draw near a holy and just God.

Third, the declaration of reconciliation is carried out by Paul: (2 Cor 5:20) Paul had been divinely appointed to a ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19). His perception of this apostolic charge stood the test of the Corinthians' insubordination only because he understood that as an ambassador of the reconciling God his message was the functional correspondent of the very voice of God (2 Cor 5:20). Paul also recognized that the assertion of this message confirmed the wisdom of God in redemptive history. In Rom 11:13ff. He shows how Israel's present denunciation of the message of reconciliation in Christ has resulted in the Gentiles experiencing reconciliation. He goes on to explain that the Gentiles' reconciliation will in the end bring Israel to a point of national response of their Messiah, which will in turn bring unique blessing to the whole world.

Fourth, the *realization* of reconciliation comes only when individuals listen to the proclaimed message and receive it by faith: (Rom 5:11) Individuals cannot experience reconciliation with God apart from faith in the proclamation of the messianic mediation of the Father's gracious initiative. As individuals respond to the message of reconciliation, they gain assurance that they are now at last in agreement with the Creator of the universe who has begun a new creation in them (2 Cor 5:17). Their destiny is no longer an strange which causes fear. Relatively they achieve assurance in the good will of their reconciler and are assured (Rom 5:2ff.) that they will finally be saved by his life (Rom 5:10). The actualization of reconciliation has even greater effects as reconciled individuals begin to live at peace with one another in the community of the people of God.

Believers today live "between the times" of the first and second advents of Christ. The first advent mediated the foundation of reconciliation; the second will mediate its universal expansion. In the interim, those who have experienced through the gospel the end of hostilities and the inauguration of



peace with God will make every attempt in their family, church, and societal duties to expand the message of reconciliation by word and deed. Paul modeled this reconciling lifestyle as he tolerantly served the Corinthians in obedience to Christ who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God" (Matt 5:9; cf. Jas 3:17-18).

## 7.0 References for Further Reading

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## **Unit 2 Theology of the New Creation**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
  - 3.1 Theology of the New Creation
4. Conclusion
5. Summary
6. Tutor Marked Assignment
7. References for further Reading

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Pauline theology of the new creation in Christ implies that all such who are secretly in Christ from everlasting, though as yet some of them may not be new creatures, yet they shall be sooner or later; and those who are openly in him, or are converted persons, are essentially so; they are a new "creation," as the words may be rendered: "a new creation," is a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors, and is applied by the apostle to converted persons; and designs not an outward reformation of life and manners, but an inward principle of grace, which is a creature, a creation work, and so not man's, but God's; and in which man is solely passive, as he was in his first creation; and this is a new creature, or a new man, in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, the corruption of nature; and because it is something anew implanted in the soul, which never was there before; it is not a working upon, and an improvement of the old principles of nature, but an inauguration of new principles of grace and holiness; here is a new heart, and a new spirit,: old things are passed away: the old course of living, the old way of serving God, whether among Jews or Gentiles; the old legal righteousness, old companions and relationship are dropped; and all external things, as riches, honours, learning, knowledge, former sentiments of religion, are renounced: behold, all things are become new; there is a new course of life, both of faith and holiness; a new way of serving God through Christ by the Spirit, and from principles of grace; a new, another, and better righteousness is established and accepted.

### **2.0 Objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- i. Comprehend the theology of being in Christ is "a new creation".
- ii. Describe the characteristics of the man who has become a new creation in Christ in contrast to the old life.
- ii. Grasp with Paul's theology of "unity in Christ" as regards salvation

### **3.0 Main Content: Theology of the New Creation:**

#### **3.1 Resurrection of the dead in Pauline Theology**

## Romans

*Romans 1:1-7: Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, [2] which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, [3] concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh [4] and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, [6] including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, [7] To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

What follows is an examination of the end of the book of Romans; we are considering the bookend statements of Romans. Having identified himself in v. 1, as servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, separated for the gospel of God, we have the reference to the gospel of God at the end of v. 1, before going on to emphasize that this gospel is concerned with His son. By this qualification of the relative clause in v. 2, Paul brings out several things about the gospel. First, he says the OT is essentially prophetic in nature. It is as a whole open-ended. It's flow fundamentally prophetic.

The OT is not a closed book; it is not ultimately self-referential, it refers beyond itself. Secondly, the relative clause shows us the essentially Christological character of these holy scriptures. The OT as prophetic revelation is focused on Christ. Christ is the point of the gospel proclaimed in the OT. Third, at the same time, as he says this about the gospel, Paul does something to his own ministry of the gospel, and so by implication to any gospel ministry that would build on him; he puts his apostolic ministry as he brings God's revelation in a definite historical perspective. In other words, he locates his gospel ministry in the history of revelation. What is that location? The emphatic form of the verb in v. 2, pre-promise, that implies a contrast that enables us to see more exactly how Paul sees his place in the history of revelation. He is pointing out that in contrast to the OT statement of the gospel which Paul is affirming here as promissory and prophetic nature of the gospel of the OT (notice the concern of the OT is the Christian gospel), in contrast to that, Paul's ministry is in the context of fulfillment of that gospel; his revelation is a final revelation; his ministry an eschatological ministry.

- Rom. 16:25-26:

What we have is in the format of doxology.

*25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

Now our interest here is toward the end of 25, "the revelation of the mystery." What is the force of this expression? What is the mystery, and what is the revelation? The force of the expression points to the content of this gospel proclamation. Then we're told three things about the mystery (which is in the genitive): it has been kept silent; it is now manifested; and, in distinction from being manifested, it is being made known through the Scriptures, for obedience of the faith to all the Gentiles. The key here is to see--contrary to the tendency which has sometimes been the case--that the reference is not simply cognitive. You can keep in mind the gnostic strands that Paul is dealing with. This is not a new body of doctrine that has arrived. It is not a matter of the communication of spoken or written truths which were previously heretofore unknown. Or we may put it, it is not a category of verbal revelation. Now,

again, we want to be careful to not put up an opposition here; this will be considered as a *part* of this. To put it positively, the mystery here (and we're going to see other instances in Paul) and correlatively its revelation is in the first place an event. It has a decidedly historical connotation referring to what has transpired in history. The mysterion does not have reference to a teaching that has been hidden; it has reference to what has previously not yet taken place. It has its place fixed in God's eternal plan; yet as mystery it has not yet been realized, not yet taken place in history. It is the fulfillment, the realization of God's plan.

In the NT, mystery is closely related to the secret counsel of God, particularly with respect to the plan of salvation. So, again, the revelation of the mystery is something that has been hidden with God but has become a reality in history. Specifically, the mystery is Christ, his person and work. Better the revelation of the mystery is the person and work of Christ, highlighted in his death and resurrection. So the silence is the silence of non-eventuation--the silence of not yet having happened. And what reinforces this observation, that this is not merely noetic, Paul goes on to say that the revealed mystery "has been made known." How? Through the prophetic Scriptures--the old covenant Scriptures (as in ch 1). So he's saying, In a cognitive sense, they've been there all along in the Old Testament. But now what has been known cognitively to his people all along has now come about. Proof of that: Acts 17:2, 18:10-11: demonstration from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. That points up the event character of the mystery. It has previously been made known in that sense, purely in a noetic sense. So we could reference Lk. 24:44ff in this same consideration. Refer to the actual occurrence of what takes place in Christ. Cf. 2 Tim 1:9-10: "grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus." And cf. 1 Pet 1:20: "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake." And considering 1 Cor. 1:7, it is not revelation as info *about* his return; the revelation *is* his return. Or as we considered earlier, Christ is *himself* God's wisdom--not teaching about Christ, though, again, that will be involved (the verbal revelation of the redemptive-historical accomplishment) (1 Cor 1:24, 30). 1 Tim 2:6--the death of Christ is said to be a marturion--a witness--to all. The mystery is Christ, not as an abstraction, but in his work. And the revelation is the realization of that work--it's actual occurrence. So you can appreciate the fulfillment Paul stresses: the realization is nothing less than eschatological. The *now* is a note of finality. In contrast to the ages long past, the silence. Now *at last*. This is truly an eschatological "nun." ("Abraham rejoiced to see this day and was glad." His is not the same clarity as our own, but we have to stress that there is a concern toward an essential continuity here. The point really is there in the OT. So on the road to Emmaus, they're foolish and slow of heart because they didn't believe all the things written in the prophets.)

Rom 16:25-26: We're involved with passages that will illumine for us Paul's eschatological structure overall, as that is formed implicitly or sometimes explicitly in the two-age structure. In the last hour, we looked at what is involved in that--the signature of the mystery of that revelation. Now, this is something related to an issue in the church today (per dispensationalism). The mystery here is not something unseen in the OT. We see that because the revealed mystery is the mystery of the known, true prophetic Scriptures.

- Col 1:26-27: In connection with this, now let us look at Col 1.  
*26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

This is in connection with Paul talking about his ministry. His ministry is one of making full proclamation of the word of God. So that what we see in v 26, without any conjunction here, so as to make it mean the *content* of the Word of God (as if it were a colon, or "namely")--the Word of God which he makes full--is the mystery (and we can see here parallel or echoing Rom, since written after Rom). In 27 he adds: This mystery *is* Christ. Christ then identified further as Christ in you the hope of glory. And then what we noted here from 2:2-3 that shows that this is the best reading (re: Christ). The mystery is Christ in whom are all the hidden treasures, which are now revealed. Cf. 4:3, where Paul speaks of the mystery of Christ. And also Eph 6:19, where Paul speaks of the "mystery of the gospel." We can say further from the context of Col 1 that this mystery of the Christ is that of Christ *in you*. The Christ who has been exalted is also in the church--the body of which, Christ is the head. Another item to say: The sermon that needs to be preached in v 27 that I've been noticing more and more recently is that the Christ in you that needs to be preached, the indwelling Christ, is the "hope of glory." Often you see the hope is put in terms of an imputed righteousness, of having been justified freely by grace--and it is that surely. But consider, How often is it that we've been told of our hope in terms of Christ in you? I go on, then, to encourage you to note how little the rev of the mystery is a matter of purely noetic disclosure.

#### **4.0 Summary:**

So, to summarize here, the way Paul associates his own ministry--we could say qualifies his own ministry in a fundamental way--with this signature expression, "the revelation of the mystery" makes eschatology clear then from two interrelated considerations. That brings into view the content of his preaching as eschatological, but also sets his own ministry in an eschatological context. The language can seem gnostic, to have a gnostic background, but the language is utilized decisively to make an anti-gnostic point. It is not used to report arcane matters, but there is this profound *history* or redemptive-history nuance. It is in this passage that the manifestation and realization of salvation in Christ itself is established. It is that salvation that previous for ages *was not* and now *finally is*. And we can note here that it is Christ in all of his saving plutos--riches and Christ as he is the pleroma (v 19)--the fullness.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

As we look at other references to Paul's use of *mysterion* language it is the case that sometimes what is accented is the matter of Gentile inclusion--that is in fact in view in this passage: "the mystery of Christ among the Gentiles, Christ in you, the hope of glory." And that is particularly the case in Eph 3:4. But there the point is not so much that Gentile inclusion is something not known before. We could go back to Isaiah where the the point of nations that are being brought in is there again and again. This is a significant *aspect*. And here, this is a matter with which the so-called New Perspective has become very preoccupied, and it surely an integral element--that what has arrived in Christ brings inclusion; it brings in all nations. The purposes of God realized in Christ have this universal expansion to it to include non-Jew as well as Jew according to his electing purpose.

## 5.0 Tutor Marked Assignments

- i. Explain how Paul has connected Christ to the Old Testament prophecy.
- ii. Explain Paul's idea of being a new creation in Christ.
- iii. What does Paul mean by "mystery" in this context?

## 7.0 References for further Reading

M. J. Harris, *2 Corinthians* (EBC. 10; Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1976) 353.

W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 195; and Hughes, *2 Corinthians*, 199-200.

Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915) 168.

R. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 48; Waco, TX: Word, 1986) 137.

J. L. Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Cor 5:16," *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 269-87; J. I. H.

McDonald, "Paul and the Preaching Ministry," *JSNT* 17 (1983) 35-50; M. E. Thrall, "2 Corinthians 5:18-21," *ExpTim* 93 (1982) 227-32.

J. W. Fraser, "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus: II Cor V.16 once more," *NTS* 17 (1970-71) 293-313;

R. Martin, "Reconciliation at Corinth," *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 90-110;

## Unit 3 Eschatological *Content* of Paul's Preaching

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main content
  - 3.1 Paul's Eschatology
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### 1. Introduction

This unit introduces the student into Paul's view of eschatology. Paul's eschatological message centers on Christ. The age of Christ ushers in the end of time where all things are being consummated in him.

### 2. Objectives

The objectives of this section is to:

- i. Help the students to understand the concept of eschatology in Paul's thought.
- ii. Enable the student to understand the eschatological connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

### 3. Main Content

#### 3.1 Eschatological *Content* of Paul's Preaching

This makes clear his own being grasped by the eschatological character of his time and place in history for his ministry as an instrument of revelation. Again we could emphasize the "nun" of Col 1--the "now" of redemptive history. That is in contrast to the ages long silence. Now, at last, after ages of expectations, after being so long hidden for ages and generations, redemption in Christ has been revealed (Eph 1:10, Gal 4:4, and 1 Cor 10:11): The eschatological dimension of Paul comes out in still other ways, particular in certain Pauline expressions. We see this in Eph 1:10, Gal 4:4, and 1 Cor 10:11.

*Galatians 4:4* But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

*Ephesians 1:10* as a plan for the fullness of time (lit "times), to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (lit in the pl, "times"; unite = lit "bring to a head")

We look at these together because of the expression "fullness of time." In the Galatians passage, God sent his son born of a woman in the fullness of time. In Ephesians passage, the fullness is connected with v 9, "the mystery" of the administration, which is involved with the execution of plan of God of his will, in the fullness of time. It does *not* mean as it is oft taken to mean an especially auspicious time in history--a particularly strategic time in the course of history. (Notice the articles here.) About that, it is certainly true on other grounds. But it is not what Paul is saying here. He means what he says--the fulfillment of the time or the times. With the coming and work of Christ, the time of the

world, history, if you will, has been filled up. The present era has been brought to its end, its telos. That present era ultimately considered has been brought to its consummation. Now the fulfillment spoken of here is *initial*; that is, there is a future aspect, and we must account for that future. But while there is a future aspect, we must appreciate the full force of what Paul has to say here; and that is, the end of history has begun, really and truly. And that eschatological thrust is reinforced by the correlative clause we have in Eph 1:10, where Paul speaks of "the heading up of all things in Christ." Or we may put it, the bringing together of all things under Christ as head. We can take note here of what Paul says a little bit later in v 22, that Christ as the fullness and related to the church in its fullness is head over all things for the church. And that's clearly a present affirmation. And it couldn't be put more emphatically; when we ask what are the "all things," Paul says "all things that are on heaven and on earth." NIV puts a future force, but nothing in the text asks for that future rendering; the ESV here doesn't push, iterating what is in fact the case (which is what Paul is iterating). And in that connection, we can bring in our discussion 1 Cor 10:11. Making the analogy there is between the church as the new covenant people and Israel as God's old covenant people, particularly in relation to their wilderness experience.

*1 Corinthians 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*

The eschatological language here is very forceful. It is the case that the church is in this eschatological situation that has already arrived.

So those expressions have their input for our concern. Here again 2\_Cor. 6:2 would lead us to look at another indication which is the use of Isa. 49:8 in 2 Cor 6:2. In the larger context--remember we gave some attn to it yesterday, looking at 5:17, as part of the unit that runs from 5:11-6:3--this is something of a culminating expression of Paul considering his ministry particularly as one of reconciliation. He is God's co-worker in the ministry of reconciliation.

*For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

Note the "nun" again. The emphatic double use here connects with what we've seen Rom 16:26 and Col 1:26. And here, too, we'll see, in its own way in this passage, the eschatological use of this. This question: What is the reference of the acceptable time? And what is the parallelism of the day of salvation, as this day is predicated of the "nun"? Despite many, many sermons preached on this text, the reference of the now here is not to a particular occasion that may come into the life of an individual--not a set of circumstances that fall in my life that I may take advantage today (i.e., to repent and to believe in Christ). That opposite for me in God's inscrutable plan may be here today and gone tomorrow. Now that, again, is a point that may be made on other grounds. But here, reference the new creation language used in 5:17. It's not in the 1st place to be und with reference to the order of salvation--salvation as applied to the individual. It's also not meant to be applied to one generation. These expressions are simply to be understood in light of the OT here. Isa 49:8. And we'll see the context that comes into view with that citation. (The Septuagint and Masoretic Text are virtually identical here). Isa 49 is one of the so-called "Servant Songs," which we've come to appreciate is a prophetic forecast in the 1st person singular of the work of Christ. The "you" of the servant is firstly with reference to Christ.

*Isa 49:8: Thus says the LORD: "In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages.*



## 4.0 Summary

Now in context of Isa 49, what the LORD says to the servant, can only be understood in light of v 4--the lament of the servant. He expresses that he has spent his strength for nothing. But I-servant Israel--"have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God." So we can rightly characterize this as a lament...*in hope*. So v 8 is part of the response of YHWH to the servant. The servant can be assured that the LORD has heard his lament; he has answered his servant, and he has come to his aid. Or, we can fairly transpose, he has answered his servant by *coming* to his aid. Now with those considerations in mind, back in Paul, we can be sure that the apostle intends us to find this in the context of fulfillment. And we can say the acceptable time is that has been inaugurated in the death and resurrection of Christ. That is pointedly back in 5:15. It is a time in which the LORD answers his servant eschatologically. The servant of the LORD, Israel, focused now in the person of Christ. Putting it more pointedly, the resurrection is the answer--the answer which vindicates the servant. The resurrection, as we'll have opposite to see in other passages, the resurrection as an event is an event that speaks; it has a certain declarative force as life from the dead.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Correlatively, the day of salvation is the day of reconciliation. The reconciliation of believers, 5:18; the reconciliation of the world, 5:9. And we can just reference here that the "acceptable time" is the same in its scope of reference as the "acceptable year of the LORD" in Isa 62. The year which Jesus applies to himself; in Lk 4:19, Jesus uses the Isa 62 at the time of the inauguration of his ministry. So these references to acceptable time and day of salvation are not to be taken in an individualizing sense. But they have a broad sense; a sweeping redemptive-historical sense. The reference is to the end-time of fulfillment which has come with Christ. And we may also point up further, in another link to the Isaiah passage, its reference is to the day of salvation which is to be taken to the nations. Cf. 5:19. And in that regard, listen to what intervenes between v 4 and v 8 in the Isaiah passage:

*It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

In a hermeneutical line, we've seen how the citation of a verse from the OT oft brings into view a larger context as well.

## 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. Explain Paul's understanding of the goal of eschatology.
- ii. How has the Old been brought to an end?

## 7.0 References for further Reading

W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915).

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J. W. Fraser, "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus: II Cor V.16 once more," *NTS* 17 (1970-71) 293-313;

## **Unit 4 The Church and its Faith in the Eschatological Context**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content: The church and its Faith in Christ
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### **1. Introduction:**

The life meaning of the church is woven around Christ. The faith of the church stands on nothing else but on Christ alone. We can say that the church in its life period is to be construed as part of God's answer to Christ. The answer, in other terms, is of the Father to the Son because a resurrected Christ without a resurrected body of Christ is an abstraction. The New Testament knows of no such state of affairs.

#### **1.0 Objectives**

The objectives of this unit are:

- i. To help the student understand the nature of the eschatological faith of the church in Christ.
- ii. To enable them engage critically, the materials in understanding Paul's idea on this.

#### **2.0 Main Content: The church and its Faith in Christ**

The church in its being constituted, its life period, is the day of salvation, as the acceptable time is to be seen as part of God's answer to his servant in raising him from the dead. And here we can connect with the way that the resurrected Jesus himself puts it in Lk 24:46-47 to his disciples: "It is necessary that the messiah suffer, rise, and in his name repentance and the remission of sins be preached to all the nations." So the now generation--2 Cor 6:2--is the church, the church as it is being constituted in the time between the resurrection and the return of the Christ.

We can refer to some other passages that are oft not appreciated with the light that could be shed upon them. Col 4:5 says: "Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time." "Redeeming ton kairon." I think that the definiteness there indicates redeeming the time until Jesus returns. Similarly, "redeeming the time because the days are evil." Again, the period between the resurrection and the return of Christ. So when the NIV renders "making the most of every opportunity" I think that blurs the force of what Paul is saying.

Rom 13:11: "Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed." Or 1 Cor 7:22: "the kairos has been shortened"--*the* time has been shortened. We would explicate that, in view of what has taken place in Christ, in view of his return. And Gal 6:10, where Paul says, "Do good to all esp. of the household of faith" That may have the more general force "as you have opposite," but it may have the redemptive-history force as well.

Gal. 3:23-25:

*23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian*

We were in custody under the law. Now or since faith has come we are no longer under custodial regimen of the Law. As we process the language of faith, there are basically two ways that "faith" can function in Scripture and in theological parlance. There is the "fides quae creditor"--faith which is believed. Faith as a body of doctrine. Jude 4 is a good example of this: contend for the faith. The other is "fides qua creditor"--the faith *by which* is believed. Faith as the act of believing.

So we have two senses: faith as the body of belief and faith as the act of believing. The first sense does not fit well here. That leaves us with the alternative. But that raises the issue of how Paul can say that, that there was no faith before Christ. We see earlier in Gal 3, the classic example of justification by faith is whom? Abraham. So we're forced here to consider what faith means in light of him as an example. So what we're to see here is how for Paul faith is redemptive-historically qualified. Faith is ever faith in Christ. In particular, he is concerned here to express how much faith is bound to its object. So it's kind of a metonymic expression here. So when he says "until faith came" he means until Christ as the object of faith had come. You see, faith on its own is nothing. It has its value only in terms of its object, as it is trusting in Jesus Christ. So the *eis Christon* is to be taken temporally here. The Law was pedagogue until Christ. And similarly, v 23 almost certainly ought *not* to be read in an individualistic sense as it is sometimes. He's not talking about the coming of faith in an individualistic sense. He doesn't say here that the Law came to lead us *to Christ*. Again, that is something that can be soundly supported biblically--that the Law does its sin-convicting work to convince us and to bring us a need to cast our faith *on Christ*. That's certainly the case. But that's not the point that's being made here. But it's red-historical--how essential for faith is the object of faith, in a red-historical sense, that is Christ, come in the fullness of time, as Paul will say presently in ch 4, verse 4, so that without that object, focused in Christ and his accomplishment in the fullness of time, it's as if there is no faith. [Or, more simply, elementally, Christ is the object. When faith came, v. 25, he is connoting when salvation came, when it came in Christ, or was revealed. So the statement of v. 25, in the immediate context the thought of vv. 23 and 25, the use of faith, is in effect correlate to the sense of v. 19, where Paul says, until the seed came, or again in the sense of until Christ came. Or again, thinking of the statement in 4:4, when the fullness of time came, that is what is in view when Paul speaks here saying "When faith came."] Faith is the object of faith in a redemptive-historical sense.

## **2.1 Faith and Justification**

[The implications: This way of speaking on Paul's part shows how important to him is the historical qualification of the exercise of faith. The historical orientation is inseparable from the exercise of saving faith. Remembering what the controlling theme through this section of the letter of Galatians, and that is justification by faith. Justification by faith, salvation by faith, is not a timeless arrangement by God. Justification is not, while it is intensely personal, is not experienced by the individual sinner on the basis of some pre-creational decree, or some existential state of affairs looking in another direction. Faith is never an end in itself, never its own justification. Justification by faith is not a transaction between God and the individual sinner without any other considerations coming into view. In its fully trinitarian character, in its covenantal character, it is pointedly Christological, it is specifically messianic.

Justification is dependent upon, given its validity, by the coming of the Son in the fullness of time. The God who justifies the sinner is the God who justifies *en Christo*, in Christ. Justification by faith, and this includes now, the justifying faith of Abraham, that is appealed to by Paul in the larger context, justifying faith is valid, only in terms of the distinction of promise and fulfillment. It has its validity in terms of the fulfillment of the promise, given to Abraham, that comes to its focused fulfillment in Christ. More specifically to the language in 3:23-25, so thoroughly is justifying faith dependent upon its object, inseparable from its object, in a redemptive-historical sense, that Paul can speak of that faith as not being present until the object, the seed, Christ, is present. This way of speaking is to highlight how everything in justification by faith stands and falls around the work of Christ in the fullness of time. *Ordo salutis* questions, how am I justified, how does the individual appropriate salvation, or how is it applied, those questions are controlled by *historia salutis* questions and considerations, which Paul spells out here.]

#### **4.0 Summary**

Salvation and redemption are now events that have been accomplished in history. To bring a model in here that has been introduced in the last half of the 20th C, by Oscar Cullmann, Paul is very much aware that believers are those for whom the battle of the evil one, the great D-day battle has passed, the war has been decisively resolved. The redemption of God's people is an already-accomplished reality. Paul knows himself to be among those believers for whom the period of shadow, probation, the era of unresolved conflict--all that is past. What was provisional has given way to fulfillment, what was anticipatory has given way to what is final, in the eschatological order of things. And this situation, where he is focused, and is able to look back on this decisive change of events, these aeon-turning events, that is the content and focus of his ministry. Its setting and focus, context and content. And apart from this, Paul would have his readers understand that the salvation experience of the individual believer is largely unintelligible, or is certainly deeply impoverished. Paul is a minister of "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations, and has now been manifested, to the saints" (Col. 1:26). Cf. Rom. 16:25-26.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

Our objective in this section (D) has been to consider those passages in which Paul orients his message--message and ministry, content and context--does that in terms of a two-aeon construct, and so gives us an indication of the basic character of his apostolic ministry, as he is a writer of scripture,

correlative with his ministry to the Gentiles. What we have discovered is the controlling basic historical, eschatological perspective which Paul places on his labors. The redemptive-historical context is that in which Paul locates his ministry, and which qualifies his entire ministry, in which Paul locates himself as a Christian, which Paul sees as fundamentally qualifying himself in Christ, along with other believers. In all that he is and does, Paul is one upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived. (1 Cor. 10:11). Paul again is deeply conscious of living in what he calls the pleroma of time, the fullness, the fulfillment of time. The time when God has sent His Son, has finally sent His Son (Gal. 4:4); or again, 2 Cor. 5:17, he is conscious of being in that situation when the new creation has already dawned. From his place or vantage point in history, Paul knows himself to be characterized by this, to have the privilege that he is able to look back now, on the climactic events of the history of redemption, specifically, the death and resurrection of Christ.

## 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. How does Paul relate the faith of the church eschatologically in Christ?
- ii. Explain the basis on which justification stands.
- iii. Explain how the end of the age terminates in Christ, according to Paul.

## 7.0 References for further Reading

W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 195; and Hughes, *2 Corinthians*, 199-200.

Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915) 168.

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J. W. Fraser, "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus: II Cor V.16 once more," *NTS* 17 (1970-71) 293-313;

## Unit 5 The Future Eschatology

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### 1. Introduction

Eschatology has two important aspects of realized and future that need to be distinguished. We have touched on these aspects above. The realized is captured in the coming of Christ and the future which refers to the consummation of all things. Christ is at the center of all eschatological expectations. Here the student is led to understand the future aspect and how it connects with the already realized as they constitute one whole in Pauline understanding.

## **2. Objectives:**

The main objectives are to:

- i. Help the student understand the nature of the future eschatology.
- ii. Help the student to be able to connect the two aspects of eschatology.

## **3.0 The Future Eschatology**

### **3.1 Future Dimension:**

It is most important to work in another factor we are aware of but to which we have not given adequate attention. Stress on the present reality, past realities that have arrived in the cross and resurrection, that stress on what has been realized does not eliminate his emphasis on the future, what the future will bring. To continue the WWII analogy, the D-Day having been resolved, there is still VE-Day to come. So Paul makes it clear that from his place in history, there is still one great event, one great future event, one event, the future hope that in fact controls the situation, and that is what he refers to as the parousia of Christ. 1 Cor. 1:7. Together with the Corinthian believers, he is eagerly awaiting the apokalupsis, the revelation of Jesus Christ; or more broadly in Tit. 2:13, with all believers, he is awaiting the blessed hope and glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. So there is that future dimension that constitutes the total picture.

### **3.2 Inseparability of Present and Future:**

The emphasis on the future, as well as on what has been realized, does not betray some confusion or uncertainty on the matter on Paul's part, as the situation has sometimes been read in the critical interpretation. In fact, a future has been given with what has happened in the past. (And this is most clearly seen with the resurrection.) [Rather, we could say that for Paul, the future is given with the present. Or better, the future is given with the past.] Because of what has happened, there will happen. We may say that for the apostle, the past tense, or rather, the perfect tense in Greek, because of redemptive-historical consummation, and the future tense, always need to be parsed together, to use a grammatical metaphor. The perfect and the future belong together, they are inseparable. In an overall biblical perspective, esp. against the OT background, the second coming is given with the first; it is part of the same event complex. As we make the distinction between first and second coming, and esp. as we find ourselves between the one and the other, it is important to state that we are not so much talking about two separate events as two phases of one event--the eschatological coming of the Lord, as revealed in the Scriptures. [What is a unitary outlook in the OT focused on the day of the Lord, that is delineated in the NT into a first and second, but they are a first and second not separate events, but

are part of the same event complex. What is a single event from the OT perspective becomes present and future from the NT perspective. One parousia in two phases or installments, not two parousiai.]

So what all this involves then for Paul is a basic qualification that attaches to the existence of the believer, to the lives of Christians living in history--involved here is an all-controlling qualification, and that is the way in which the believer's present is inevitably defined by the past and the future of redemptive history. Again, my present is not just defined in terms of my individual past and present, but the past and present of red-hist. That is, our lives are bracketed by the resurrection and return of Christ. The passage most succinctly expresses this qualifying structure of our lives in terms of eschatological consideration is in what Paul has to say to the church of the Thessalonians. In 1 Thess 1:9-10, there is a concern on "how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." There you see, you have the whole of the Christian life encapsulated, in as effective a way as any. That's who we are as believers. But now notice what's pointed up about this service: it's the service of God as we "wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." So the service of the church is a "waiting service," you could say. An active waiting that always has to understand itself as bracketed by the resurrection and return of Christ.

### 3.3 The Imminent

A comment needs to be made on the imminence statements that you find in Paul. The way in which the NT writers speak of that future as soon or imminent, Paul speaks that way, with such certainty about the future, Paul speaks of the imminence, because he is so certain about it. He is so certain about the future that he says; it is near, soon. And speaks of an imminent parousia. And he speaks that way, to distance ourselves from certain views (like Hal Lindsey or Tim LaHaye), not because he has some advance calendar information which he has held back from us with the other NT writers, which we must figure out by some eschatological ingenuity (like Tim LaHaye or, going back, Hal Lindsey). That is not why they are so certain in their expressions; it's not because they know something we don't know. Nor do they speak this way because they made a mistake, which is the standard assumption in modern criticism. Rather, the situation is this: the NT writers speak with such certainty about the future because of what has already happened in Christ, what has been established in cross and resurrection. So that the near and the soon in the NT language have the force that "it is just a matter of time." It is inevitable now. The imminence expressed in the NT is a redemptive-historical certainty. [Imminent no matter how many years or centuries elapse until it takes place.]

Paul's modification of the two-aeon schema: the overlap of the two

To get us into things, we already noted at an earlier point, that is, under c when we were looking at the background of Paul's use of the two-aeon construct. We noted that it originates in the Judaism just preceding Paul's time. It adequately represents the OT as a formal structure, and from there is taken over by Paul. With that recognized, the two eschatological viewpoints are plainly not identical, though. For Judaism the turning point of the aeons is still future. Or more pointedly, the coming of the messiah, as at least some strands of Judaism are still focused on, is still future. For Paul, however, that event has already taken place in the past. And that inevitably involves modifications in Paul's use of the traditional construction. Modifications which we want to go on and spell out, clarify if they aren't already on the basis of the material we have covered in the last few hours. Here we can point out what we must recognize are two basic modifications of a structural character.



### 3.4 Realized Eschatology: The Horizontal Dimension.

In view of the fact that this decisive event has taken place, that Christ has come, it might seem improper for Paul to think in terms of the contrast between this aeon and the aeon to come, and incongruous. Because what from the traditional Jewish point of view, the coming aeon is now a present reality; it is no longer future. Despite that apparent incongruity, Paul continues to think and write in terms of this schema, and he does that without slighting the full eschatological implications of the work of Christ, which have culminated in His death and resurrection. He still points out this structure as relevant to the setting *after* the resurrection of Christ. Just how is that antithesis, that contrast between the two aeons, relevant when Christ has come? And the answer, when the pertinent scriptures are examined, lies along these lines: for Paul, the appearance of the Messiah and the Messianic Era unfolds in two successive epochs. Or, as we could put it, the parousia, the end of the age, takes place in two installments. The first appearance is fully eschatological. What has already taken place in the arrival of the messiah is the realization of the OT hope. And that that extent, Jewish hope anchored in the OT. What has already arrived is the coming aeon, or the basileia, the kingdom rule of God. But still, making full allowance for the stupendous effect of this first coming, that does not mean the cessation of all hope of historical expectation.

Rather, that gives rise to a new hope, a new and renewed focus on the future. We are picking up on some of the discussion in Vos's *Pauline Eschatology*. Vos uses an illustration to clarify, taken from biology: cell separation, so that the future age divides, so it gives rise out of the present to the future. Or, at a more sophisticated level, Vos talks about the coming aeon in its arrival as being pregnant with another. In its delivery, it is pregnant with another. The period between the two phases of Jesus' parousia--first and second coming, as we distinguish--involves affinities and characteristics of both ages--both the pre-eschatological sinful situation and eschatological reality. What marks this period is an admixture of characteristics. While a mouthful, this is important because a large part of the program of NT interpretation for the church and especially as it bears on the church today, a large part of understanding yourself as a believer in Jesus Christ, is to clarify this combination, this mixed state of affairs in which we find ourselves, esp. as we go on to consider Paul's and of the resurrection. Second, Paul continues to refer to this period as "ho nun aion," this age. He never refers to it as ho mellon aion, but in many other ways, and we have noted some of the most important, he makes it no less clear that the coming age has actually been anticipated. Here we can help ourselves fairly to interpret the apostle with the language of the writer of the book of Hebrews, with reference to the present work of the Holy Spirit, as "the powers of the age to come" (6:5)--that is what is presently at work in the church. This brings out the tension between the already and the not-yet, the way the present and the future are bonded together, that the present is not complete without the future. Oscar Cullmann has used the term "taseology" to refer to this. He or someone else coined this from the Greek tassis, tension--the pole of opposites, the pre-eschatological and the eschatological; sin innervated and resurrection; death and life. This is bringing into view the elliptical state of affairs. This matches up exactly with Jesus' kingdom expectation, with diff perspective to be sure; but there is the same present-future structure.

### 3.5 Realized Eschatology: The Vertical Dimension.

This is more radical, I suppose we could say, than the first, and brings us into contact with what is perhaps the most *distinctive* aspect of Paul's eschatology, and he highlights it in a way not found in other NT writers. The first modification is significant. But it leaves untouched the linear or horizontal

character of eschatology. The one age succeeds, follows the other. What we have to consider now, is that this second modification is such that the two aeons are contemporaneous, they are coexistent, and overlap. Now before we go on to detail that, let me just accent that this modification is *not* one that supplants the first modification or makes it obsolete, as if this is some development of Paul's teaching, the later Paul, following the earlier Paul. It is not that way at all. Rather, the situation is such that the two modifications have to be seen together; they supplement each other, so that along with the linear point of view comes the vertical outlook. Along with the consecutive comes a concurrent or contemporaneous viewpoint. Along with the horizontal comes a perpendicular. Now as things are put this way, it may sound paradoxical, may be even unintelligible. It could seem that the viewpoint that we are talking about now really involves a *break* with the two-aion scheme, that Paul has used the two-aion schema but now goes beyond that, and it is no longer serviceable to him. Some interpretations say that Paul is saying something that just can't be expressed any more in terms of the two-aion construct. In terms of formal structure, remember what we noted, the dual force, that first the Hebrew *olam* came to have, that is, the original temporal age sense, that it came to take on a world sense. It has a double ring.

Similarly, so does the Greek *aion*. It is in terms of this second spatial sense, that what we're calling the second modification becomes possible, conceptually intelligible. With that said, let me go on and express that this line of discussion can begin to lead us astray, because it is not a matter of theoretical possibility, but of realistic necessity, that is vital and practical. Here as well as in the first modification, the factor that determines the direction of Paul's thought, is the coming of Christ, as that has already taken place in Christ; that is what shapes his thinking, as he comes to grips with that. What is at work determining the line of Paul's thinking, is this accomplished fact, this historical reality; that is what necessitates this modification in theory, in doctrine. It's not a matter of speculation.

Vos expresses this in an aphoristic fashion, first the historical, then the theological. This is a sound principle for *all* theologizing. The inevitable orientation of the word focused on the deed, the event. Which is another way of stating what I have worked to some extent with a number of you in ST 101, Introduction to Systematic Theology, that the basic pattern of revelation is the deed and then the revelatory word about the deed. The deed calls forth the revelatory word.

### 3.6 Realized Eschatology: The Vertical Dimension

We can go on to put up, in the new state of affairs, Vos says we have to give account here of the abiding liveliness of Jesus, the activity of the resurrected Christ. Just to orient to the empty tomb for a moment; the empty tomb is not just negative. It not only tells us where Jesus isn't, but also, it raises the question, where then is He? And, we may say that in answering the question, the church has at times gone to extremes; it has speculatively overstated itself, and we should be on guard here against going into a kind of "theological astrophysics." But with all the caution demanded here, we must at least affirm the following on the basis of Paul's NT teaching: Jesus has departed to a place, most often put as "the right hand of God." He has gone from here to there. The incarnate Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, has gone to a new sphere, or as incarnate, a new *environment*.

And we must maintain the genuineness of that place, as a there in distinction from our being here where we find ourselves. No matter how sublime or difficult to conceive that place may be. It is an

environment in the sense that it is appropriate to and in keeping with His incarnate mode of existence. It is a place, a spatiotemporal order, a world. In his resurrection and ascension we must insist that Christ remains in a bodily existence. Vos: The "eschatological center of gravity" has shifted from the present world order, the present aion, to a new world order, to a new aion. The center of the believer's devotion has gone from here to there. So that as long as the present aion, the present world continues its course, the new aion--the eschat world age--will run concurrent to it. The world to come has become a present reality, even though it is only in the future, at the parousia, that will it come into its fulness. Only then the aion to come is present in all its fullness. The resurrection and the ascension of Christ bring about a certain cosmic dualism. A bifurcation of cosmic dimensions that is brought about temporally, historically in the unfolding of the history of redemption. It is effective in time. So to speak of a cosmic dualism is appropriate, but it is far removed from Greek cosmology and ontology. In other words, we have expressed what you find in the diagram at the bottom of p. 38 in Vos, the overlap of the two aions between the first and second coming. Paul adds a new dimension to the eschatological outlook of the NT believer; a new dimension for the church's eschatological perspective. Not only does the believer continue to look to the future along the horizontal timeline, but there is also a vertical reference which enters in. Not only does the believer wait for his Son from heaven (1 Thess 1:10), but he also sets his mind on the things above (Col 3:2). This vertical interest does not *supplant* the horizontal outlook, but the one supplements the other. We are not dealing with some desperate measure on Paul's part to counteract a disappointment (as some put it) about a delayed parousia; both belong together. *A piety which lacks or suppresses one aspect or the other is correspondingly impoverished*. It will not be Pauline piety.

The Life Aspect of Union with Christ: There is much more involved that just Paul's outlook, more than the believer's outlook and interest, more than epistemology, if you will. It is nothing less than **the ontology of the believer** that comes into consideration for Paul. Nothing is more basic to the NT doctrine of salvation, particularly in the teaching of Paul, than **the union that there is between Christ and believers**. This principle, this reality of union, lies at the basis of the union with God's people. It is particularly in the systematics curriculum that we pay extensive attention to it. What I want to do here is stress that in terms of that union, as it is a reality in the actual experience of the believer, here we want to stress that that union is not only representative, as what Christ has done for me, but it is a life-union, nothing less than that; it is a vital union. What classical theological language refers to as the "*mystical union*." And so Paul can claim in Gal 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." In other words, the ascension does not simply mean a shift of the locality of the object of our religious interest, of our eschatological preoccupation as believers, but has for us a significance that is *existential* or *experiential*. It means nothing less than the relocation of my actual life as a believer. The life that I now live in the flesh is ultimately considered not here, but there in Christ, at the right hand of God. It is in terms of these considerations that we are pointing up, that we can begin to understand certain statements of Paul about the Christian life, in something of their true depth. We must understand such statements as something more than simply loose rhetoric; we are not dealing with Paul being carried away in some doxological but careless enthusiasm, as some might say.

Some passages that express this, bring this dimension to light:

Eph 1:3-14: In the opening of this long section, the theological doxology that runs through v. 14, Paul begins, *Eph 1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.*

First of all, as we can put it here, as we consider it from the angle of the spiritual blessing in which the believer participates, first what comes to expression here is the existential reality, the spiritual blessing which we presently have, we have by virtue of being in the heavenlies in Christ. We can note three things about this: 1. The existential reality: Paul means to say that the believer is *there* in Christ, in heaven. 2. The Christological basis: We may notice as well the Christological basis of this reality; we are there because *Christ* is there, and the believer is in Christ. It is perhaps worth noting here, that as you look ahead to 1:20, where you find the next occurrence of "in the heavenlies." And there its redemptive-historical qualification is unmistakable. The "in the heavenlies" is qualified by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. 3. The Spiritual character of the blessing in view: We should note further the spiritual character of the blessing involved. The adjective pneumatike has specific reference to the Holy Spirit. The contrast here is not as so often taken, between Spiritual blessings as one kind of blessings, and material blessings; but rather the contrast is of a different order, of the contrast between pneuma and sarx, that we find in a principal way in a number of passages in Paul. It is between *Spiritual blessing* and *fleshly un-blessing*, the misery of our earthly existence, of what is fleshly, and sinful. That is the sweep of the contrast.

Eph 2:6 (and we'll look at this later, too): What Paul says is that believers have been raised up with Christ, and have been seated with Christ, *in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus*. A statement that we can bring in to advantage here is Philippians 3:20. "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also await our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Does citizenship mean homeland, or citizenship? Probably the latter. And note what is surely semantically deliberate in the syntax here, the position of the hemon; OUR citizenship is in heaven. When it comes to evaluating the two worlds, the two realms or aions in which the believer exists, it is heaven that has priority. The believer more properly belongs there, exists there, that is what more properly defines his existence, identifies his citizenship. This is not to deny that the Philippians had an earthly citizenship. Now look at the end of the statement of v 20; here in one verse you see how the vertical or heavenly outlook, and the horizontal or future blend in one perspective; they do not take away from each other. It's just from heaven where believers have their citizenship; believers are awaiting their Savior from it (the parousia).

Col 3:3: *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.*

Note here how emphatic Paul is: our life itself is hidden with Christ in God. Where is it hidden with Christ in God? Paul has commanded believers in v. 1 to seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; that is where our life, our very life itself, is hidden. And you can see again, in Col 3:3, how in one statement, the perspectives blend, particularly as you go on to v 4, where you have a reference to the parousia. The manifestation of our life in Christ, in glory.

#### 4.0 Summary

"**Realized Eschatology**". When we consider Paul's teaching here, on the culmination of the history of redemption, 3 factors emerge, which need to be distinguished, accounted for, and related. Those factors can be described differently. Here we will follow Murray's terminology: the anticipated (the already), the prospective (the not yet), and the projective (the vertical).

#### Already/Not Yet/Vertical

One area, one factor is what Murray calls the anticipated, or we would say, the "already." Here comes into view all that Paul has to say about the fullness of times, the ends of the ages, everything that is associated with parousia prime, its *initial* realization. It deals with that the end of the ages has arrived. But there is also the prospective, what is future: the "not-yet." And this of course is where Paul brings into view the return of Christ. The parousia as future. Then along with these two strands, there is the third, what Murray calls the projective, which refers then to those passages that bring into view the vertical, the "in the heavenlies."

So we can identify these 3 strands of Paul's eschatological teaching. This brings into view the relationship between them. What I want us to appreciate anew is that the question of the *relationship* is a question that is posed by the Pauline material *itself*; in other words we are not intruding some outside agenda on Paul, by asking the question. And the answer is best given in terms of the two-aeon construct. Paul himself suggests that it is in terms of that framework that the relationship can be best understood. That is not some outside framework where we would run the risk of imposing something on Paul. The distinctive elements of Paul's eschatology are:

1. The arrival of the new aeon and the overlap of the two aeons.

So we could remind ourselves of the two-age diagram. You, the believer, the Christian, the church corporately in the situation between the resurrection and the return, has an anticipative look backwards, and a prospective look forward, and a projective look upward, within the central box of the diagram. The new creation has begun in the death and resurrection of Christ, with the resulting overlap of the two aions until Christ returns. The overlap/tension results because of the ascension. This viewpoint, with its implications for the Christian life, Vos calls that "semi-eschatological." That is not necessarily the best term; he's wanting to keep the present and future in balance. The more common designation is "realized eschatology." (We are talking about inaugurated eschatology, but you can see where Vos's terminology is going.)

## 5.0 Conclusion

Some Further Observations:

Some could falsely interpret the diagram to think that the Christian life is characterized by a dualism, a sharp *dichotomy* between two parts of life. In the teaching of Paul with which we have been concerned, there is a certain concern for otherworldliness, a heavenly-mindedness, that has always been a hallmark of true Christian piety. It has been distorted and abused, in all sorts of asceticism and monasticism. But let me remind us of the heavenly-mindedness of the church. In terms of the projective, vertical element, we could look at Phil 1:23. Paul is pulled to stay on earth or to go to heaven. He expresses the desire to depart and be with Christ, which he says is better by far. In 2 Cor 5:8, Paul says in a biographical fashion, addressing a broader situation, the matter of the hope of bodily resurrection; he expresses a preference rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, short of the resurrection of the body, as he looks at death as if it might intervene before that bodily resurrection, he articulates the preference to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Although this will involve the anomaly of an ultimate nakedness, to describe disembodied existence, he shrinks back from that, and would rather avoid that. But even with that involved, his preference is to be present with the Lord. That is just to highlight this heavenly-mindedness. We need to ask ourselves how much this apostolic desire, this Pauline preference, is part of our own makeup

and desire in the Christian life. How much is that desire, this preference, this other worldliness, this heavenly piety meant to be a part of our existence?

In terms of the structural issue we have raised, it is not a matter of some kind of ultimate dualism or compartmentalizing of our lives. This is seen in a particularly instructive way, in Col 3:1ff. Everything there is predicated on categorical commands to seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. Here as you would take that verse on its own terms, apparently is a dualistic or world-detaching mode of expression. But what is immediately striking as you go on to read the passage, for the apostle, to seek the things above is a very much down-to-earth reality. The flow of the passage, as he makes clear in what follows, is that seeking the things above, that seeking works out in the various relationships of the life of believers, congregational life, marriage, home, job, life and all its trials. Mortifying our members here on the earth is correlative to the "old man." So any kind of world-detached dualism is not the kind the apostle has in mind. Further, it is a temporary sort of dualism. A temporary kind of dualism. That is to say, it is brought about historically, by the course of redemptive history. It is because Jesus is not here, He is there, ascended. It is a dualism that is produced by the pattern of the consummation, that is historical in character. It will be collapsed at His return. It is not a vaporization of our concrete historical existence.

The eschatological structure we have been dealing with here may be said to be, in a word, "pre-millennial." The quotes are intentional. I say this to make a point, and not to be misunderstood. It is "pre-millennial," in the sense that the structure he sets out is prior; it is *basic* to any further eschatological discussion. This eschatological structure is foundational for any further eschatological reflection. It is pre-millennial in the sense of the "pre" being more fundamental than, and basic to, traditional evangelical debates on the millennium. When we say "eschatology" we should not first focus on issues normally discussed surrounding the millennium.

We see in the NT, the question of what can we expect to happen before and after the parousia, the return of Christ. It would be ideal to accent though that this diagram gives us a better perspective for finding the right answers, and asking the right questions. As a structure, this is surely more accommodating to an *a-millennial* position, and certain post-millennial positions, rather than a standard pre- or post-mil position. Particularly as a post-mil position seeks a coming golden era on earth. Augustine rejects "Chiliasm" because if the 1000 yr period is already present, it will have to come a second time. In other words, Augustine saw that a coming of Christ that is truly eschatological can only happen once. I think it can be said that the kind of zeal or preoccupation that can manifest itself regarding a future millennium, whether or a post or premillennial sort, stems from a failure to *see* fully the already of the eschatology that has arrived in Christ. If we had to label the apostle Paul, we would have to label him an amillennialist of a decidedly optimistic frame of mind. Both pre and post-mil have a way of de-eschatologizing the present state of the church, and relatedly devaluing the work accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ. In regard to the way in which the topic of eschatology is typically framed, with a view to a more biblical handling of eschatology, we need to recognize that the question of eschatology for Paul is always more than "eschatological" in the traditional sense. For the NT, eschatology needs to be defined not only with reference to the second coming of Christ, but also with reference to his first coming; it is elliptical in that sense.

## 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. Explain Paul's concept of realized and future eschatology.

- ii. Explain the distinctions and connections of the two eschatological aspects.
- iii. How does Paul's future eschatology motivate our present life as believers?

## 7.0 References for further reading

R. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 48; Waco, TX: Word, 1986) 137.

J. L. Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Cor 5:16," *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (ed. W. R. Farmer et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 269-87;

J. I. H. McDonald, "Paul and the Preaching Ministry," *JSNT* 17 (1983) 35-50;

M. E. Thrall, "2 Corinthians 5:18-21," *ExpTim* 93 (1982) 227-32.

J. W. Fraser, "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus: II Cor V.16 once more," *NTS* 17 (1970-71) 293-313;

## UNIT 6: Paul as Pastor-Theologian 2

8.0 Introduction

9.0 Objectives

10.0 Main Content

3.1 Pauline Theology on Justification

11.0 Conclusion

12.0 Summary

13.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

14.0 References for further Reading

### Introduction

Some believers struggle between two seemingly conflicting teachings of the Scripture. On the one hand the Scripture plainly affirms the grace and forgiveness of God toward those who believe, and on the other hand affirms the complete need for holy living. Some have come to the conclusion that grace and holiness, or justification and sanctification are opposing. Holiness is either viewed negatively as mere suggestions that can be ignored in the face of grace, or grace is viewed negatively as an open door to irresponsible, sinful behavior, taking God's forgiveness to mean that believers can sin as they please with no consequences. Both of these views are unbiblical and will cause spiritual, practical, and perhaps even eternal problems.

Is there a balanced thought that one can take between persistence on grace and good works? Is there a way to maintain on justification and sanctification concurrently? All theologies which create a

dichotomy between justification and good works are the result of a erroneous reading of Scripture. Not only is the believer justified, but he is also commanded to live right, and given the power to do so. In this unit we will examine the doctrines of justification and sanctification, and then reveal how the two doctrines can be synthesized both theologically, and practically in the everyday understanding of the believer.

Christian faith involves both an objective and a subjective element. The doctrine of justification and sanctification are tremendously significant for the faith and experience of the believer. Most of Paul's epistles were taken up with illumination what happened to believers when they experienced redemption in Christ, and what that meant to them in on a realistic stage. The doctrine of justification and sanctification are significant to set bounds for interpreting our experience of salvation.

Justification and sanctification are doctrines with an existential effect. The doctrine of justification by faith is an endeavor to put a spiritual experience and reality into human words. It is an effort to enclose our experience in a transmittable form, and in a way that is believable in a physical world. It is an image of what happened spiritually when we believed on Christ. The doctrine of justification especially explains the 'how' and 'what' of salvation. It tells us what happened to us at salvation, and how this stumble upon with Jesus Christ could transform our lives. When we recognize these doctrines, our lives will be changed. Paul noted that our justification brings us peace with God (Romans 5:1). The assessment of these doctrines is to produce the fruit of understanding in regards to God's disposition towards us, and our disposition towards Him.

## 2.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. discuss the concept of justification in relation to the law
2. explain the need for justification having been a believer
3. describe justification and eschatology

## 3.0 Main Content

### Justification

#### *Definition of Terms*

In the OT, the Hebrew word translated "righteous" or "just" is *saddiq*, which originally carried the thought "to be straight," and came to refer to "conformity to an ethical standard." In the hiphil form the word was used in a forensic sense, meaning "to declare righteous" or "to justify." This righteousness is not an earned or imparted ethical righteousness, but a declaratory judgment of God on the believing sinner. Many OT references verify the forensic nature of righteousness (Exodus 23:7; Deuteronomy 25:1; I Kings 8:32; Job 32:2; Psalm 51:4; Isaiah 1:18; 5:23; 53:11; Zechariah 3:1-5). Just as a judge's verdict of guilt does not *make* an individual guilty, God's pronouncement of innocence on the believer does not *make* them ethically righteous, but only affects their standing before the law and the law-giver.



In the NT, the terms "righteousness" and "justify" are all derived from the same root word, *dikaio*. The former is the translation of the noun form, while the latter is the translation of the verbal form. The meaning of the diverse forms of *dikaio* is parallel to the meaning of their Hebrew equivalent; they all relate to the concept of declaring someone to be right, or of being in a right relationship with another party. An analogous meaning is to be found in the etymology of the English word righteousness. It at first meant "to be right" with someone or something. One who is righteous is one who is in a right relationship with someone, or to something else.

Righteousness and justification in the NT moreover refer to a forensic reckoning of God for the sake of the believer. The forensic nature of righteousness shines forth in numerous NT passages (Matthew 11:19; 12:37; Luke 7:29; 10:29; 16:15; 18:9-14; Acts 13:39; Romans 2:13; 3:20; 4:3). In Romans 4 Paul uses the term *logizetai* in connection with righteousness. This Greek word is an accounting term which refers to the crediting of something to an account. It entails to consider, to count towards, or to credit to one's account. The believer has God's righteousness credited to his account and as a consequence is measured to be in a right relationship to God's law. God is revealed as the King who watches the righteous behavior of the land. Instead of receiving the fury of the Law-giver for not keeping the law of the kingdom, the believer is acquitted from all guilt and conviction.

### ***The Need for Justification***

It is crystal clear that understanding of the justification is greatly dependent on one's understanding of God and the nature of sin. To study the doctrine of justification, the first thing is to understand the human need for God's justification as it pertains to God's holiness and man's sinfulness.

God is a holy and just God, who cannot put up with sin (Leviticus 11:45; Deuteronomy 32:4; II Kings 23:26; Isaiah 30:27-31; Lamentations 3:42). His holiness sets the yardstick of the law, while his justness demands that His law be obeyed. If His law is not obeyed, penalty must be meted out. God cannot excuse evil because such an action would be synonymous to the support of evil, which is opposing to His holy nature. In order to safeguard justice from being mocked, our sin must be neutrally punished. God cannot merely change our verdict from "Guilty" to "Not guilty."

God's law is not some random list of do's and don'ts that are imposed upon people for law's sake. God's passion for His law is due to the nature of the Lawgiver. He does not merely decide to endorse this and condemn that. Relatively God's law flows from His nature. It is a picture of His person. When people obey God's law, they are not only keeping a code of conduct, but relating to God Himself. The law has no intrinsic value or dignity apart from God. Whenever people keep or break God's law we they are relating to God Himself. Sin is not just the breaking of a law, but transgressing against the very nature of God, thus creating an individual attack on God Himself. Breaking God's law, then, hinders the relationship between us and Him.

Theologically, on account of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, mankind is in a place of spiritual separation from God. Because of Adam, all of mankind is in a state of spiritual death, condemnation, and judgment (Romans 5:12-21). Isaiah confirms that our iniquities have separated us from God, and our sins cause Him to hide His face from us (Isaiah 59:2). Paul verified the absolute sinfulness of all men, declaring that there are none who are righteous who will look for God, but all men have turned

aside from Him (Romans 3:1-12). The normal effect of our spiritual state is death (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3). The solitary liberation from this condition is the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Besides God's demonstration of love in Christ's death, the only appearance of God we would imagine from God is the manifestation of His wrath. In order to evade this wrath of God, our relationship with God must be changed. We have a need to be reconciled to God, i.e. brought back into a right relationship with God that we lost in Adam.

### *Nature of Justification*

Justification involves a change in our position and relationship with God. There is both a forensic declaration of God's righteousness on the believer which changes his status before God and His Law, and a relational transform between God and the believer.

From the forensic viewpoint justification is a divine acquittal from the guilt of sin. The Pauline concept of justification is typically forensic in nature. Paul portrays sinners as those who have not lived up to the standards of God's law, and are thus subject to the Judge's holy and just wrath. In justification God changes the believer's standing before God and His Law from guilty to innocent. The believer is justified in the sight of the Law. They are no longer the objects of God's wrath, but the beneficiary of a right-standing before the law.

God's righteousness is an unknown righteousness imputed to the believer, not imparted. It is an *external* righteousness, not an *internal* righteousness. God imputes to us Christ's righteousness, therefore our righteousness is something which happens outside of us. It cannot be obtained by any outer human work, however. It does not come from an outside obedience to a set of laws, but by faith in Christ. Paul affirmed his craving to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which came by the law, but the righteousness which comes from God and is gotten by faith (Philippians 3:9). Such righteousness is not an inbuilt righteousness received by the saint, but an alien righteousness that is credited to our account.

Justification is something which we *obtain*, not something which we must *attain*. It is a past, accomplished truth. We do not struggle to persist to be justified. God has made a legal declaration of innocence on our behalf. Justification is a *declaration* of the Christian's righteousness, not the process of becoming righteous. It speaks of our status before God, not our nature.

In accordance with Paul, God justifies the sinful: For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ... God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ... Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:6, 8-10).

This Pauline concept is in bleak contrast to the Jewish notion of justification. To the Jew one would be justified if at the end of his life his good works were more abundant than his evil works. Paul's persistence that God justifies the sinful would have been quite shocking to his Jewish audience. It would seem that the guilty should get what they merit, i.e. wrath. As an alternative, God declares the

ungodly to be innocent of their sinful deeds through their faith in Christ's work on their behalf. Paul, to defend God's justness in acquitting the guilty, argued that one can never be justified on the basis of their good works because all humanity's works are defective (Romans 3:9-18). Neither can humanity be acquitted based on the submission to definite laws, because law serves to define sin and guilt (Romans 3:19-20). God's righteousness comes apart from law, through faith in Christ's atoning death (Romans 3:21-22, 24). It is Christ's atonement which allows God to be just in forgiving the sins of the sinful. God made Christ a propitiation for sin (Romans 3:25). The Greek word for "propitiation," *hilasterios*, means "the place of atonement." Christ turned away God's wrath from humanity, appeasing his holy and just anger against sin. Having dealt with the legal and just punishment for sin, in Christ, God was revealed to be just in declaring the sinful to be righteous through their faith (Romans 3:26).

Before it was known that the concept of righteousness is not just forensic in nature, but has to do with meeting the demands of a relationship between two parties. Part of the work of justification, then, involves the refinement of a personal relationship with God. Man's sins have alienated him from this fellowship, but His righteousness is given to man so that he can once again have communion together. Justification is that which ascertains our relationship with God. It gives us and guarantee of our reception before Him. Being justified we do not need to wonder if God has discarded us because of our evil works. We know that God accepts Christ and His works, and by virtue of our union with Christ He accepts us as well.

In Romans 4:1-8 Paul imitated two OT characters to elucidate the nature of justifying faith: Abraham and David. Abraham believed God and He credited (*logizomai*) it to Abraham for righteousness (Romans 4:3; cf. Genesis 15:6). This righteousness was not gained by human works, but by God's grace: "Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the sinful, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4-5). Only when we cease working for our justification can we truly receive justification. Paul made a similar point when speaking of the reason the Jews did not attain to righteousness, but the Gentiles did. He said the reason was "because they [Jews] did not seek it by faith, but by the works of the law" (Romans 9:32).

David moreover expressed the kind of righteousness which God imputes to people apart from law observation (Romans 4:6). He said, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7-8; Psalm 32:1-2). Justification, then, involves both a positive and negative portion. Negatively God does not hold our sin against us, but forgives us from our wrong-doing. Positively God imputes Christ's righteousness to our account.

Romans 10:1-4 also expounds the nature of justification. Paul speaks of a lack of faith on the part of Israel. They had an enthusiasm for God and wanted to be sacred before Him, but their understanding of the relationship between faith and works was misinterpreted. They were unaware of the righteousness that God gives by faith in Him, and so they went about trying to ascertain their own righteousness. This righteousness was based on stringent law-keeping. In doing so, they failed to surrender to the righteousness of God. They were very righteous in terms of moral behavior, but they did not attain to God's righteousness because their faith was in their conduct rather than in God Himself.

## Justified "In Christ"

Justification is an altering of our relationship with God. We get a new position or status before Him. All of humanity has one of two positions in the sight of God. They are unrighteous or righteous; condemned or justified; guilty or innocent. Which position one stands in before the sight of God is determined by their relationship with one of two individuals. Those who are *in Adam* are the unrighteous, condemned, and guilty, and therefore have spiritual death working in them. Those who are *in Christ* are those who are the righteous, justified, and innocent, which have spiritual life working in them. It is by virtue of being in Christ that we are affirmed righteous. He has become "to us God's ... righteousness (I Corinthians 1:30). We are the righteousness of God in Christ (II Corinthians 5:21).

This transformation of our status before God occurs by virtue of our link with the righteous Christ. When we are unified with Christ we obtain whatsoever is Christ's, and are measured to have performed what Christ achieved. What on earth can be said of Christ can be said of us. This is for the fact that Christ's work and merit is accrued to us by virtue of our being in Christ, God sees us as He sees Christ. He no longer sees us in Adam, or even in our own personal sin, but in Christ's righteousness and life. By virtue of our union with Christ we have been made satisfactory to God, and can now rest in this fact.

In Romans 5:12-21 Paul argued that through Adam's sin humankind experienced spiritual death (5:12). Though the many died through Adam's transgression, the many also had the grace and gift of God multiplied to them through Christ (5:15). As Adam ushered man into a position of judgment, condemnation, and death, then Christ brought to man justification, righteousness, and spiritual life (5:16-17). Just as Adam's one transgression brought all of humanity into a place of condemnation before God, so through Christ's one righteous act at Calvary He brought spiritual life for all people (5:18). Through Adam all were made sinners, and his sin reigned in death over all, but through Christ grace reigns through righteousness, and many will be made righteous (5:19, 21). Christ's submission secured righteousness and eternal life for all of those who would put their faith in Him. God sees the believer in Christ's merit, not one's own merit. This is acknowledged in II Corinthians 5:21 where Paul said, "For he made him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Jesus takes our sin upon Himself even though He did not commit the sin, while we take His righteousness upon ourselves even though we did not perform it.

God accepts us, not for who we are or what we have done or refrained from doing, but for who Christ is and our relationship with Him. Our justification is not based off of our goodness, but our relationship to Christ and His meritorious righteousness.

Paul was very clear that our righteousness does not come by means of obedience to the Law of Moses, but by faith in Christ. In Galatians he boldly declared, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, even as we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faithfulness of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16; See also 3:11). The Law could not give eternal life or right-standing with God. If it could, then righteousness would have come through the Law (Galatians 3:21). Instead, the Scripture has concluded that everyone is a sinner and stands in need of Christ. Christ's promises are only given to them who have faith (v. 22).

Paul's argument in Romans is very persuasive. After demonstrating that all men are sinners (Romans 1:1—3:18) Paul argued that the Law serves to define sinners as who they are, thus bringing them condemnation. The Law serves to demonstrate the guilt and sin of every man (Romans 3:19-20), and is unable to justify humanity before a holy God (v. 20). God's righteousness was demonstrated apart from the Law (v. 22), based on Christ's atoning death, and faith in Him (vs. 24-26). This being so, Paul concluded "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28). Law only serves to define us as sinners and separate us from fellowship with a holy God. Faith is superior to Law because only faith can bring us into a right relationship to God.

### *Eschatological Aspects of Justification*

Justification is threefold in that the Bible speaks of it as having already occurred, as though it is presently occurring, and a future time at which we will be justified (glorification). It is a past event, a present reality, and a future hope. Our justification happened historically when we initially trusted in Christ's atonement for our sins and applied it to our lives (I Corinthians 6:11). Based on the historical reality of justification Paul declared that we have *already* been saved from God's wrath, and have a subsequent peace with God (Romans 5:1, 9). In one sense justification is a completed reality.

God goes on to count us as righteous in the present, atoning for our present sins (Romans 3:26). Our justification is not forfeited when we sin. We linger in a right standing with God because of our union with Christ and His righteousness. Though God is disgruntled with our sin, all we must do to uphold a right relationship with God is repent of that sin which disappointed Him. It is in this way that we keep on to demonstrate our faith in God. It is this kind of faith that justifies. Our repentance does not earn us justification, but rather gives proof of our faith in God's capacity and purpose to forgive us (I John 1:9).

There is moreover a future phase of justification. There is coming a day when we will be made righteous in our very nature. This will crop up at our glorification (Romans 5:19; Galatians 5:5). Paul had this future acquittal of the believer in mind when he said, "Who will lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, and also was raised again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:33-34). These three aspects of justification offer for the whole range of our lives. We need not worry about our standing with God. We are the righteousness of God in Christ.

God imputes to us presently the status that we will benefit from eschatologically as though it were already an objective certainty. We are now enjoying the status which God has ordained for us in the future. Ladd elucidates this in Pauline emphasis that: an essential element in the salvation of the future age is the divine acquittal and the pronouncement of righteousness; this acquittal, justification, which consists of the divine absolution of sin, has already been effected by the death of Christ and may be received by faith here and now. The future judgment has thus become essentially a present experience. God in Christ has acquitted the believer; therefore he or she is certain of deliverance from the wrath of God (Rom. 5:9) and no longer stands under condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

## **4.0 Conclusion**

The faith which saves and justifies will inevitably result in obedience and good works. Luke and Paul both spoke of obedience to the faith (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16:26). Paul told Timothy to continually assert that those "which have believed in God might be careful to uphold good works" (Titus 3:8). In all probability the greatest didactic passage regarding the relationship of faith and works is that found in the Epistle of James. James made it obvious that pure religion is not just the confession of belief, but the acting out of the belief which is professed. Faith devoid of the corresponding works is ineffective, but faith coupled with corresponding "faith-works" is perfect, bringing salvation (James 2:14, 17-24, 26).

The average Christian is frequently unaware of, misunderstands, or does not live out the doctrine of justification on a daily, practical level. Many who do understand the doctrine do not see a realistic need for it to be lived out on a daily basis because they have reduced God's utter holiness and the strictness of human sinfulness, or because their obligation to the doctrine is in intellectual career solitary. As they admit to trust the doctrine, on the daily level they rely on their level of sanctification to inform their position before God, drawing their assurance of God's reception of them from their honesty, past experiences, or comparatively good obedience proof. Depending on human attainment causes complexity in regards to the human sense of right and wrong which will not be appeased by these good works, continuing to feel guilty is to realize that even the best of our good works fall short of God's perfection. The only way to shun such self-deception is to confess the sinful nature, God's utter holiness, and the need for His Spirit to save, and grant righteous to those who deserve it.

## 6.0 Summary

This study reveals that a believer is justified when a person is acquitted by the law, he is acquitted on certain grounds and in a certain manner. Romans 3:19-25 is the most definitive passage on this subject. Here it will be seen that the *source* of our justification is God's *grace*; the *grounds* of our justification is *Christ's sacrificial death*; and we *receive* justification by means of *faith*. Our justification has its origin in nothing other than the grace of God. It does not pour from any good work of our own, but from His favor towards us. We are "justified freely by his grace" (Romans 3:24).

The ground of our justification is none other than the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. We are justified by God's grace "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Devoid of Christ's sacrificial death on our behalf there would be no justification for humanity. We are justified by His blood (Romans 5:9). Jesus' sinless life, freely given up in death on our behalf, provided the basis for our righteousness with God. At the moment, whether one stands before or after the cross, the basis for their justification is secure and God is shown to be righteous because He visited on sin the judgment it merited. Whereas the ground of our justification is Christ's death, and the source is God's grace, God's justification prudently becomes ours through our faith.

It must not be envisaged that God justifies us *because* of our faith in Him. He justifies us *by means of* our faith. The disparity between these two phrases may give the impression to be a mere striving over words, but the theoretical variation between the two is clear. The former entails that faith is a work of man that God rewards. God looks at the faith that we have and justifies us as a result. This is an alteration of the Biblical idea of saving faith. God does not reward our choice to believe, or accept us on the basis of our faith. Faith is rather a gift of God's grace. Biblically, justifying faith is passive, not active in nature. Justifying faith does not *do* anything, but passively *accepts* what Christ has done

for us. We are not justified *on account* of our faith, but *by means* of our faith. To believe in the former is to make faith the grounds of our justification, rather than Christ and His atoning work at Calvary. For justification we just believe what God has done for us, and receive Christ's righteousness. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. This justification did not come because Abraham believed, but was received through his faith (Romans 4:1-5). It can be said, in that case, that our justification is "by faith on account of Christ," not "on account of faith through Christ."

The thought of accepting what Christ did for us by faith is at the heart of our justification. True faith in Christ is an acceptance of His work on our behalf. If we are to receive Jesus' righteousness we must *renounce* any self-belief in our righteousness and *rely* completely upon the perfect righteousness and death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. Renouncing and relying are the two aspects of justifying faith.

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## **UNIT 7: Paul's Concept of Sanctification**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content

### 3.1 Pauline theology of Sanctification

- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References for further Reading

### **1.0 Introduction**

The doctrine of justification states that we acquire Christ's righteousness. While this righteousness which we possess is a true righteousness, it is an alien righteousness. God has willed for us to be given this judicial standing of righteousness, but He has also willed for us to be made righteous in our nature. Millard Erickson said "sanctification is a process by which one's moral condition is brought into conformity with one's legal status before God." Sanctification is becoming in authenticity what we have already been declared to be in justification. Such an explanation is befitting of the Biblical data.

### **2.0 Objectives**

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Describe the theology of sanctification as explained in Paul
2. Enumerate the qualities of a believer who is sanctified
3. Explain the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Pauline Doctrine of Sanctification**

It asserted that sanctification and holiness are near equivalents theologically. Both words in their different forms are translated from the same Hebrew root meaning to "cut" or "separate," and the Greek word *hagiasmos*, denoting "consecration." The core notion of holiness, then, is taking apart and consecration to God (Leviticus 11:44). The Biblical concept of holiness is not primarily morality is evident. The use of the Hebrew word *qadash* in II Kings 23:7 depicts the accurate nature of the Hebrew root. It is said that Josiah "broke down the houses of the sodomites that were by the house of the Lord..." The word translated "sodomites" is *qadash*. The sodomites that lived beside the temple were for the purpose of sexual intercourse with those who came to worship. They are said to be holy because they were set aside to the service of temple prostitution.

Sanctification has both a negative and positive phase. Negatively it is separation from evil, and positively it is consecration to God and His holy character. It might be said that sanctification is the "growing emancipation from all evil, growing enrichment in all good." Time and again in holiness movements the negative aspect of holiness is stressed over the positive aspect, or to its near elimination. The holiness and wrath of God are emphasized, along with the need for personal holiness and piety through prayer, Bible reading, witnessing, obedience to God's commands, and shunning the socially intolerable behaviors on the master-sin-list of the local church. When sanctification is seen from this perspective holiness is distorted from the pursuit of the character of God, to mere averting behavior. Sanctification goes from being a responsible joy of the believer to a required preventative measure to keep away from the wrath of God and the denunciation of the church. Such a viewpoint of sanctification turns redemption into control and legalism.

The word of God undoubtedly indicates that believers are to practice holiness, which involves moral uprightness. Peter advised the church to holiness, quoting God's own command, "Be holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16; cf. Leviticus 20:7). Paul advised the Corinthians to cleanse themselves from all dirtiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Corinthians 7:1). We were chosen to be holy (Ephesians 1:4). The author of Hebrews strictly warned his Jewish addressees that holiness is an indispensable prerequisite for those who wish to see God (Hebrews 12:14). We are not to love the world: the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:15-16). Holiness not only concerns our external actions, but in addition affects our spirit (II Corinthians 7:1), mind (Romans 12:1-2), and thoughts (Philippians 4:8-9).

The aspiration of the Christian life is to be transformed into the image of Christ (II Corinthians 3:18), into His likeness (Romans 8:29), to the measure of the stature of Christ's fullness (Ephesians 4:13), to put on the new man created in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24), and be partakers of God's holiness (Hebrews 12:10). Sanctification is the process of restoring of the image of God in man (Colossians 3:10).

Sanctification is both a finished action and a continuing process; positional and progressive. The Bible speaks of us as having been sanctified in the past (I Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 29; I Peter 1:1-2), and even calls us saints (holy ones). Christ is said to have become our sanctification (I Corinthians 1:30). When we placed our faith in Him we were sanctified, or set apart to Him and from those who do not believe (Acts 26:18). Sanctification, like justification, is not a work of human value, but comes by faith in God.

Sanctification is more so seen as progressive and it is apparent from several passages. We are at present being sanctified by the Lord (Hebrews 2:11; 10:14). Believers are to go after after holiness (Hebrews 12:14), and constantly cleanse themselves of the dirtiness of the flesh and spirit (II Corinthians 7:1). Believers are being made perfect in every good work by the Lord (Hebrews 13:21). Paul prayed that the Thessalonians would be sanctified entirely and preserved spotless at the coming of the Lord (I Thessalonians 5:23), and guaranteed the Philippian church that God would finish the work that He had begun in them (Philippians 1:6). Thus sanctification is an eschatological work as it is justification concerning our past, present, and future.

### ***The Agent of Sanctification***

The word of God is obvious that sanctification is something we receive from God. The church is being sanctified by Jesus Christ so that He can present it to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:26-27). It is the God of peace that sanctifies us (I Thessalonians 5:23), and by His grace teaches us to refute ungodliness and worldly lusts, living godly and sober lives (Titus 2:14). It is Christ which works in us that which pleases Him (Hebrews 13:20-21; cf. II Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 2:13; II Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 1:21). Paul told the Romans that they were to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. "Transformed" is a present passive, indicating that this was an action they were to passively accept, not one in which they were to actively hunt. However, in the preceding verse they were beseeched to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice in holiness (Romans 12:1), and a few verse afterward were enjoined to hate evil and cling to that which is good (Romans 12:9). Believers are instructed to degrade the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13), and to surrender ourselves to God in righteousness (Romans 6:13). These two Biblical perspectives are not opposing, but to a certain extent approving. God puts the desire to live right within man, and gives Him the capability to do so, but man must act upon God's inner working to make it effectual.

Several Christians have endeavored to make themselves holy solely in terms of human effort, abstinence, or the exercising of the human will. Whereas these human elements are part of the process of sanctification, those who practice such have mistaken principles for true holiness, divorcing the work of the Spirit from the works of man. Such is the core of legalism. Holiness is not attained simply by the exercising of the human will, abstinence, or self-control, for even unregenerate people can do so; but holiness is realized as the Spirit of God works His character and holiness into our lives, giving us the right desires and abilities so that we may be conformed to His image.

Many at times sanctification fails to be a supportive endeavor between God and men, and the believer begins to work for his sanctification. Consequently, many Christians' holiness is not holiness in the proper sense of the word, but simple dead works, for the reason that they do not have God's holy Spirit working in them to achieve the end goal. This kind of "holiness" is little more than a dead, religious goodness, which has an ethical, moral, and social respectability provoked by the flesh, and not by the Spirit. It is often manifested in the undeclared doctrine of many church groups which says if you follow all the rules properly you will be reasonable.

### *Is Perfection Possible?*

The argument on sanctification are hotly debated because in sanctification surrounds the idea of perfection. Is it possible to be completely sanctified in this life, living completely above sin? The response to this question has separated the Catholic, Wesleyan, Keswickian, and Pelagian theologies from Lutheranism, Reformed, and evangelical theologies. The Bible seems to give contradictory viewpoints. On the one hand we are told by Jesus, "Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Paul said the ministry was given until we come to a perfect man (Ephesians 4:13), and even prayed that the Thessalonians would be sanctified wholly (I Thessalonians 5:23). Although one is tempted when drawn away by their own lusts (James 1:14-15), God always makes a way for us to escape falling into the sin which temptation brings before us (I Corinthians 10:13). The Apostle John even declared that the one abiding in Christ does not sin (I John 3:6), and indeed cannot sin (I John 3:9).

While John gallantly acknowledged that believers do not sin, he as well affirmed in the same epistle, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8-10). Jesus, in the Lord's Prayer, told His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4). In Romans 7 Paul used present tense verbs to illustrate his struggle with sinful desires, and even noted that he is, at times, overcome by them. He confessed that he is carnal and sold under sin (7:14), sin dwells in him (7:17, 20), no good thing dwells in his flesh (7:18), and that there is still a law of sin working in his members which wars against his mind which desires the good (7:21-23). At last, Paul confessed that he had not yet attained to that which God had apprehended him for, but sustained to struggle toward the prize (Philippians 3:12-14).

Are these two perspectives of Scripture opposing? It is not so because for "perfection" the word of God is to be understood in their context it can be seen that total moral perfection is not envisaged. Instantly after confessing that he had not yet attained (Philippians 3:12-14), Paul speaks of himself as being perfect (Philippians 3:15). The Greek *teleios*, translated as "perfect," refers to an end, completion, or maturity, not absolute perfection. When Jesus said to be perfect, He was not referring to moral perfection, but spiritual maturity. John's words that believers do not and indeed cannot sin must also be understood in its context. The Greek word *poieo*, translated "commit" is in the present tense. This is a customary or habitual use of the present stressing a state of action that is habitual and ongoing. Believers are not characterized by continual sinful behavior, but this does not mean that they never display sinful behavior.

Romans 3:23 teaches us that not only have all sinned, but that all (including saints) fall short of God's glory. "Fall short," or "come short" is also being used as a habitual present. Its syntactical force is that every human being continually falls short of God's glory. This does not mean that we constantly sin, but that none of us ever match up to God's perfect standards. Our only hope is to stand in Christ's perfect sanctification.

The goal of the Christian life is spiritual maturity in this life, and moral perfection in the next. Though moral perfection is something to which we strive by the grace of God, we shall never accomplish sinless perfection in this life.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

Sanctification does incur a moral change in us, but not moral perfection, and not a perfection of the will. Those who advocate the perfection of the will in holiness fall into the trap of basing salvation on the will of man in conforming to the law of God, and not in the grace of God and our union with Christ. The Scripture is very clear that our salvation comes as a result of our union with Christ, whereby we receive His righteousness and life. Salvation is not based off of works, although good works will necessarily flow from salvation. If salvation is a matter of our will always obeying God's moral character, then none of us are saved.

God's law is weak because of the flesh (Romans 8:3). It gives us the right requirements, but mankind does not have the ability to keep it (Romans 7). We may have the right desire to do so, but cannot apart from the Spirit (Romans 7:18—8:17). The human will can never achieve our sanctification. Only by the incarnation could sin be condemned, and we could be given power over it (Romans 8:3). Our

holiness is rooted in Christ's holiness, our union with Him, and our cooperation with His leading to become in practice what we were acknowledged to be in justification.

## 6.0 Summary

In this study, the fact of the matter is that justification and sanctification are ideal compliments, not diametric opposites. To hold the two as theoretical opposites is to be bias to the Biblical data. Both are essential for the growth of the Christian life. It unveils how there is a relationship between grace and endeavor is evidenced by several NT passages. The same grace which brings salvation is the same grace which teaches us to refute ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age (Titus 2:11-12). Our holy living is derived from, and reliant on the same grace that saved us. It is with grace that can we serve God with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28). Ephesians 2:1-10 wonderfully demonstrates the appropriate relationship between grace and works. Though good works cannot save us, good works will unavoidably flow from salvation.

God's grace and sanctification are both indispensable for a healthy Christian life. These two components can be theoretically labeled as dependence and discipline; reliance and effort. We rely on God's grace for our justification and sanctification, yet we also work together with God, exerting personal effort to achieve the goal of sanctification. God's grace is not just God's undeserved favor towards us in justification, but an impartation of ability whereby we are able to perform His will (Romans 12:3; I Corinthians 3:10; 15:10; Galatians 2:8; I Peter 4:10-11). God enables us to work, but He does not do the work for us. Justifying faith is passive, but sanctifying faith is active, working together with God's grace. God does not make our effort redundant, but rather makes it useful. Justification is once-for-all while sanctification is continuous.

When we relate to God based on our level of sanctification we tend to feel that we cannot come before Him. Understanding that our acceptance in God's sight has been secured when we were initially justified gives us freedom to come before His throne of grace. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us by faith even before we begin to mortify the deeds of the body and separate ourselves to God and from sinful attitudes and behaviors.

Understanding the acceptance we were given in justification apart from sanctification should not lead one to see the latter as optional in the Christian life. It is not sufficient to know that we are received through faith in Christ, but we must also comprehend that we are set free from the dominion and bondage of sin through Christ. We cannot maintain the power of justification except we also admit the delivering power of sanctification.

Sanctification, then, is not the prerequisite of our salvation and relationship with God, but the outflow of it (Ephesians 2:8-10). Grace and good works must both be accentuated if we are to have a Biblical and practical Christianity. We must persist on grace, not as the *alternative* to good works, but as the *means* to good works.

On the other hand we must persist on good works, not as the *alternative* to grace, but as the result of grace. Justification is only one aspect in our spiritual liveliness, not the totality. It alone does not cause full spiritual health. We also need a revelation of God's holiness and personal progress in sanctification to escape suffering in other areas. As Martin Luther has said, "We are saved by faith alone, but the

faith that saves is never alone." Although our relationship with God is recognized by faith and justification, it is advanced by sanctification. A believer should pursue holiness in light of our acceptance before God, not for our reception.

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## Module 3

### Unit 1 The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers 1

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

#### 1. Introduction:

This unit focuses on Paul's idea of resurrection in his eschatology. We have some perspective from our own work, so we can appreciate that Paul does this not so much by talking about the kingdom, but Paul does what Ridderbos says he does by focusing on those events which are decisive in the coming of the kingdom of God. [He does that in terms of the diagram for the staging or phases of the coming of the kingdom, looking back on the events of Christ's death and resurrection, and looking forward to His coming again.] The center of Paul's theology is the fulfillment that has taken place in Christ; his eschatology--his kingdom outlook--is Christ-eschatology. Even more specifically, the focus is the death and resurrection of Christ. They are not isolated events, but cross and resurrection in context, in their broad redemptive-historical context, in their eschatological significance.

#### 2. Objective

The objective of this unit is to guide the student to:

- i. Explore into Paul's understanding of the resurrection of Christ in the eschatological frame.
- ii. Understand the dynamics of Christ's resurrection and our future resurrection.

#### 3. Main Content: The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers

Remember how well 1 Cor. 15:3, 4 pointed that up. Let's not lose sight that the cross and resurrection are inseparable; the one is unintelligible without the other. Or as Calvin puts it already at a point in the Institutes (2:16:13), a reference to the cross alone or to the resurrection alone is synecdochic, by which he means that for a biblical writer to speak of the cross without any explicit reference to the resurrection is to be at the same time speaking of the resurrection, and vice versa. I stress that in the interest not of downplaying the significance of the death of Christ, but to focus on the resurrection. I do that here for what are essentially pragmatic reasons. But pragmatic reasons of a rather broad sort, and pragmatic reasons of substance. To put things in a certain historical context, we can say that in the area of soteriology, the theological tradition of the Western church, and I'm including Roman Catholicism as well as

the Reformation, so you see this is a very broad perspective now, the tendency has concentrated heavy and almost exclusive attention on the *death* of Christ. And that has been especially true since the time of Anselm in the 11th C. Especially since then, in this Western vein, the atonement and the work of Christ have been virtually synonymous.

So we may observe further that debate over the salvation accomplished by Christ has concentrated on His death and its significance. And the church has been intent on making clear that in the death of Christ, he is not simply an example--simply an ennobling, inspiring, challenging model. He is certainly that, but not just that. But beginning with Anselm, the concern has been that the death is a *real* atonement, that substitutionarily satisfies divine justice, to propitiate and remove God's just wrath. The concern has especially been to keep clear that the death of Christ is a *penal substitution*. In drawing attention to this development, you will appreciate that it is not at all my interest to challenge the validity or necessity of these conclusions--of this development and certainly not the conclusions that were reached. With that point made clearly, that the non-negotiables of the Pauline gospel are involved, I do want to point out what appears to have happened: in this dominating preoccupation with the death of Christ in the area of soteriology, *the resurrection has tended to be eclipsed*; more specifically, the doctrinal or theological significance of the resurrection has tended to be overlooked.

All too frequently, the resurrection has been considered exclusively in terms of its apologetic or evidential value, as a stimulus to Christian faith, as it supports faith in Christ. Again, the resurrection does that; it does have profound evidential significance. But in the case of Paul, seeing the resurrection of Christ only in its evidential significance--that oversight is an especially impoverishing thing to Paul's teaching. He is *intent* on bringing out just that significance of the resurrection, pointedly, the doctrinal (and more specifically, the soteriological) meaning of the resurrection. We have substantial materials that we may aptly refer to as Paul's resurrection theology--teaching to which he addresses questions that may fairly be put like the following:

- What is the redemptive efficacy of Christ's resurrection? What is the *saving* efficiency, specifically, of the resurrection?
- How is Christ's resurrection integral to our salvation?
- Or in other terms, what more specifically is the significance of Christ's resurrection for the history of redemption?

Now that sets the direction we want to go in further in our work here; they set the framework, the context, in which we come to develop and address things in such a way. The question we have to deal with is: How is resurrection central to our salvation?

**B. The Unity between Christ's Resurrection and the Resurrection of Believers:** The basic format will be to look at various passages. But before we come to the first one let me just say this: As I have just been indicating, our concern in this section is how the teaching of Paul makes central the resurrection of Christ. It might then seem odd, even questionable, that the first thing we do, at the outset, we bring into the picture the resurrection of the believer. Doesn't this involve a blurring of our focal point? Ought we not first to consider Christ's resurrection, and then go on to the resurrection of believers? As a matter of fact, however, as we move into the Pauline materials, nothing is more fundamental to Paul's understanding of the resurrection of Jesus--nothing is more basic as he teaches about the resurrection of Christ--than



this: just as we deal with the resurrection of Christ in its historical particularity, then we are (and what Paul does) is to bring into view the close connection, the solidarity, the *unity* that exists, between Christ and believers in resurrection. That we can see most clearly as we look at our first passage.

1. **1 Cor 15:20:**

*Now Christ has been raised from the dead, firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

What is of concern to us is the description of Christ as firstfruits, and it is a description of Christ as resurrected. Nowhere in Paul is the unity that we are concerned for expressed more pointedly and clearly, and even strikingly, as you have it here. It is the word *aparche* that is of particular interest here. Johannes Weiss says that this little word contains a thesis. James Barr would not like the semantics of that statement, but the word as it functions here in context does involve implicit in the use of the word, the thought that underlies the entire argument here in 1 Cor. 15, which is the great epochal chapter on the resurrection. And it is not too much to say that this passage is largely representative of Paul's teaching on the resurrection as a whole. *Aparche* is by vintage an agricultural term; it has the sense then of "first-fruits." It has an OT background, and there in the OT has cultic significance, as the firstfruits language refers to those sacrifices that are brought each year at the beginning of harvest time. The spring harvest of grain. Cf. Ex 23:19 and Lev 23:10, 11. So particularly with that OT background, what the term does is to bring into view the initial portion of the harvest, the first installment of the whole harvest. But in doing that, the term is not only an indication of temporal priority, of what comes first in time, because the notion of organic connection, of the unity is quite apparent and essential. The unity is of the part and the whole. That is what the firstfruits sacrifice is about. The initial quantity is brought into view in the sacrifice only as it is a part of the whole, as it is inseparable from the whole harvest, and in that sense is *representative* of the whole harvest, to acknowledge that the whole harvest is from God. Paul is saying that the resurrection of Christ and of believers can't be separated. Why? Because Christ's resurrection is the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest. The firstfruits implies the harvest. You can see that more explicitly in v. 23. (It is important to remember that in this chapter, and particularly in this statement, it is the resurrection of the believer that is in view. The resurrection of the unbeliever is not in Paul's sights here; it is not in the purview of the passage (which is true nonetheless as seen in 1 Thess). So to say that Christ's resurrection is the firstfruits of the final resurrection as it includes unbelievers is to push this passage beyond what it says. This passage is a soteriological affirmation. This is not to say that Paul would deny the resurrection of unbelievers. In Acts 24:15 in his appearing before Felix, he clearly affirms a resurrection of unbelievers, both of the just and the unjust. The resurrection harvest, then, is that of Christ and believers.) So we need to get the full impact of what Paul is saying. It doesn't go far enough, at least for Paul, to say that Christ's resurrection is the *guarantee* of our resurrection. That is true, but doesn't go far enough if we are thinking of a decreed connection between the two, or because Christ has promised. Rather, what Paul is saying here is that Christ's resurrection is a guarantee of our resurrection in the sense that it is nothing less than the representative, actual beginning of the general epochal event (as Vos puts it). Paul is saying here that **the general resurrection begins with the resurrection of Christ**. So as we might envisage it here, to make a point, if we had Paul as an invited speaker at a prophecy conference, and we were to ask Paul when the general resurrection of believers will take place, he would say that it has already begun to take place. In Christ's resurrection, the resurrection harvest becomes a visible

reality; the entire harvest-resurrection becomes visible. And we'll see that in 15:42ff. So we can draw two conclusions then from this passage:

First, we can see very clearly here the eschatological significance for Paul of the resurrection. It is not just an isolated event in the past. It of course has taken place in the past, at a point in history past, no question about that. But as he sees the resurrection here, it is not so much an event in the past, but rather as a past event, it points us to the future, and even has come from the future into the present. [It has invaded history from the future. So when according to the NT does the kingdom come, and is eschatology inaugurated? You could make a case for the incarnation, and the Jordan baptism of Jesus.] But certainly what the apostle accents is that it is specifically in the resurrection of Christ that the age to come begins, that the new creation dawns, that the eschatology inaugurates. It has pride of place, we could say, without wanting to do anything toward the insignificance of the death of Christ.

Secondly, the unity that there is between Christ and believers in resurrection, the solidarity between Christ and His bodily resurrection and the future bodily resurrection of believers. We can make a parallel point to the broader observation we have made about the day of the Lord, the parousia of the messiah. According to Paul, as we look at the resurrection and our future bodily resurrection, these are not so much two events they are two episodes of the same event, temporally distinct, to be sure, the one having taken place 2000 years ago, and the other historically future, but they are the same event essentially. *They are the beginning and the end of the same harvest.*

## B. Unity of Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers

### **1 Cor. 15:12-19**

*Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14] And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting ("false witnesses of") God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied ("pitiable").*

Inseparable Resurrection: Here in these verses we encounter the same notion of unity, not only present, but also as controlling the argument. In this segment, Paul has not yet come to v. 20, the affirmation, the ringing declaration highlighted by the "but now." So he is arguing hypothetically--and doing that as he anticipates the point he is going to make in v. 20. (The validity of the vv 1-19 argument rests on the truth of v 20.) If the resurrection of Christ is true, then the resurrection of the believer can't be questioned (v.12). Notice that the argument can move in the converse, v. 15. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither is Christ raised. We then are found to be false witnesses of God, because we testify of God that He raised

Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. The denial of the future resurrection of the believer implies a denial of the resurrection of Christ. How can Paul argue that way? He can, because he is operating with a certain assumption, a certain supposition that he will affirm in v. 20. That is the assumption that the two resurrections are so intimately related, so inextricably connected, that the one is given with the other. The one is inseparable from the other. Even though as we have seen, Paul can argue both ways, from Christ's to ours, and ours to His resurrection, nevertheless the primary direction of the argument lies not as we might think, from Christ's to ours, but from ours to the resurrection of Christ. That I would take to be an indication of just how firm and just how close a bond he sees to exist between the two. He sees the two resurrections not so much as separate occurrences, as they are two episodes of a single event, the same harvest event. To Agrippa, Paul says, "Why is it so incredible that God raises the dead." "That's the foundation of my whole ministry" (so Paul might say). We see that here.

### **Col. 1:18**

*And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might have preeminence.*

(Cf. 1:15-18.) Our concern is the expression "firstborn from among the dead." This expression, the whole unit, expresses virtually the same thought as the firstfruits of 1 Cor. 15:20. But immediately we should see that firstborn by itself does not bring out the element of organic connection in the same way the word "firstfruits" does. The thought is plainly this: the solidarity or unity of Christ with the dead; there is those dead, plural, and out of that group of the dead, *ek nekron*, Christ is *prototokos*. It is not the indiscriminate dead, but particularly the dead believers, those who are to be raised as Christ is *prototokos*. From that group He is the firstborn.

A further comment on *prototokos*. The term is not or almost certainly not to be understood in the sense in which it is often taken, that the resurrection of Christ and others is being likened to a birth-process. We should not focus on the literalness of the -*tokos* component of the word. Rather, the term has a derivative sense, a sense that it already has in the OT. Particularly as we look at the LXX usage of it. There the term connotes or has reference to special dignity, to exalted status, to supremacy. Ex. 4:22, Israel is the firstborn as a nation. Or Messianic reference in Ps. 89:27 (LXX 88:28). In v. 15 Christ is referred to *prototokos tes ktiseos*, firstborn of all creation. If you implied the literal sense there, that would give the suggestion that Christ is the first creature, which the Jehovah's Witnesses emphasize from this passage. But to call Christ *prototokos tes ktiseos* is to indicate his status, His supremacy over the creation, that all things are made through Him. Here in v. 18 the term is to be understood in connection with the *arche*, the preceding designation, which likewise in the background of the LXX, is not only of temporal priority, but denotes headship, and origin. Gen. 49:3, Dt. 21:17. ("Firstfruits" is pressing this. ESV?) The two together bring to the thought that the general resurrection begins with the resurrection of Christ. That is confirmed by other descriptions in the context--Christ as *head* of the church *body*. All told we can put it this way: *prototokos* indicates the uniqueness of Christ, the prepositional phrase "from the dead" brings out the solidarity, his representation with that group--the one with the many. Prototokos expresses the uniqueness of Christ; *ek ton nekron* brings out his solidarity with believers.

We could draw a quick connection to the other occurrence of this term *prototokos* in the description of Christ, in Rom. 8:29: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined conformable to the image of his Son, in order that he might be firstborn among many brothers." We're bound to remember that it is specifically as Christ is resurrected that He is firstborn among many brothers, dead brothers who will be resurrected as He is resurrected. It is specifically as resurrected, and that as the omega-pt of predestination. His being firstborn is connected here to our being made in His image, and the contrast between the image of the earthly and the image of the heavenly. Firstborn and image are correlative ideas. Cf. down in v 42, as we have borne the image of the earthly one, so we will bear the image of the resurrected one. These considerations linking Christ and believers is focused specifically to the linking of believers to the resurrected Christ.

**2 Cor. 4:14 / 1 Thess. 4:14**

*2 Cor. 4:14 "knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence."*

*1 Thes. 4:14 "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also God will bring those who have fallen asleep through Jesus with him."*

Just to read them is enough in light of what we have said. Again, the connection of Christ in His resurrection with believers, and that includes the very comforting thought that believers died through that bond with Jesus.

**Eph 2:5-6, Col 2:12-13; 3:1; Rom 6:4ff; Gal. 2:20**

*Eph 2:5-6 (ESV) "even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph 2:1-10 (BNT) Eph 2:1-10 (ESV) "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*

The verses that we have examined so far, they stress strictly speaking the connection between Christ's resurrection and the believers' future bodily resurrection. But in order to get the full picture, it is necessary to bring in another line of teaching, and now those verses, where Paul speaks of the resurrection of believer in the past tense, in the aorist, where he speaks of

believers having already been raised with Christ. He assumes that it has already happened. We need to reflect on how we are to understand this past dimension, this past resurrection. It has often been maintained that in saying this, what is in view there is our involvement with Christ at the time-point of His resurrection, our solidarity with Christ in His resurrection, in the sense that Christ was raised for us, that our own resurrection is in view in His resurrection as He is our *representative*, our substitute on the cross. Now, no doubt there is an element of truth in viewing things this way; that is certainly true. We go wrong to eliminate that point from Paul's language. But I want to note in these references another aspect that comes into view that is most important not to miss, *crucial* in fact to Paul's teaching on the resurrection. That is to say that as we look at these occurrences, what Paul is referring to is not merely an involvement at the time point of Christ's resurrection as He was our representative, that He was raised for us, but is also and even primarily to an involvement that we can describe as experiential or existential. What Paul is referring to is resurrection as it has taken place in the actual life-history of the individual believer.

#### 4. Summary.

Now some grounds for that conclusion, for viewing things that way:

You were raised and seated in the heavenlies in Christ. What Paul affirms here, that God made alive and raised, is that it took place precisely when we were dead in our trespasses and sins. A controlling idea in the Eph 2 passage is the believers' *walk*, their way of life. Their former walk in transgressions and sins, and the passage closes with an indication of their new walk, as they have been created in Christ Jesus for good works, that we should walk in them. This is the new creation walk in Christ. There is a stark contrast of its good works to the former walk in transgressions and sins. The question is what explains this transition, this radical reversal in walk or way of life, this 180 degree turn about in actual conduct. The answer to that is right in the middle of the passage, the pivot around which everything turns. What explains this turnaround in walk is in v 6: God having raised us up, made us alive, and seated us in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. This is what explains the change in conduct, in walk--that they have already been resurrected in Christ. This then highlights the existential dimension of resurrection in Christ. Also, in Col. 2:12, we are raised in connection with faith. It is something that has taken place by faith. This has happened in the actual life-history of believers. In Col. 3 and Rom. 6, what we discover there is that the past resurrection that is affirmed for the believer is not only the motive, but in fact the *basis*, the dynamic, for individual obedience and holy living. It is interesting that in these contexts, Paul is talking about baptism. What Paul says in Rom. 6, that we have been raised with Christ. To speak of our having been raised is to speak of a personal change, a personal transformation.

#### 5. Conclusion:

We want to conclude, at least initially here, in light of what we have been saying here, when Paul says we have been raised with Christ, or God has raised you with Christ, the resurrection in view is *real, actual, existential*. It is not merely in principle, as it is sometimes said, but it is an actual experience. When Paul speaks as he does in this past usage, the primary reference is to the *application* of salvation, not its once for all accomplishment. Even though the

application is tied to its once-for-all accomplishment, the language is the language of *historia salutis*, but the reality in view involves *ordo salutis*. Three factors have to be taken into account, as we assess and take in Paul's teaching on resurrection unity. The first is the resurrection of Christ in the garden of Joseph, 3 days after the crucifixion, the actual event of the resurrection of Christ. The inception of the Christian life, the believer's initial experience of salvation, what happens as they have been rescued and are taken out of trespasses and sins. What takes place at the beginning of a believer's Christian life and the future bodily resurrection of believers.

## 6. Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. Explain how the resurrection of Christ defines the goal of eschatology
- ii. What is the connection between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers?
- iii. Explain Paul's idea of Christ as the firstfruits among the dead.

## 7. References for further Reading

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## **Unit 2: The Resurrection of Christ and the Resurrection of Believers 2**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### **1. Introduction**

This section continues the discussion on the nature of the resurrection. Here we shall deal with the issue of terminology: What language should we use to express this distinction of our resurrection between already and not yet? One is the bodily and non-bodily resurrection; what has already taken place is not bodily.

### **2. Objectives**

The objective of this unit is to:

- i. Help the student know the distinction between external and internal and the invisible and visible resurrection in reference to Christ's return.

### **3. Main Content: The Nature of the Resurrection Involved**

Now keeping in view the organic connection between these elements, we may express the basic control or structure of Paul's teaching on the resurrection as follows: the unity of the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers is such that the resurrection of believers consists of two episodes in the experience of the individual believer. One that is past, that has already been realized, and one that is still future, yet to be realized. Notice how the formal structure of the apostle's eschatology, the overlap of the two aions, is reflected in his teaching on the fundamental eschatological occurrence, what is the fundamental eschatological reality for the believer, that is the resurrection. You can't get more eschatological than the resurrection. That formal structure of already-not-yet is reflected in the specific matter of the resurrection. Both these aspects of the believer's experience are integrally related to each other. We can't envision the one without the other. In turn they are integrally related to the resurrection of Christ; it is all one big, grand resurrection harvest. We can say that Jesus' own

resurrection *refracts itself* into the experience of the believer in a twofold fashion. But when I put it that way, we need to always keep in view that we do not mean to blur the spatiotemporal distinction between all 3 occurrences. We must not compromise actual spatiotemporal, historical distinctiveness. We want to guard against Barth's idea of *Geschichte*. His understanding of history is not Paul's. [That is the idea that the meaning of history is dialectically beyond history, and hinges on history in a tangential fashion, and eliminates all distinctions between redemption accomplished and redemption applied, and the state of humiliation and exaltation. Our salvation is not a-historical or suprahistorical.]

Let me say finally then that in view of the stress we have been seeing on the unity that exists between Christ and His people in His resurrection, in the passivity of Christ, for Paul, the primary significance of Jesus' resurrection does not lie where we find the difference between Christ and His people. Paul does not see the resurrection especially as display of Jesus' true deity. Rather, the primary significance of the resurrection for Paul is found in terms of what He and His people have in common, genuine humanity. The resurrection is not so much an evident display of Christ's divinity, it is rather the vindication of the incarnate Christ, Christ's vindication in His suffering, His obedience unto death. And with that, the resurrection is the powerful transformation of His humanity. *Something happened* to Jesus in his resurrection. It brings into existence for the first time a humanity that previously did not exist, a glorified, exalted humanity. So the resurrection is the constitution of Christ as the firstborn among many brothers. It is the constitution of Christ as the image, the *eikon*, so that He might be the firstborn from among many brothers. The believers will be conformed to this image--the same form. The resurrection for Paul has an Adamic character, His resurrection in His identity as last Adam or second man. So on balance, we could put it this way: the resurrection for Paul is a thoroughly messianic event. Not just representative with respect to his deity, but constitutive as human identity. And it is messianic as is His suffering and death. It is just as much representative and vicarious as are His suffering and death. 2 Cor. 5:15, "the one who died and was raised for them."

It is important to understand that talk about the bodily and non-bodily resurrection has to be approached with caution because both have visible consequences. Others again have proposed: secret and open. Another distinction not mentioned yet which is sometimes used is not helpful and probably should be rejected because it is misleading--that between spiritual and physical/bodily. If we use the word spiritual as we should, in a biblical sense, as referring to the Holy Spirit, then there is no problem with saying the resurrection that has already taken place is "Spiritual," capital "S," the work of the Spirit; but the problem that comes in here is that the future physical bodily resurrection is just as Spiritual, no less Spiritual. So if we asked Paul, what would he say? He would turn us to 2 Cor. 4:16.

*2 Cor. 4:16 (ESV) "Therefore we do not lose hope. But even if our outer self is undergoing decay, our inner self is being renewed day by day."*

Here Paul is making an important anthropological distinction between the inner man and outer man, so that inner and outer would be a way of keeping fairly close to Paul's language to distinguish the two aspects of our resurrection. (Cf. Ridderbos, 114-121.) One member of this distinction occurs in Rom. 7:22 and Eph. 3:16. It is not intended to compartmentalize man, as if we are made of two parts, or compartments. But rather, the distinction here is *aspectival*



rather than, strictly speaking, partitive; these are aspects, ways of looking at who I am as a believer. So that the inner man would be what Paul has in view when he speaks elsewhere, correlatively, of *the heart*. That seems to be, that brings into view, me at my motivating center, me for who I am at the core of my being--deeper than my functions--my thinking, my doing. So that Paul is saying so far as I am an inner man, my truest, deepest self, I have already been raised. It is at the root of the renewal that the believer has already experienced. But so far as I am an outer man, or what Paul will usually refer to correlatively as soma, *the body*, or melle, *members*, viewing the body as a functioning composite of parts. The functioning me is undergoing corruption; so far as I am that outer man I am still to be raised. Always keep in view regarding inner and outer self that the *whole me* has hope. There is not a kind of schizophrenia going on here. [So we should appreciate the full impact of what Paul brings us to consider from a passage like this, and the others we've been looking at: If you are a believer in Christ, you will never be more resurrected than you are at the core of your being. That is not just an analogy, or a figurative way of speaking. That is of course true only as we exist bodily, only as we have an outer man. So the principle holding things together here is that this is true only in the body, that the inner man...but it is not yet true for the body.] What is true *in* the body is not yet true *for* the body. I think that anthropological distinction opens up a great deal of Paul's teaching.

Confirmation: We want to bring out and make explicit something that has only been implicit thus far. This is confirmed in Paul's statements. There is a pattern found in Paul's statements:

Egeiro (raise): Christ is the direct object, God is the subject, of the verb egeiro in the active. So Rom 10:9. And sampling here, cf. 1 Cor. 15:15, Acts 13:30, 37. God raised Christ. Correlatively, Jesus can be the object of the participial subject, the one who raised Jesus from the dead. Cf. Rom 4:24; Col 2:12. So far as the subject is concerned here, ho theos, the reference is more specifically to ho pater, the father, who raises Christ Jesus from the dead. Cf. Gal 1:1; cf. Eph 1:17, 20, 1 Thess 1:9, 10.

Or, the verb is in the passive, with Christ as subject. Approximately half of the references to the resurrection in Paul are in this category. It can be aorist passive, as in Rom 4:25 and 2 Cor 5:15--"was raised." Or it can be perfect, as in 1 Cor 15:20 and 2 Tim. 2:8--"raised from the dead." (It can be middle as well as passive when it is in the perfect, but there is no question here of a middle sense, because of the first pattern we see of the active, that God is the subject, Jesus the object. It can have an intransitive active sense (he rose), but here it is a truly transitive active force that the verb has.)

#### 4. Summary

So, to summarize, as we look at Paul's passing, undeveloped references to Jesus' resurrection, we can notice two things in it. 1) It is God in His specific identity as the Father who raises Jesus, and 2) correlatively, Jesus is passive in His resurrection. And this is a viewpoint that is held consistently without exception by Paul. Nowhere does Paul say that Christ was active or contributed in His resurrection, or that Jesus raised

Himself. To put it provocatively, Paul does not teach that Jesus *rose* from the dead, but that Jesus *was raised* from the dead in a passive sense. The stress everywhere is on the creative, enlivening power of the Father, through the Holy Spirit, of which Christ is the recipient, the beneficiary. What is the theological significance? We can connect this with what we have already seen to be Paul's central controlling conception, the unity of Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers. His being raised passively evidences His identification with those who slept. He is the beginning. This passive language reflects His solidarity with the dead as he is firstborn.

## 5. Conclusion

How do we relate this to statements of Jesus such as John 2:19? "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Future active indicative of *egeiro*. He was talking about His body, looking toward His own resurrection. He was active in His resurrection. Or more fully in 10:17-18: "I lay down my life in order that I may take it again. No one takes it from me.... I have the power to lay it down, and the power to take it again." Very definite, forceful active assertion. These statements in Paul are not in conflict but are *complementary*. Here is where the church's formulations as at Chalcedon becomes very helpful. (Cf. 451.) *Anything that is true of either of Christ's natures is true of Christ as a person*. The controlling substructure of NT revelation expressed in the creed is that the two natures exist without confusion, but without separation. What is true of one of the two natures may be affirmed about the person. Paul is looking at Jesus' resurrection in reference to his *Adamic identity* (what is true in reference to His true humanity, his identification with humanity). In John, Jesus is affirming what is true in reference to His true deity (what is true in his identification with the Father). We may affirm both that Jesus rose from the dead, and that He was raised from the dead.

## 6. Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. Explain how the resurrection of Christ was a powerful transformation his person.
- ii. Explain the nature of our solidarity with Christ in his death and resurrection.

## 7. References for further Reading

- J. W. Fraser, "Paul's Knowledge of Jesus: II Cor V.16 once more," *NTS* 17 (1970-71).
- R. Martin, "Reconciliation at Corinth," *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).
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### Unit 3: The Place of the holy spirit in eschatology

1. Introduction
2. Objective
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

#### 1. Introduction

This unit exposes the student to Paul's view of the Holy Spirit in the eschatological dawn. The relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ's resurrection is explored. In this connection Christ has been juxtaposed with Adam. This is as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit by which Christ also became the life giving Spirit. The Holy Spirit is involved in the resurrection of Christ and of believers.

#### 2. Objective

The objectives of this unit are:

- i. To help the student understand the core redemptive work of the Holy Spirit.
- ii. To help the student understand the nature of the resurrection work that the Holy Spirit does.
- iii. To explain the contrast between the first and second Adam

#### 3. Main Content: Christ and the Holy Spirit (*Historia Salutis*).

What we have established in section B is the unity between Christ and believers in His resurrection. C focuses on Christ, and D on the Christian life, in this resurrection. What it meant for Christ personally, what it meant for Him, for Jesus Himself to pass through and experience resurrection, we see as Paul highlights best, as we explore the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit.

**1 Cor 15:45:** "The last Adam became life-giving Spirit."

[Note the deliberate antithetical parallelisms. This is a contrast between this present aion and the aion to come; that is the controlling structure, even if that language is not there.]

*42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are*

*heavenly. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

We are concerned with the statement that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. We can proceed here in focusing on that statement by answering two key questions. First, what is the meaning by *pneuma zoopoion*, and secondly, there is a time question. Paul doesn't merely say that there *is* such a life-giving Spirit, but that Christ *became* a life-giving Spirit. There is a point in time at which this occurred; so *when* did He become a life-giving Spirit? The answer to the first is the Holy Spirit, and to the second is the resurrection.

Paul's Opposition (v 35): I can imagine how you could wonder how Christ became the Holy Spirit, and how Paul could mean this. What is the meaning of *zoopoion*? The context we read is a unit, vv 42-49. As Murray said, here we have one of the most striking and significant rubrics in all of Scripture. But we can only treat this briefly. (From a Systematic Theological Perspective it really does touch on just about every subject--and in a decisive way.) We should look back at v 35, where we have an earlier transition point, what opens up the discussion at the end of the chapter. V 35 raises two questions: *how* are the dead raised, and with *what sort of* body do they come? There is a double question here; a question as to the *pos*, the *how*, the *mode*, of the coming resurrection, and the *poio*, the nature of the resurrection body. These questions are posed by opponents (we can say from earlier in the ch), and as such they were probably raised in a somewhat derisive fashion, and I say that in view of the sharpness of Paul's reply: one word, "fool," without qualification. I think this will be a place to say something about this opposition; some things are clear, others lead into gray areas. Surely their opposition centers in a denial of the future bodily resurrection. Where things are less clear is where you try to determine the exact nature or grounds of that denial. If you look back at v. 12, "Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" so between Paul and his opponents, there is a formal agreement that Christ has been raised. But beyond this there has been quite a diversity of opinion as to how the position of this opposition should be understood. (Cf. commentaries of Thistleton and Fee, who are helpful here.) You can observe that this is a believer Paul is responding to.

However, there is a fairly wide consensus, with which I would identify, that Paul has in view some form of belief controlled by a pagan Hellenistic dualism, that involves a depreciation of the body as part of the material of existence; a depreciation of the material aspect of reality, as not being reality, and more pointedly, the body. It is probably a proto-Gnostic type error which makes a sharp division--even an opposition--in Christology, between the Christ in the present as a spiritual (heavenly) being in the sense of immaterial, a being with which Christians now are substantially identified, identified in substance, which carries with it a depreciation of the earthly, bodily historical Jesus of the past as having no significance for Christian faith. Accordingly, what this view involved is a spiritualization in the sense of an immaterialization. And the believer's resurrection is seen as spiritual in the sense of being immaterial. The resurrection then is entirely what has already happened to the believer, in his regeneration. The true self, the spiritual essence has already been brought to perfection, and has in fact become part of the pneumatic Christ. So on this view the body has no positive significance; it can either be suppressed or abused, or it can be indulged, in various forms of licentiousness. We can even go on here to speculate or suggest that Paul is dealing with a distortion of his own teaching, as

we have been considering it in Rom 6 and Eph. 2, where Paul taught that believers have *already been raised* with Christ. So there's a one-sided misuse of Paul resulting in drastic error. It may be then akin to the position of these individuals in 2 Tim. 2:17-18, Hymenaeus and Meletus, that they were upsetting the faith of some by saying that the resurrection has already taken place. Ridderbos' chapter on the resurrection is helpful here. But whatever prompts Paul's sharp reply in v 35, Paul takes up these two questions, and treats them as a single compound question, that structures the discussion to the end of ch. 15.

The Meaning of Pneumatikon (vv 42-49): As you could see from our reading, in v. 42 Paul begins to reason antithetically, reflecting the antithesis of the two ages. That becomes clear as you move toward the latter part of the passage, v. 47, where he uses specifically cosmological language. He describes the resurrection, eschatological body of believers, and contrasts that with the pre-resurrection, pre-eschatological body of believers. The resurrection body is marked by incorruption, glory, power; in contrast, the pre-resurrection body, decay, dishonor, weakness. So that when he comes to v. 44, he is providing a summary description of the two bodies, an all-embracing designation, looking for a one-word description of the pre-resurrection body, psukikon, natural, with reference to the creation, and with reference to what has happened in the fall. The one-word description of the resurrection body he uses is pneumatikon. Here particularly with reference to the question controlling our discussion, we see that pneumatikon has reference to the Holy Spirit. It is to be rendered "Spiritual," with reference to the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is helpful to think with a capital S. To put it negatively, then, to distance from some misunderstandings that have been fairly pervasive in the history of the church, the adjective here is not anthropological, not referring to the human spirit, not a body associated with the human spirit. This is the view that is taken by Charles Hodge in his commentary, who speaks here of the body "adapted to pneuma, understood as the rational, immortal principle in man." I think there are contextual reasons that argue against that understanding; nor does the adjective have a *compositional* sense, as if spiritual describes the material of which the resurrection body is made of. That would imply that the body is made up of an immaterial spirit-substance, involving then a denial of the truly physical character of the resurrection body, which is to deny that it is the resurrection of the body, which scripture and Paul teach. So the reference here is to the Holy Spirit. Some grounds for that.

For one thing, we could point up here that pneumatikon is contrasted, juxtaposed, with psukikon. Now what needs to be observed here further is that in the NT, and more broadly, early Christian writing up to the period of the apostolic fathers, this contrast is found only in Paul, and in only one other place in Paul, which is elsewhere in this same letter, back in 1 Cor. 2:14-15. The distinction between anthropos psukikos and pneumatikos. At least so far as the body of Christian literature, the rest of the NT and the first extrabiblical materials, this is a distinctively Pauline usage, and is rather specialized, one which he is rather deliberately employing. These categories could be found widely employed across Gnostic materials beyond the time of the NT, and that raises the question of that background; what is happening here is that Paul is taking those Gnostic categories and is using them to make a decidedly anti-Gnostic point. When you look back in 2:14-15, the contrast that is there between natural person (or "man") and spiritual person, is in a context where the stress is on the Holy Spirit, His activity, and the necessity of His activity in revelation. So I would say that clearly in the ch. 2 context, pneumatikos there has reference to the Holy Spirit. So Spiritual person is that in the sense of

one who is indwelt, taught, motivated by the Holy Spirit. There is also something that comes close to Paul's antithesis when you look in Jude 19, where he talks about those who are psukikoi, and then he describes them as "not having the Spirit." And this is to describe them there, unbelievers in their worldly-mindedness, those who follow their natural instincts, and do not have the Spirit of God. So in effect this would point up a reference to the Holy Spirit. We do find this adjective in a number of places in Paul, though not in contrast to psukikon. In Paul it clearly and consistently refers to the Holy Spirit and His work. Rom. 7:14; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 1:3; Col. 1:9. The only exception is in Eph. 6:12, where Paul talks about "the spirituals of evil in the heavens." Pointing to the spiritual dimension of the opposition to the believer. That would not bear against seeing the reference in ch. 15 here as to the Holy Spirit. V. 46 has reference to the Holy Spirit. We might just take the time now to accent the positive point Paul is making about the resurrection body. It describes the body, this presently psukikon body, the believer's body, as it will be, in contrast to the way in which it is now. It is spiritual in that it is so transformed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that the one term that best characterizes that body is pneumatikon. It is not a spiritual body in the sense of being immaterial, but rather it is this body in its genuine corporeality, in its genuine physicality, transformed by the Holy Spirit. This is where the ultimate work of the Holy Spirit comes to its final expression in the life of the believer. So when some translations, most notably the NRV, say "physical body" and "spiritual body"--that is decidedly a most unhappy rendering. Rather, the contrast is not here; the contrast is between a present, sin-cursed physicality and a transformed physicality. NT Wright, who can be helpful in many ways, suggests "transphysical." Of course, there's great mystery here as to continuity and discontinuity, but as so many things among Christians, we need to talk about mystery in a biblically bounded way.

The life-giving person of the Holy Spirit (v 45): What we can go on further to point up in support of the reference to the HS is to look at v. 45, and notice that in the immediate context, it functions to support an argument at the latter part of v. 44. So you have the summary statement of 44a and Paul changes the discourse mode--from an assertive, antithetical parallelism to this linear argumentative form ("if there is, then"). [It is that argument which we gave close attention to in Salvation 1.] Psuke (taken from the Greek of Gen 2:7) on the one side refers to Adam, and pneuma on the other side of the contrast referring to Christ as the last Adam--those two descriptions define or anchor the adjectives we have in v. 44: psukikon and pneumatikon. As pneumatikon refers to the Holy Spirit, that would point us to that the noun refers to the person of the Holy Spirit. What we would go on to point out further is that Paul doesn't simply say that the last Adam became pneuma, but pneuma zoopoion (life-giving or life-producing Spirit), and that is important, because we find that same word connected with the Holy Spirit, in 2 Cor. 3:6. God who has made us (apostles) competent as ministers of the new covenant; it is a covenant not of letter but of Spirit. The Spirit makes alive (the Corinthian congregation, 3:2). That activity of making alive Paul associates particularly with the Holy Spirit. We could more broadly take note of those places in Paul where there is a close connection between the Holy Spirit and life. Rom. 8:2 the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, 6, the mind of the Spirit is life, and 10; and Gal. 6:8. We are brought to the conclusion that pneuma refers to the Holy Spirit; in this sense Paul affirms that the last Adam became a/the life-giving Spirit. This is certainly surprising, and it raises questions (particularly regarding trinitarian considerations, and the ontological distinction between the Father, Son

and Holy Spirit). Before considering those questions, let me address the other question that we had raised here, and that is the time question.

The Time Question: Look at v 45 and the way that contrast is broader. Bodies were concerned; now whole persons are concerned. Also note that this Adam considered in 45 is created, prefall man (despite those that argue differently). I think there can be little doubt as we keep in view the immediate and broader context that the reference is to the resurrection, or more broadly, the ascension. It almost obscures the point to belabor it, but there are those who have questioned that. The immediate context: whatever else may be involved in describing Christ as a life-giving Spirit, Christ is brought into view as the primary and first realization of the soma of the pneumatikon of v. 44. Christ is the first to instance the Spiritual body in v. 44, the body that will be received by believers in the resurrection. Adam is the primary ("first") instance of the psukikon body, and Christ of the pneumatikon body. Bodies imply an environment. They are exponential of a context. V 46 has generalizing words. Two orders are contrasted, 1st and 2nd. Prob countering the Hellenistic pagan notion of things. Paul's eschatological point: the ideal is to be seen as history coming to its consummation.

The Pauline biblical world view: perfection is not at the beginning history nor above history but arrives at the end of history in the consummation of God's creative purposes. V 47-49 confirm and elaborate what we have said is the general or comprehensive scope of v 46. But the contrasts are different: earth-heaven. It makes explicit the environmental context that was implicit in v 42. Christ is the heavenly one, v. 48, referring to the ascended Christ, whose image those who are heavenly will bear bodily at their resurrection. The earthly one is representative and constitutive of the earthly order and the earthly ones. And the heavenly one is representative and constitutive of the heavenly order and the heavenly ones. (Cf. 47: ek gys and ek ouranon. Not "from" in the sense of Adam from the earth and Christ from heaven. Rather these are qualitative. So not reference to the incarnation, but to resurrection. V 49 brings us back around to the original concern begun in v 42. At the resurrection, believers experience the full transformation, the full spiritual renovation of their existence, of their bodily existence. They will bear the image of their heavenly one; they too then will receive the soma pneumatikon of v 44, which is already existent in the person of their head, Christ.

Note that there is a significant semantic break between 44a and 44b. The fallen natural body, then the Adamic natural body.). Let's remind ourselves of our primary interest in looking at this passage--Christ became life-giving Spirit. When? The answer, keeping the context in view, is his resurrection, ascension and exaltation (with the resurrection as the alpha point of that). With those observations, directed toward answering the question, we can draw the threads together, that the thought of v. 45 is this. Christ is the first instance of the soma pseukikon. So the point could be made here by analogy, what Christ instances for believers, and what believers will receive at their resurrection, Christ received and became at His resurrection. Looking at the broader context: 1 Cor. 15. The entire argument of ch. 15 is based on the resurrection of Christ, and more particularly, the connection between His resurrection and the resurrection of believers. It would make no sense to construct the argument in this way as Paul has, if Christ were already life-giver by virtue of something else--if Christ were already qualified as life-giving Spirit, by virtue say of His preexistence or His incarnation. In fact, if He were by virtue of anything other than His resurrection, more broadly, His exaltation, the



basic structure of Paul's argument breaks down. In terms of keywords to capture this point: v. 20 He is *aparche*, v. 45 He is *pneuma zoopoion*. As firstfruits, He is life-giving Spirit. Or, as life-giving Spirit, He is firstfruits. It's not as if the *divine preexistence* is not absolutely essential to Paul; nor is it the case that the *incarnation* as an event does not have its significance; but it is specifically in his resurrection and ascension as contingent upon and following out of his obedience unto death that Christ is qualified as life-giver, the giver of eschatological, saving life. To blunt that in any way--as some traditions do, to locate soteric life, say, in the act of incarnation--is to blunt, at the very least, the biblical significance of cross and resurrection; the gospel centrality of that for Paul he makes clear (as in vv 3-4). (This heaven is the place he has created in exaltation (here, in Paul, keeping Christ's that Christ's incarnate existence is in view).) At His resurrection, more broadly the exaltation, because of the language of heaven which comes later in the paragraph, Christ, as last Adam, became life-giving Spirit in the sense of the Holy Spirit. And he continues to be that. In his heavenly estate. [And, there would be the obvious tie between *zoopoio*, and that in Christ all will be made alive.] So the key question now we should be clear on, and be clear on the answer, is what is the sense of this "becoming?" How more exactly are we to understand the equation between Christ and the Spirit, the unity? The identity? To that question let me say this first of all: we need to keep in view the scope of the apostle's discussion. Which is to say, here, this is contrary to the way so many handle this passage today, Paul is not concerned with essential intertrinitarian relationships, so the statement is pushed too far or we go beyond it if we take it in an ontological sense, as if Paul is here denying the trinitarian distinction between second and third persons. Or, as he describes, it concerns Christ's specific identity as the second man. It is quite wrong-headed when contemporary scholarship such as James Dunn says that Paul has an entirely adoptionistic, functional Christology, and that the later church trinitarian doctrine of the ontological trinity is something Paul wouldn't know anything about. That conclusion is not respecting the terms of this passage, and what Paul is intending to do, as well as Paul's clear trinitarian view elsewhere. Trinitarian doctrine later in the church builds on Paul (cf. 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13-14; Eph 4:4-6). His outlook here is not ontological relationship between the 2nd and 3rd person as eternally existent.

Rather, we must remember always in looking at this statement, Paul is speaking here of what *happened* to Christ, [and what happened to Christ, not a timeless *estin*, but a historical *egeneto*, a historical *became*,] as **last Adam**. That is, we need not to miss the historical scope of his outlook to express things positively, what Paul is affirming in the passage is that the resurrection brought about in Christ, first of all, two interrelated aspects of reality, it brought about a conjunction between the incarnate Christ and the Holy Spirit that did not previously exist, a possession by Him of the Holy Spirit that previously was not the case. But as the resurrection brings about such a culminating conjunction of Christ and the Holy Spirit, it also brings about His transformation, by the Holy Spirit. There is a climactic possession of the Spirit by Christ (v 45). There is also an unprecedented transformation of Christ by the Holy Spirit here. Conjunction between Christ and the Spirit, and transformation of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Both those aspects come into view by the passage. This is a conjunction and transformation that is so complete, climactic, and eschatological, that Christ and the Spirit are one. Or maybe we should just speak as the apostle does, that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. But with that accented, the uniqueness and the climactic point, we need at the same time not to lose focus that when we speak of Christ and the Spirit as one, it is their being

one and identical in a specific respect, and that is a functional respect, the activity of giving zoe, of being life-giving, the giving of eschatological life. They are united in life-giving. How are we to categorize this equation between Christ and the Spirit, this oneness, we could use terms of theology, economic, as distinct from ontological. Or, the unity is functional, or if you will, eschatological. At any rate, whatever term we use here, what we are affirming is an equation or oneness in terms of their saving activity, a oneness that does not obliterate their personal distinctions.

*Christ as the last Adam as Spirit makes alive.*

[In time it has become more and more helpful to in effect read 1 Cor 15:45, last clause, as Paul's one-sentence commentary on Pentecost and the significance of Pentecost. So let me just comment here that it continues to be a concern for me, and we all and I need to be ready to hear what others have to say, that our English translations do not reflect this point. We confront a broad consensus in the exegesis, commentaries and monograph literature, that Spirit here is a reference to the HS. That is the case in the way I have developed things here, I have depended on Murray, Vos, and Ridderbos, who hold that conclusion, but we find a situation in the translations that it is spirit with a small "s." The ESV sticks with the lower case. I made the case for the capital, and I challenge you as you read and teach from 1 Cor. 15:45, think capital "S." Within the framework of biblical teaching, what does it mean to say that the resurrected Christ is a life-giving spirit with a small s? What would that mean? A spirit does not have flesh and blood, as I have, doesn't eat fish. (The resurrected Jesus in John.) The translations will catch up.]

#### **4. Summary**

Having followed Paul's perspective here closely, we draw the following observations.

We understand this statement in terms of the staging principle we have spoken of earlier in this class--the staging of the coming of the kingdom. The staging of his state of humiliation and the state of his exaltation. So in the larger context of the NT, we could say that there is a conjunction, if you will, of Christ and the HS earlier on. From conception (Lk). At baptism. And then culminating climactically what we have just considered, in 1 Cor 15:45, and as Peter does in Acts 2 and 3. What we have here then is the staging principle in the coming of the one kingdom, as that bears on the relationship between the incarnate Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is the climactic oneness between Christ and the Holy Spirit because it means now that the Spirit and Christ are together for the first time as Christ is in a state of exaltation; that was not true before.

I find it very helpful across the range of issues discussed in the church, to see 1 Cor. 15:45 as Paul's one-sentence commentary on Pentecost and the significance of Pentecost. What Peter delineates in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2:32-33, "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." Paul telescopes all that here, by saying that the last Adam became a life-

giving Spirit. We don't want to let down the redemptive-historical point here. To say that as Paul does is not to deny the life-giving activity of the Spirit prior to Pentecost, or to deny that there was that activity proleptically in the Old Covenant. Think of the way he puts it in 1 Cor 10:3-4--Paul refers to those who were baptized into Moses, and speaks there of that wilderness community--that they partook of the spiritual, the pneumatikon, food and drink that was ministered to them, and then Paul glosses the description, by referring to the pneumatikon petra, the spiritual rock, and that rock was Christ. Christ present with the wilderness community, ministering the Spirit. (Typological connection in the Old Covenant here between the Spirit and the person of Christ.) But however we would judge that passage, the point here is not to deny a prior activity of the Spirit, or a prior relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit, which Paul seems to accent there, but rather, that the Spirit is now at work as a result of the finished work of Christ. The point is a redemptive historical point: the HS is here and at work in a way that he was not previously, as a result of the finished, once-for-all work of Christ and as he is the transformer of the person of the incarnate Christ. In that sense, the last Adam became life-giving Spirit. To say that Christ has become a life-giving Spirit is to say that the Spirit is now at work on the basis of Christ's finished work, and that the Spirit is the transformer of Christ's humanity. The point is not just that the Spirit makes alive, but that Christ as the risen last Adam, as Spirit, makes alive.

Paul does not just look at the resurrection for its evidential value. Rather, as we see in this passage, the resurrection is a constitutive event in the history of salvation. It is constitutive event particularly in the experience of our Savior. And so as it is constitutive for the last Adam so it is constitutive for our salvation. And we could just express that further in the category--the eschatological category--of glory. Christ has glory that he did not have previously. That which constitutes him as exalted, glorious savior over the church (Col 1:18). Believers are now being transformed from glory to glory as they behold or reflect his glory (cf. 2 Cor 3:18). The link between glory and the Holy Spirit in Paul is inextricable. The resurrection constitutes Christ as possessor of that *body* of glory that believers will have upon his return (cf. v 49).

The cosmic scope of the contrast: Paul has cosmic considerations in view. The questions Paul is dealing with in our passage is an apparently restricted one--he's asked a question about the resurrection body. The how and the what sort of. His answer at first glance can seem an exercise in theological overkill. We need to appreciate what has happened in this passage. The perspective he generates in this pericope, is a perspective that is nothing less than cosmic, encompassing the whole of history in its scope, and that appears in the way in which Adam and Christ are categorized, introduces in our passage. Adam is protos, first. In the order of the apostle's thinking, there is no one before Adam. Christ, then, is deuterios, second. There is no one between Adam and Christ, on the order of the apostle's thinking here. Not Moses, David, etc. They are below the horizon of the apostle's sweeping outlook. But Christ is not only 2nd; he is last. In other words, at the level of concern, there is none after Christ, no one counts after Christ; He is quite literally the eschatological man. As we could look further at this passage, they two are heads, representatives; they bring into view two orders of existence, orders of life, environments, which we are to understand in this way: the order of Adam is first, and has become subject to corruption and sin. The new order of Christ is second and last, the order of incorruption, the eschatological order. What we have coming into expression in this passage are orders of life, that are consecutive, comprehensive, and antithetical.

## 5. Conclusion

In other words, in so many words, the two-aion structure is what is present and underlying the apostle's addressing this pastoral question about the resurrection body. That is the sense of v 46--creation and eschaton; each came with an order of its own. What comes into view is the thoroughly eschatological character of the work of Christ for Paul. When does the eschatological new order dawn? It begins in the resurrection of Christ. The new creation begins with the resurrection of Christ.

### Cor. 3:17

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” A more careful exegesis will show this: that ho kurios (the lord) is a reference to the exalted Christ, and similarly, pneuma (spirit) is a reference to the Holy Spirit. That is more clear as you reflect on statements that follow here.

There are some exegeting interpreters who question that this kurios is Christological, and rather think that it is a reference to the Spirit. But with Ridderbos I think it is a reference to the exalted Christ. So we have a statement that is parallel to 1 Cor. 15:45. Again what I want to stress as we take this statement into consideration, is that it is to be understood in a redemptive-historical sense. Within the scope of the contrast that is begun in v. 3:6ff, the apostle says that the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive--Old Covenant and New Covenant distinction. Christ takes the veil away. To turn to the Lord is to turn to Christ. On the New covenant side, Christ interchanges with the Spirit. How can Paul make that interchange? The answer is v 17: because the Lord *is* the Spirit. V 18 refers to the glory of the Lord. I don't see any way that we can take that other than Christological. You see, believers are being transformed into the same *image*, and what is that image? That of Christ (not of the Spirit). And the glory-image of 3:18 is that of 4:4; and cf. Rom 8:29--"conformed to the image of His Son." (Internal terms of vv 17-18 and the flow base this whole argument.)

Again, we don't want to lift this statement out of its context, and take it to create ontological trinitarian confusion. He surely assumes they understand what he has said in 1 Cor. The "is" of 2 Cor. 3:17 is not a timeless, ahistorical, eternal "is," but is based on the eugeneto of 1 Cor. 15:45; it is because of what happened in the resurrection, that it is now the case, and will remain the case, that He, the resurrected and exalted Christ, that ho kurios, the Lord is the Spirit. The exaltation of Christ results in a relationship--a working relationship--of him and the Spirit unprecedented oneness, of new intimacy. Here they are equated more particularly with freedom--eschatological freedom. And that is the close correlative in Paul of eschatological life. Cf. Rom 8:2: "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from sin and death."

## 6. Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. Define the role of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Christ?
- ii. How is Christ the life giving Spirit?

- iii. Explain how you understand Christ as the eschatological man
- iv. Describe the two ages that Paul is talking about.

## 7. References for further Reading

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## **Unit 4: THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS: 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### **1. Introduction**

Christian stewardship occupies a key place in contemporary Christian thought. Through the various media, as well as the pulpit, many Christian speakers call for Christians to give of material resources for the development of their ministries. Often 2 Corinthians 8-9 forms the biblical basis for giving.

### **2. Objectives**

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Give a teaching on Christian offering
2. Explain the need to be collecting collections for the church
3. Grasp with the benefits of sowing abundantly for the church

### **3. The Main Content: Theological foundations for Collection for the Saints**

The Scriptures articulate often of material possessions. They warn about mishandling of what God has provided, about the acquiring of things as a life goal, and about the inevitability of using material things to produce spiritual blessings and eternal rewards. The foundation for this occurs in the OT, and Jesus himself taught that we should "lay up treasures in heaven" (Matt 6:20). The sarcasm of this teaching is that laying up treasures in heaven involves a shrewd spending of the treasures of earth. This passage speaks in a roundabout way to that issue.

At a deeper level, however, Paul speaks here of Christian brother-hood. While apparently the relief offering occupies the well-known place, the passage concerns the well-being of Christian brothers and sisters. It speaks to a Christian's world and life view, the actuality of a spiritual tie that transcends physical dimensions, and the fulfilling of OT prophetic expectations. The literature on this section of Scripture is wide-ranging and great.

These two chapters its center of attention have based on the grace of giving. Written while Paul was on his third missionary journey, they reflect one of his major concerns: a collection for the saints at Jerusalem which Paul hoped to distribute at the Passover celebration. This exceptional offering helped make available for the financial needs of Christians from another ethnic and national milieu. The monies were neither the tithe nor the gifts given for the functions of the church. This was an actually benevolent offering.

The early church took sincerely the social and economic conditions of fellow believers. Many different Scriptures recommend care for those who have endured difficulties. These include widows and orphans (Jas 1:27), natural disasters (famines, Acts 11:27-30), and persecution.

The most expected instantaneous concern was for the financial loss suffered in Jerusalem because of a famine which came in the mid-40s of the first century. It left many, including Christians, in dire straits. Before turning to the content of these chapters, two preliminary comments require attention. The first relates to the purpose of the collection for the saints. Perceptibly Paul considered it an important part of his ministry, devoting a seemingly inordinate amount of time and energy to help those in need. Many have suggested reasons for the offering, most of which expand the significant work of D. Georgi, R. Martin reduces these to four: (1) Paul was remembering the poor as he promised the "pillar apostles" of Jerusalem; (2) he was conveying genuine concern by the Gentile congregations; (3) he was seeking to unite the two diverse elements in the early Christian community; and (4) he was cooperating in the eschatological fulfillment of Israel's conversion. Without a doubt each of these deserves legitimate discussion.

Beyond it all, however, the words of E. Best serve as a good souvenir. They are based upon the character of the apostle himself. "Paul in all probability initially accepted the obligation to raise the money because he saw the need in Jerusalem and was inspired by the love of Jesus to take action. Other reasons might have come to his mind as time went by.

The second introductory comment relates to the unity of the two chapters. Many interpreters assume Paul wrote the two chapters at different times and, perhaps, to different churches (see n. 7 below). Others have argued for their unity. Recently C. Talbert supported the unity of the section based on a perceptive literary and thematic analysis. The objections are not insuperable. Concerning the relationship of chaps 8 and 9, C. K. Barrett concludes that "the transition is not as sharp as is sometimes supposed. It is therefore best to treat it as a continuation of chapter viii, and as belonging to the same letter as chapters i-viii."

### *Theological Foundations*

In general, Paul's Christian ethic emerges from theological certainty calling for a life lived thoughtfully and knowingly. There are many suggested theological underpinnings. Some interpreters see ecclesiastical concerns in the front of the passage while others see a broader theological foundation. Talbert sees a threefold theological significance: "(a) it would be a realization of Christian charity (Gal 2:10; 2 Cor 8:14; 9:12; Rom 15:25); (b) it would be an expression of Christian unity (2 Cor 9:13-14; Rom 15:27); and (c) it would be an expectation of Christian eschatology (Romans 9-11 . . .)." The ecclesiastical argument assumes that the collection is from churches to church. For them the project displays a strong clerical tie. The passage, though, neither asserts nor assumes that. Here at least two primary theological pillars support Paul's program of giving.

### *Soteriological Concerns*

Conceivably the most striking theological underpinning is soteriological, emphasizing the outworking of salvation. The typical employment of the term "grace," the example of Christ, and the Pauline concept of Christian community support this interpretation.

1. *The Employment of "Grace."* Semantically, the word grace preponderates in these chapters. Its regularity has led some to argue for the unity of the two chapters based upon the rather consistent use of the term. Undeniably, the chapters open with the concept of grace (8:1) and close in the same manner (9:14-15), forming an inclusion. The term occurs at least ten times, and the root occurs in compound words twice more (translated "thanksgiving").

The most common use of the term "grace" speaks of the act of giving as a "grace" (8:4, 6, 7, and 19). The employment of the term "grace" so frequently and naturally reflects Paul's theology. First, by using the term "grace" for the act of giving, Paul changed expressions from the Jewish concept which no doubt formulated his thinking as a rabbi.

The Jews usually referred to benevolence as an act of righteousness. Jesus also spoke in these terms in the Sermon on the Mount when he addressed almsgiving as an act of "righteousness" (Matt 6:1ff.). His vocabulary reflected a state of law and a preoccupation with legal requirements. Paul, on the other hand, used the term righteousness in this correlation only once. In 9:10 he speaks of the gift as coming from the Corinthians' righteousness, but he by and large refers to giving as an act of grace. By this turn of phrase, Paul emphasizes both the situation of the giver and the motivation for the gift. Those who have received God's grace engage in benevolent activities as the fruit of the state of grace. Paul cautiously avoids any "works ethic," choosing rather a terminology and concept to root these activities in his characteristic theme, God's grace. E. Best appropriately states, "If giving loses its origin and purpose in God and his grace, both it and our faith will wither and die."

As a second factor, the concept of grace applies to a precise action related to the experience of grace. Time and again Paul refers to giving as "this grace." At the end of the day Paul considers all human responses to God outworkings of grace. This is particularly true of the gifts which work for the betterment of the Christian community. Though a spiritual gift of giving occurs in the lists of spiritual gifts, here individual gifts come as the result of God's grace ("Let each person give as he has determined," 9:7). Rather than an act for attaining righteousness, this giving evidences the grace of God in the lives of the Corinthians. In this regard Barrett's comment regarding the Macedonians applies. He notes that Paul may mean "the grace of God himself" or "that God has given grace to the Macedonians," and that Paul may not distinguish between these two. The term "grace," therefore in the approved manner designates the action in its full theological definition.

Paul also uses grace to refer to the grace of God which initiates a good action. Here, again, he expresses his understanding that everything good originates from the grace of God and glorifies his grace (Eph 1:3-14, e.g). The passage begins with the grace of God working in the Macedonians (8:1), continues with the grace of God in Titus (8:16), and ends with an expression of God's grace (9:14). Undoubtedly, the grace of God motivates Christians to give. Paul commends them for their contribution in the gift, because it means that God is at work in them.

#### **4. Summary**

*The Example of Christ.* The grace of God is demonstrated in Jesus. His action of self-denial is a meticulous expression of the grace of giving (8:8). When Christians give of their time/lives/resources (for financial resources represent them all), they are fulfilling the same action of Jesus in kind, though not in degree. That is, he gave of himself for them, and they are giving of themselves for others. The



example of Christ, which undergirds this passage, occurs in 8:8-9. The picture calls to mind the basic Christological truth. Three elements support Paul's argument, and each has meticulous application to the matter at hand. First, Jesus was rich (8:9). The term applies to possession of resources satisfactory to achieve a proposed task. Here it must refer to spiritual riches, since there is no substantiation that Jesus had material possessions on earth. On the other hand, it is improbable that simply spiritual blessings are in mind, since the Scripture teaches that Jesus entered a state of poverty. Paul may be speaking of the "spiritual-environmental" riches of the pre-incarnate state which Jesus left in the journey to earth for redemption. Jesus' *kenosis* lies behind Paul's thought here. The example does not propose divesting oneself of spiritual riches which uphold us through difficult times, but speaks of the enthusiasm to change the conditions of life for the sake of others.

The second spotlight in the illustration is Jesus' poverty. He became poor. Jesus left the environment of heaven to assume the limitations (hence poverty) imposed by both his humanity and his earthiness. Paul stresses here the state of poverty by an ingressive aorist. Third, the reason of his change of condition was soteriological, i.e., that we might become rich. Jesus' riches and poverty were not principally spiritual; neither are the Christian's.

## 5. Conclusion

Paul has in mind the eschatological reality of the full spiritual life, including heaven, when he speaks of riches. Jesus left what he had to take us there with him. The relevance of this illustration challenged the Corinthians. They were not to think of their environments or material possessions as of primary concern. Just as Jesus left his, so we are to understand that this world and its goods must not enslave us. Although the cross is unmentioned, it lies in the background. The point is that to accomplish what Jesus wanted, material (environmental) blessings of earth must serve God's kingdom. Now the Corinthians had opportunity to imitate Jesus' action by giving of their materials to accomplish a spiritual result.

## 6. Tutor-Marked Assignments

8. Explain the goal of giving in the church.
9. What are the theological foundations for giving?
10. What are the soteriological concerns for giving?

## 7. References for further Reading

- M. J. Harris, *2 Corinthians* (EBC. 10; Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1976).  
W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).  
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## **Unit 5: *The Concept of the Christian Community and Giving to the Gospel***

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### **1. Introduction**

This unit discusses the concept of the church as a community. The concept of Christian community permeates the soteriological foundations. Christians form one brotherhood because of the saving grace of Christ. The offering displays this unity. Following Paul's idea should help believers today to practice this with serenity.

### **2. Objectives**

The objectives of this section are for the student to:

- i. Understand the theological foundations of the church as a community.
- ii. Know the eschatological and soteriological concerns of the church as a community.
- iii. Know how giving in such community serves the Gospel.

### **3. Main Content: The Nature of the Christian Community and the Grace of Giving**

Naturally Christians shared with those in need, but this was more significant because it was a substantial expression and validation of the Pauline mission to the Gentiles. Repetitively Paul expressed his typical theological insights in symbolic forms. His reliable emphasis on the principle of justification by faith alone led him to have Timothy circumcised but not Titus (Gal 2:3). This well-known occurrence crystallized Paul's theology and exemplified it for the Christian community. In similar fashion the relief offering symbolized the real unity of the churches and their theology. The gospel of grace meant that the gospel could go to non-Jews without the cultural practices inherent in its original (Jewish) roots. When it spread beyond Jewish culture, would it be anti-Jewish or apathetic to the Jewish system which had birthed it? There was an apparent soteriological tie between the peoples which took account of the deeper basis of unity. Afterward Paul expressed the soteriological tie with a reference to the removing of the barriers between the two groups, allowing a new man to appear (Eph 2:1-11). Thus in

the offering, the Christian community expressed itself as unified beyond racial and cultural boundaries. Paul cautiously avoids the term "church" in this passage, preferring words like "saints." He emphasizes the Christian community but not in ecclesiastical terms.

#### *Eschatological Concerns*

A second theological foundation relates to the eschatological structure within which Paul operated. Obviously, his understanding of the historical outworkings of God's redemptive plans formed the basis for much of his plea. Particularly, Paul saw a historical development in God's workings. Some interpreters tie the offering to Rom 15:27 and the Christian obligation for those who profit spiritually to share their physical/material blessings with their spiritual benefactors. Others have a preference to make the situation theoretical, indicating that if the Jerusalem saints have the resources in the future they will, of course, be able to help Gentiles. The latter approach, however, fails to deal with the text at two crucial points: (1) the text says "their abundance" non with no hypothetical element slotted in (it is a given for Paul), and (2) the purpose clause moves to the point of equality (a true equality measures spiritual with spiritual and physical with physical). Both interpretations ignore the most obvious parallel earlier in Romans (11:12 specially, and the argument of 9-11 normally). In the past, God worked through Israel to accomplish his purposes. With the rejection of Christ, however, national Israel lost her Christological blessings (Romans 9-11). However, Paul expected a time in the future when God would again bless Israel. In Rom 11:11ff., Paul makes two points relating to Gentile and Jewish relations which have significance here. First, the fall of Israel was not chiefly punitive, but it provided for the salvation of the Gentiles. Second, God will restore Israel in the future. That, too, will have impact for the Gentiles (Rom 11:12) in bringing them even greater riches.

This eschatological structure finds expression in 2 Cor 8:14. The key to Pauline thought here is the term for time which he employs. The "now time" contrasts with another time, a typical Jewish and Pauline way of contrasting the present age with a future age. As a result, Paul urges involvement in the relief offering because of its eschatological significance.

The eschatological dimension takes us deeper into Paul's understanding. Here there are visibly two realms of blessing and responsibility: spiritual and physical. The spiritual situation of Israel past brought spiritual blessings to the Gentiles. The spiritual blessings projected in correlation with Israel's future will bring spiritual blessings to the Gentiles. The Gentiles, therefore, are to respond in providing physical blessings for the Jews who are in need. In this eschatological framework two ideas develop. First, there is a close unity between the spiritual and physical realms, and Paul moves straightforwardly between them. The blessings of the present time engross principally the spiritual aspects of redemption. The future blessings, nevertheless, comprise the entrance into the environmental (physical) blessings connected with the Second Coming of Christ. The physical and spiritual unite in Paul's thought, since ultimately, at the return of Christ, both appear together for the enjoyment of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

Second, the various churches acting constantly with the example of Christ must conduct themselves in light of the economy that characterizes the kingdom environment. Like Jesus, the Gentile Christians must give of their earthly environmental blessings, aggravated in part by the

expectation that they will be recipients of the future spiritual environmental blessings of Israel. In a way, therefore, the work of Christ continues on earth through the work of the church. Christian people must pray and work for "thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

The eschatological significance of the offering, thus, goes beyond the immediately visible. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, "remembered the poor" as the Jerusalem apostles requested (Gal 2:10). This was particularly significant to his ministry to the Gentiles since it symbolized the unity of the churches and his support of the Jewish Christian community. Paul understood full well that the future would be a time of unity of all persons in Christ and the complete satisfaction of every need. It was indispensable, therefore, for all Christians to share in anticipation of that great day.

One final portion of the collection requires awareness. Paul realized the OT predictions about the future relationships between Israel and the Gentiles. Many of them anticipated a time when the Gentiles would bring gifts to Jerusalem. Passages like Isa 60:5ff explain that in the last days Israel will enjoy the wealth of the world. Given that Paul expected this accomplishment in the future, perhaps he saw the offering prophetically as well. It was another step in the fulfillment realized through Christ. Even more, when Gentiles gave to Jews, the gospel message reached maturity. Christian unity was effected. Paul could then go on with his expected mission to the West (Rom 15:24-26). Currently, however, he must holdup his trip to Rome (and the western mission) until he delivered the offering (Rom 15:28-29). The eschatological foundations of the collection were solid, and Paul's growing understanding of salvation history no doubt inspired him in his efforts.

### *Motivations for Giving*

Having seen two of the major theological foundations for giving, the motivations may be considered. The discussion is suggestive rather than complete.

### *The Example of Others*

The first motivation found in this section is the example of others.

Paul includes two examples: the churches of Macedonia and the example of Christ. The Macedonian Christians keenly contributed in the offering for the saints. The Macedonian churches, Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica, were founded by Paul on the second missionary journey. They had taken the same peninsula as Corinth in what is now Greece and were the nearest Christian neighbors to the north. Since little is known about Berea and Thessalonica, Philippi must stand for the situation there. The church had a troubled history, It was founded amid difficulties which Paul here identifies as tests. Their condition makes the gifts all the more impressive,

Two ostensibly contrary characteristics make them important. Foremost, they were poor. The term Paul uses to illustrate their poverty may well be translated "dirt poor." The reasons for their poverty are not lucid, even though their political history no doubt contributed. The church enclosed some wealthy and influential persons at its founding, such as Lydia and, probably, the

influential Romans. Their poverty, on the other hand, did not reduce their extreme joy, nor did it affect the size of their gift.

Paul identifies the gift as the "riches of single-mindedness." The expression suggests that their gift was (1) generous, and, (2) purposeful. As to the latter, they gave "single-mindedly." The term frequently is translated "liberally, generously," but conceivably it is better translated in this context as "focused." They simply gave to meet the needs of others. That single-minded focus produced a generous gift. Though the size of the gift is unknown, four elements in the text suggest it was considerable. First, Paul calls it "riches", an exceptional term to use in such a context. Second, it is illustrated as "to their capacity and beyond" (8:3-4), indicating the sacrificial nature of the gift. Their giving began with ability and moved to their inability ("beyond themselves"). Third, they begged Paul to allow them to give (8:4). This statement reflects both their persistence on giving and their situation. Maybe Paul thought the gift was more than they could really give, but they begged for the privilege of giving. Here again Paul uses the word "grace" to describe the gift. If Paul were troubled by the size of the gift, he received it because it came from the grace of God. Fourth, Paul took great care in the administration of the gift. With justification, some see a chief transfer of funds because of the size of the envoy chosen to accompany the gift to Jerusalem.

Each of these factors opines that generosity is not dependent on the possession of significant resources, but is a matter of the purposes of the heart. Paul says as much in his commendation of the Macedonians (8:5). They "gave themselves first to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." Their giving was twofold: to the Lord and to us. Although many suggest a temporal argument here (that they gave themselves first *in time* to the Lord), the logical expression is more likely. The financial gift stood for a higher giving than was expressed. The actual issue was their relationship to the Lord and the personal implications it brought. The material gift was "natural" because they had already cared for the greater matter of presenting *themselves* to the Lord. That preceding obligation led them to commit themselves to Paul and the concerns he brought to their attention. Thus the gift was truly Christian. It was an outworking of their relationship with Christ; it was a participation in the lives of other Christians, and it was sacrificial. The Macedonians were certainly exemplary in their giving.

### *The Continued Development of Christian Graces*

A second motivation is the conclusion of the work of Christ in them. Here Paul builds on the desire of all mature Christians to grow in grace. In 8:7-9 Paul lists six virtues in two triads. The first triad includes faith, word, and knowledge. Even a cursory reading of the Corinthian mail reveals the significance of word and knowledge. First Corinthians 1:5 states that they were present in the church. These two became the subjects of conflict in the church as well as the vehicles by which Paul answers the problems of divisiveness. The Corinthian correspondence, yet, does not reveal a church particularly known for its faith, yet Paul commends the church for these qualities which were obviously prominent. The second triad commends the church for qualities which are more unswervingly related to the offering. First, they possess great passion. The term frequents these chapters. Generally it stands for zeal to do appropriately what is correct. If that meaning obtains here, Paul commends them for the desire and ability to implement the plans for the offering. Second, they are commended for their love.

Third, they are to nurture the gift (grace) of giving. The argument is straightforward, yet demands responsible action. Since the church was spiritually rich and prided itself in the manifestations of spiritual gifts, they should bring that spiritual heritage to bear on the material and financial needs of other Christians. If they would devote themselves to the offering, it would provide an occasion for them to develop another Christian grace in their lives individually and corporately. If the argument of 1 Corinthians 12-14 applies here as well, the offering takes on more significance. In 1 Corinthians the evidence of the reality of these other gifts is the exercise of love. So here, the verification of their claim to these spiritual qualities depended upon the exercise of love shown in the offering. The motivation is twofold: (1) the development of the total person so every area of life falls under the lordship of Christ and the process of sanctification; and (2) the complete exercise of their spirituality call for a substantial act of love.

### *The Completion of a Promise Made*

The third motivating factor is the completion of a dedication made to the offering. This first appears in 1 Cor 16:1-4, where Paul opens his remarks in a way typical of the first Corinthian correspondence. The phrase "now concerning" indicates that he was responding to questions from the church. Therefore there was a prior knowledge of the offering. Perhaps it was Titus who informed them of the offering and secured their initial participation (2 Cor 8:6). Following that, Paul wrote definite instructions in 1 Cor 16:1-4. They included (1) laying aside an offering on the first day of the week, (2) giving as God had prospered them, and (3) selecting some trusted persons to carry the offering to Jerusalem. The same instructions had been given to the churches of Galatia (1 Cor 16:1) at the beginning of Paul's third missionary journey. Clearly the project formed a major concern during this time of Paul's life.

The church at Corinth was the first of the churches to give, but a year had passed since Titus went to Corinth for Paul. Now Paul felt the need to address them again regarding the offering. Almost certainly, they had given instantly upon hearing of the need (2 Cor 8:10) and left Titus with the promise of more to come. Such passionate and spontaneous giving may with no trouble fall down into forgotten promises.

Paul's approach contains several elements. He first showed indisputable concern for their comfort in this undertaking (8:10). He stated what all should remember: it is in our best interests to keep our promises. He also called them to comprehend that the desire to perform will not reinstate the actual feat, and he continued by reminding them of the pressing need. They must complete the task. Second, he sought for Christian equality. The equality was in the furnish of needs and sacrifice. Each person measured his giving in light of what he had, not what he did not have (8:12). Once more, the goal was not that others prosper at someone's expense, but that there would be equal sacrifice and equal supply of needs (8:13). The OT supports these ideas. Paul quotes the LXX of Exod 16:18 (8:15) to tell again the people that when God supplied in the wilderness, he did it in a way that all would receive sufficiently and equitably. The situation applied to the Corinthians. If God were supervising the distribution of resources, as he was in the desert when he supernaturally supplied their needs, there would be

sufficient supply for all and equitable distribution. The Corinthians had the task of acting God-like in their stewardship of resources.

### *The Principle of the Harvest*

The final key motivation is the principle of the harvest. The principle occurs in both natural and special revelation, coming from knowledge of farming and Scripture. Paul states it: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (9:6, NIV). Statements like this had become proverbial by the first century, occurring in both biblical and extra-biblical contexts. Perhaps Paul crystallizes such proverbs as Prov 11:24-25 and 22:9, which extol bounteousness in sharing with others. The form of the proverb, however, resembles that of Cicero who said, "As you sow, so shall you reap." Here Paul applies it to one's relationship to material things and makes it a normative Christian principle; Interestingly the phrase translated "generously" is literally "upon blessings", stressing the principle of impartial giving. The Corinthians were to give according to how God blessed them.

Paul provides a commentary on the last two portions of the proverb, "He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully" (9:6). Rather than warn of the repercussions of stinginess, which Paul assumes are self-evident, he urges them positively toward the rewards of giving. The commentary provided expands "soweth bountifully" and "reapeth bountifully."

On the subject of sowing bountifully, God loves a cheerful giver. Two guidelines put in plain words cheerfulness. First, the gift must be in relation to conviction ("every man according as he purposeth in his heart"). Rather than exterior motivation or standards, possibly imposed by the collector of the gifts, each one is to react to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in light of his own personal situation. A unique joy and contentment comes from following through on what God has placed in the mind and heart. Since it is constantly easier to purpose than to do, and the remoteness between the obligation and the follow-through constitutes the amount of irritation one will experience, Paul urges them to submit with the Holy Spirit and happily follow God's promptings. Second, the gift is not to be given reluctantly. The similar words "not out of regret" and "not out of necessity" imply that one should not yield to the external pressures imposed on him. "Regret" means literally "out of sorrow". Possibly Paul has in mind the grief that comes from mishandling material possessions and learning this significant principle of stewardship after many difficulties. The expression "necessity" speaks to the possibility of being pushed (by God) into a situation of giving. To shun these erroneous motives for giving, the giver should give out of a free enactment of a prearranged commitment. Not only does this supply the best condition for the conscience, the burden of this piece, but it places one in an environment of God's special love since God loves a cheerful giver. Accordingly, sowing generously means responding constantly to the promptings of the Lord to give according to what God has laid on the heart.

The second piece of the commentary addresses the matter of reaping generously (9:9-11). Those who sow will receive. This passage has given rise to the idea of "seed faith," i.e., that God will make available more to those who give. The context, though, speaks against this idea.

First, Paul states that God can make all grace flourish. once more he prefers to use the term “grace” for this type of giving (typical of this context), and thus the grace God will provide must refer to some gift received in return. As the Corinthian are to be the vehicle of God's grace to the Jews, so God is able to work so his grace comes to them through some suitable vehicle in their time of need. Note that Paul does not guarantee a great influx of financial provision, but reminds them that God can remember them. Since God placed the Jewish condition on Paul's heart, resulting in a generous gift for them, so God can place anyone on another's heart with the same result.

Again, Paul designates that this grace accomplishes "good work." Two statements crystallize this teaching. In v 9:8 the goal of God's provision is that they "might abound to every good work". This proclamation is further explained by 9:10, where Paul states that God may "increase the fruits of your righteousness." Some have taken these to mean that God will supply financial blessing because of the righteousness (or good work). Taken in this sense, the gift becomes a means of securing bigger financial blessings.

The troubles with this interpretation are: this represents a non-Pauline use of the term "righteousness," and this makes giving a way of receiving rather than the single-minded giving that Paul has spoken of earlier. Christian giving is never to be a means of receiving material things. To a certain extent, Paul states that God is able to expand the gift given so that the giver may be able to engage in greater generosity ("every good work," v 8), and that the gifts given will generate fruit. The latter phrase, found in verse 10, teaches that the actual benefits of giving are the spiritual blessings that accumulate because of the righteous state of the giver (i.e., that he is saved), and because he has spent in the work of God as a result of that state of grace.

The critical goal is "thanksgiving to God," expressed here in vv.11 and 12. Distant from being a promise that one who gives will at all times receive more fiscally, this suggests that the giver will receive, in that he will appreciate the workings of God better and be in a better position to trust his own needs to God who *can* supply grace to those in need *even as he did through the giver to another's needs*, and the results of a gift driven by the Spirit and given for the work of God will be that God is glorified in new ways by broader circles of people.

The inspiration from the principle of the harvest, thus, is that God will do more with a gift given (sown) than the palpable. The act of giving cheerfully will place the giver in a unique milieu of God's love, and the gift will at last bring praise to God. There is no assurance that God is bound to enlarge the resources of the giver, nor is there here a promise that God "must" meet the needs of one who gives. The matter is a matter of God's grace, not of law.

### *Administrative Responsibilities*

Susceptible to the charges of abuse in this area, Paul noticeably sets forth responsibilities in the physical matters. The responsibilities are two-dimensional, surrounding both the giver and the collector of funds. The main focal point of these chapters is on the giver and his responsibility before God. A summing up statement will be adequate to review to this point. The giver is:



(1) to be insightful to the promptings of God in his life; (2) to be familiar with that giving is an expression of the grace of God and brings with it a responsibility of stewardship; (3) to find out for himself what amount is proper; (4) to follow through on his commitments, giving cheerfully; (5) to give single-mindedly, with a focus just on being faithful to God's prompting to give; and (6) to give expecting that God will use the gift beyond what can be imagined to bring praise to himself. Obviously, Paul conceived of stewardship as necessary in the lives of believers and as unique proof that the grace of God was operative in their lives.

Paul in addition defined responsibilities for the collectors of the monies, sometimes by command and sometimes by example. Though the offering was of tremendous importance to Paul as a justification and achievement of his own ministry, he recognized the higher magnitude of his calling to spread the gospel to the world. His main mission was the ministry of the Word, and not even the offering could discourage him. He chose to make the most of Titus as the conciliator. Possibly he learned from the early church that while "waiting on tables" is significant, there is a higher calling of "giving oneself to teaching" (Acts 6). Paul understood himself as plainly in the line of the apostles both by spreading the gospel and by his participation in the Gentile mission, which was a ministry and insight distinctive to Paul (Eph 3:1-10). Whether or not this was his motivation, Paul chose not to involve in the "hands-on" aspect of the offering. Firstly, he did not even intend to escort it to Jerusalem, but later apprehended the importance of this gift and changed his mind.

The procedures for the collection are, thus, instructive. Paul assigned the work to trained brethren. He addressed their character and their concern in 8:16-9:5.

### *The Character of the Men*

The most outstanding of the men chosen was Titus, Paul's trusted companion. Considerably, he is the only one named in this passage, a fact which suggests that Paul wanted Titus to be famous because of his relationship to both Paul and the Corinthians. Having been sent to Corinth as Paul's messenger, he had made the preliminary arrangements for the offering. Apparently he also bore the major accountability for it. Three statements disclose Titus' fitness for the mission he undertook. First, he devotedly cooperated with the promptings of God in this service (8:16). Once more, Paul thanked God for so moving in Titus' life. His "natural" concern for them and the collection qualified him for this vital position. Possibly Titus bore this burden from the onset, since he heard the apostles advise Paul to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:1-10). Second, Titus was approachable. He "accepted the exhortation" from Paul. Third, he was concerned to go. Paul indicates that he was eager of going to the church to see them again, a fact which evidences the unique relationship God had given to Titus and Corinth (8:17). Paul's major representative, thus, had an enthusiastic dedication to the project, knew the theological significance of the offering, and enjoyed the trust and respect of the church at Corinth.

Another Christian brother accompanied Titus. Undisclosed by Paul, this man also had the reverence of the Gentile Christian community. His status in the work of the gospel was renowned (8:18). The churches chose him for this mission (8:19). Paul seemed concerned to have this man because he wanted to do things correctly in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of men (8:21). The distress for good manners before the Lord suggests that Paul lived with the

awareness that God watches each person and action. In actuality, Paul did not need a delegation to safeguard his character, as 1 Thessalonians 1-2 reveals. Nonetheless, the group would produce an added accountability which would be praiseworthy to the Lord as well as convince human expectations. Paul had settled financial matters at the outset of the ministry, preferring not to be supported by others. However, this procedure would ease the minds of those who gave, as well as provide an objective protection for the administration of funds.

A third brother, also anonymous, accompanied the two (8:22). Portrayed by a proven sincerity which now was at its height, and no doubt equally well known to the churches, this brother would lend his trustworthiness to the offering. If Acts 20:4 speaks of the same delegation, it was considerably larger than these three. It included local representatives consisting of Asians, Europeans (Macedonians), and Romans. The offering encompassed many nationalities and was delivered by a composite group.

### *The Concern of These Men*

The volume of the group and its mode of choice further stress the significance of the offering to Paul. Nothing was to obstruct with their expression of love, and the three men were to secure it. The group had an extra role, however, that of appropriately overseeing the matters so there would be no reproach brought to the name of the Lord or to Paul and his ministry. If there would be opposition to Paul, it would be on spiritual/theological grounds, not on financial.

The faction functioned also in other ways. First, it was to help in the collection of the offering. Paul planned a coming at Jerusalem at Passover. The feast was not only the proper time for all Jewish men to emerge at Jerusalem, but was also the time of the festivity of redemption, sacred to the Jews because of Egyptian bondage, and consecrated to Christians because it pictured the salvation accomplished in Christ. The gifts from the Gentiles received at the feast of redemption were, in a sense, the last fruit of redemption. Therefore the timing was of great importance. The group of three was to guarantee that the collection would be ready on schedule.

They were also to make sure that the gift was not of "covetousness" (9:5). The expression is complicated to interpret here. In 1 Thess 2:5 Paul uses the term in defending himself against the charge of "extortion or greed." possibly, thus, Paul wanted them to know that the gift did not come from his own avariciousness, but it is complex to see how their prior arrival would solve that problem. First, Paul could still have used the gift for his own ends even after the influx of the group; and second, the term contrasts with "thanksgiving". The covetousness to avoid, therefore, must be an approach on their part.

Conceivably it is best to understand it as Martin does. He suggests that the gift was not to be from the "'love of money' which in turn leads to a niggardly gift." The arrival of these three prior to Paul would help the Corinthians to offer a genuine thank offering to God. They could fulfill their promises, give as God had prompted, and no ulterior motives would either produce the gift or manage its amount.

## 4. **Summary**

There are, therefore, a number of concerns relative to the matter of the collecting of the offering. First, Paul must be the motivator for the giving since God laid it on his heart. Second, others who share the vision and the burden must be involved in the actual handling of the monies. Third, the group who deals with the money should represent faithful men from Paul and the churches. This provides answerability before the Lord and men. Fourth, the participation of the group encouraged the churches to give more generously by reducing the likelihood of misconduct. The early arrival of the group gently reminded them of past pledges. Significantly, Paul deals in great detail in this chapter with responsibilities for both the giver of funds and the collectors.

## 5. Conclusion

In these two chapters Paul presents his most wide-ranging teaching for giving to deprived Christians. His theological motivations incorporated the common salvation and an awareness of the historical outworkings of God's redemptive agenda. He altruistically motivated the Corinthian church to follow the example of the Macedonian Christians, to remain true to their prior commitments, and to collaborate with the work of God in their lives. They were to keep in mind the example of Christ who gave himself for them. In conclusion, his administrative procedures exposed his concern that all things be done above reproach. Paul's concerns help the contemporary church. In a day of increasing demand for financial support of ambitious ministries, there is danger that the end will rationalize the means of fund raising. Sometimes both Christians and non-Christians take offense at high-pressure tactics and the continuous emphasis on finances. A study of this passage though, reveals that Paul would have none of these. As significant as this offering was and as indispensable for the Corinthian Christians as an expression of their spiritual lives Paul remembered his priorities. In a masterful way he promoted the cause while disassociating himself from the process of collection and the destination of the funds. Above all, he saw this as a obligatory outworking of salvation. It would unite Christians of many ethnic and national backgrounds in a tangible fellowship and, finally, put in to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

## 6. Tutor-Marked Assignments

- i. Explain Paul's concept of the Christian community.
- ii. Explain the importance of Christian giving.
- iii. What are the administrative responsibilities in giving?

## 7. References for further Reading

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## **Unit 6: The Christian Life Part 1**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### **1. Introduction**

This unit expounds the nature of the Christian life. The Christian life has two important aspects, namely what God has done to change the status of the sinner and what the sinner is required to do. Paul combined these aspects of the whole person and connects with the overall work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. More particularly, Rom. 8:9-11 presents an observation that will draw the connection of the Holy Spirit, Christ, the church, the believer (or more formally, the intersection between pneumatology, Christology, ecclesiology, and soteriology).

### **2. Objectives:**

The objectives of this unit are to help the student to:

- i. Have a full grasp of the totality of the Christian life
- ii. Understand the connection between the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in obtaining the status of the believer.

### **3. Main Content: The Christian Life**

Rom 8:9-11.

*9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

Recall that Paul has connected the flesh with death, the Spirit with life, and the en sarki are not able to please God. But you (speaking to the church) are not of the flesh if the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Having the Spirit parallels Paul's more common "in Christ." You have all possible combinations: the life of the church, and the individual. You in Christ, and Christ in you; you in the Spirit, and the Spirit in you. These are different ways of looking at the same thing; they all come down to the same thing. In the life of the church, the experience of the believer, Christ and the Spirit are interchangeable. There is no union, no relationship to Christ which is not at the same time a fellowship in the Spirit, a fellowship with the Spirit in power. That Spirit-fellowship is not only the reserve of only some believers but not all. And the reverse can be said, too. There is this unbreakable unity, inseparable conjunction, between the Spirit and Christ, not because God has decided somewhat arbitrarily that it would be this way; but it is not constituted in our experience; but there is this constitution based on and constituted by what happens back of our experience; and that is the experience of Christ, the work of Christ, in its once-for-all, definitive accomplishment of our salvation. There is this interchangeability because of what the Spirit is--and notice how Paul expresses it: "**The Spirit of Christ**"--that's who the Spirit is now in view of the resurrection. But also because of who Christ is; **Christ is life-giving Spirit**. Eph 3:16-17: This is the beautiful, powerful prayer of Paul for the church in the close of Eph 3. Among other things, he is praying to God the Father:

*16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith - that you, being rooted and grounded in love. The empowering Spirit in the inner self is interchangeable with Christ through faith dwelling in our hearts.*

**Resurrection-Life (Eph 2:5-6, etc.)**: The Christian life as it is located between resurrection and return of Christ--in this interim where you and I and the church is, believers are not only those who will be raised, but also it is the case that they are those who have already been raised. For Paul, resurrection is not only a future hope but a present reality. And a present reality in an experiential hope. It's not only at the *end* of history, but *in* history. And so, it is the case that the entirety of Christian life may be subsumed under the heading of resurrection. The last Adam has become life-giving Spirit--that is a description of who Christ is now, in the church. Christ is life-giving, the dispenser, through the Spirit, of resurrection life. This is not only not yet, but also already, right now. Again, the Christian life as Paul sees it is an outworking, a display of the resurrection life and power of Christ, the life-giving Spirit. So, Gal 2:20, where Paul asserts--autobiographically but surely representatively--"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." That is reality (not mere metaphor or overstatement). It is in this sense that the believer, as we say, has *eternal* life; we could just as well say *eschatological* life. Because this is the way John means it, as well as Paul.

It is not eternal in some vague sense; certainly not above or beyond history; not timeless in an ahistorical sense; but it is eternal because it is the life that is revealed at the end of history and comes to us out of its consummation. We have arrived at a conclusion that can be amplified and developed in any number of ways. (And one of the fair criticisms of this course is that we ought to have been at this point much sooner in our work. And maybe I'll figure out in the future how to do that. But don't hold your breath). Col 3:1-4: We have touched on these verses and now we want to zero in on them with more care. We will focus as we look at various passages on the hortatory of Paul's teaching, the imperative, the Pauline paranesis (a technical term for commands, exhortation). If you will, we are going to look at the ethics of Paul.

*1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

First of all here, I want to make some comments to bring out this point: The way in which the resurrection life of the believer is presented in these verses. And there are two sides to the matter. On the one hand, as we've seen in passages such as Eph 2:5-6, the believer's resurrection is referred to as an already accomplished fact. It is referred to indicatively. Which is true thru faith (Col 2:12). This life is what the believer already enjoys by virtue of union with Christ. "You have died" (3) (cf. Rom 6:1ff.). "Your life is hidden with Christ in God" (4). We need to emphasize this because of the tendency in the church *not* to embrace this. This is who we are. **In the deepest sense of who you are, you will never be more resurrected than who you are right now**, because of your present union with Christ. And, on the other hand, we can see that there is a sense in which something remains to be obtained. So we can fairly gloss, "Seek after the things of resurrection life." Direct your thinking, your willing, to resurrection life. The common notion--resurrection life--is brought into view as both a **possession** (a secured one, we could find in other passages) and also a **goal**. Gift and task--it is both. Set your mind toward what you already have (paradoxically spoken). Verse 1: The conditional (protasis) contains an indicative; the consequence (apodosis) is an imperative.

Paul is saying, *If* the indicative, *then* the imperative. If you have resurrection life, then seek resurrection life. Or assuming "Since" or "because" rather than "if": seek what you already have, because you already have it. Clearly the things above refer to the resurrection/ascension life. Because this is where Christ is. This is not a timeless and (dualism); but a redemptive-historical and. This is important especially in interpretations in the modern period. Sometimes this is referred to as the indicative-imperative "problem" in Paul. But this is not the problem so much as the *pattern* in Paul.

Some other passages with this pattern:

*Gal 5:1: For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore and don't burden yourself with a yoke of slavery.*

*Gal 5:25: If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

*Eph 5:8: you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

*1 Cor 5:7: Clean out the old leaven in order that you may be a new lump even as you are (really are) unleavened.*

*Coordinating Gal 3:27--[you] have put on Christ--and Rom 13:14--put on the Lord Jesus Christ. (The imperative is to the church.)*

*Col 3:9-10: you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self.  
Rom 6:2: you have died to sin; Rom 6:12: don't let sin reign in your mortal body.*

#### **4. Summary**

More broadly, we can observe conceptually, that on the one hand, sanctification is God's work; it's a gift of God: Phil 1:6, 1 Cor 1:2, and 1 Thess 5:23. But it's also brought into view as a task of the believer: 2 Cor 7:1. Or what are considered fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5, in Gal 6 are referred to as "your fruit." Or, re: the fundamental dimension of loving: love is first as fruit or the gift of the Spirit (Gal 5); but love is also the first commandment (Rom 13:8ff). So there is this pattern that appears throughout the Pauline corpus. Remember, these are exhortations to believers; not outside the church, among those of unbelief. So Paul's exhortation, his ethics for believers can be summed as "Become what you are." But a qualification is important. There is an all-embracing "in Christ." So, "Become what you are in Christ."

#### **5. Conclusion**

This raises an important issue: the relationship between indicative and imperative. Much is at stake in this relationship because it takes us to the heart of Paul's understanding of the Christian life as a whole. Conversely, if we miss the balance between indicative and imperative, that is going to strike at the heart of his teaching of sanctification, and with that his understanding of justification. In this history of interpretation, and particularly the historical-critical tradition, much has seen the coexistence of these as antimony or even a contradiction. So that in exegesis, the one or the other is effectively eliminated. Sometimes it's seen as an apparent contradiction, softened in one direction: that the indicative is really a softened imperative, or vice versa. Or sometimes called an inconsistency on Paul's part (the imperative--as a relapse back into his Pharasaic past or addressing the church in its immature state with these imperatives, or the indicatives--as an idealism, a theory-praxis lack of realism). Such approaches are hardly satisfying. Paul connects them deliberately and explicitly--even in the same verse! 1 Cor 5:7. Gal 5:25. Note how this indicative-imperative relationship shows how thoroughly Paul is a covenantal theologian, how thoroughly he is oriented to God as the God of the covenant, of his covenant people, who now in Christ encompasses not just one nation but all nations.

#### **6. Tutor-Marked Assignments**

- i. How is sanctification both the work of God and of man?
- ii. Differentiate between the nature of our present resurrection with Christ and the future resurrection.

#### **7. References for further Reading**

K. F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (SBT 48 London: SCM, 1966);

- B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (ConB. New Testament Series 11; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979);
- R. Martin, *The Worship of God: Some Theological, Pastoral and Practical Reflections* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).
- E. Best, *Second Corinthians in Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (ed. James Luther Mays; Atlanta: John Knox, 1987) 76.
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- P. E. Hughes, *Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962] xxi-xxii.).
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## **Unit 7: The Christian Life Part 2**

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Main Content
4. Summary
5. Conclusion
6. Tutor-Marked Assignments
7. References for further Reading

### **1. Introduction**

This section continues with discussion on the Christian life. The new creation is central in Paul's soteriology. This new creation issues from the eternal plan of God. The believer is required to appropriate what God has achieved for him/her in Christ. The Christian life is both actualized and progressive in character.

### **2. Objectives**

The objectives of this unit are to:

- i. Explain the nature of the new creation
- ii. Further explain the relationship between the passive and the active nature of the resurrection life in this present life.

### **3. The Christian Life Part 2**

Further on the relation question, indicative and imperative *belong* together; they have a non-polar, non-dialectical, positive relationship. It is *not* a contradiction in Paul. The indicative: what we have in view is salvation accomplished once-for-all in Christ and received in being united to him by faith. The imperative: has in view the Law of God (and I would say the 10



Commandments at its core (a disputed proposition); as expressing the covenanting will of God and which has its core in the.

*1 Cor 7:19: For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.*

*(Gal 5:6: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. Gal 6:15: For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.)*

Paul is speaking from the vantage-point of the new creation. The distinction *did* very much have significance in the old covenant. What matters is faith working through love. But Paul is emphatic that keeping God's commandments belongs on the new covenant side of the equation. What is key is how are we to understand the reference here to the commandments of God. I would refer to 1 Cor. 7:19; Rom 13:8-10, where Paul refers to many of the 10Cs, and as incumbent upon the church; and Eph 6:2, where it is the 5th commandment (re: parents). So I'm seeing the Law of God here as they find their core in the 10Cs; and the 10Cs as summed in the law of love. (Others say this refers to commandments only as found in Jesus (and possibly Paul).)

The indicative-imperative state of affairs comes to expression. The relationship is a positive one. Salvation revealed in Christ and received by faith by being united to Christ--the will of God can still be summed for the believer in the Decalogue.

Irreversible: The indicative-imperative relationship is irreversible. The indicative has priority; it's the foundation of the imperative. It's the root. Paul's gospel as gospel is on the line here. The integrity of his gospel depends on maintaining the priority of the indicative. It's not like the indicative is constituted by responding to the imperative or expresses only a possibility that is actualized *through* the imperative. Rather the indicative supplies, as we might put it, the impulse or the incentive to responding to the imperative. Paul never writes in the imperative without first--at least implicitly--writing first in the indicative. Paul knows all too well that it does no good to beat a dead horse; and that's exactly of what the congregation is apart from Christ. So this irreversible priority is the pt that has to be made, in CH, in the face of "liberal" Christianity, so-called, a tradition which denies the gospel and results in one form or another of moralism.

Inseparable: This relationship is also inseparable. Paul never writes in the indicative without having the imperative in view (at least implicitly). This reflects how thoroughly Paul is a *covenant* theologian--that in Christ reflects that bond which in salvation God gives and man in response believes and obeys; they belong together. The inseparability needs to be particularly maintained, to uphold the lineage of the reformation. The imperative without the indicative is soteriological legalism; it leaves me in some way to work out my salvation in my own strength. Whatever format legalism takes, that leaves us with Paul the moralist. On the other hand, the indicative without the imperative tends to antinomianism, to various forms of quietism. And it leaves us with Paul the mystic. The indicative does not describe a reality or state of affairs that exists by itself, in the sense that the imperative follows as something subsequent and perhaps detachable. They are given together. And response to the imperative is the consequence apart from which the indicative does not exist. It is the *attestation* apart from which there is no indicative.

Westminster Confession of Faith 16.2 says that response to the imperative is "the fruit and evidences of a lively faith." Paul's exhortations to the *church* as he does are a very clear indication that the life of

new obedience does not result automatically in those united to Christ and justified by faith. That concern for the imperative will surely follow in the lives of the justified; but that does not happen automatically or indifferently. The imperative has a *critical* or discriminating function. So wherever there is the reality of concern for the indicative, there *will be* the reality of concern for the imperative. Ridderbos: Both indicative and the imperative are the object of faith in Christ. Faith in its *receptivity*, as resting in Christ, as the uniting bond with Christ--answers to the indicative. Faith in its *activity*, the obedience of faith--answers to the imperative (286).

Phil 2:12-13: A passage that provides us with the perhaps the deepest perspective on this relationship in Paul.

*12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

He begins with the imperative: "You, the church, are to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." This reflects on the intensity, the depth of the response. And then, what follows is the indicative. V 13: "God is at work in you." Again, intending to be comprehensive, "for you to will." He enjoins the indicative and imperative. Paul, note, does not say, God's work parallels our efforts--as if we're alongside each other. Nor does Paul say that God's work supplements our, nor ours his. Nor is God working to compensate for our defects in our doing. Rather, God--we are working just because of what?--*God* is working. Here is what might be fairly called a certain kind of synergy--though you must be very careful how you use that language.

It is not the synergy of a divine-human partnership, of a cooperative enterprise, each side making his own contribution. It is not a kind-of 50/50 undertaking (or any other percentage). Involved here is a mysterious mathematics of God's covenant, of the relationship of God and man restored in Christ, where the relationship is 100% and 100%. Sanctification is 100% the work of God, and just for that reason, it is to engage the full 100% activity of the believer. What comes in to view here is the "mystery" of the Christian existence, of the life of faith, of the work of the Spirit sanctification. There is a demand to do justice to the full involvement of the believer w/o compromising that or allowing that to become competitive or supplement to the grace of God. The sovereign working of God that involves the full activity of the believer. We are not just stating the general truth that divine sovereignty and human responsibility cohere; that may be in the background. But we are dealing with a *soteriological* truth, that is revealed in God's covenant, to his people thru Christ in the Spirit. It's the mystery of the covenant whose God in grace promises and makes good on the promise "I will be your God and you will be my people" (Jer 31:33). But that same God no less of grace commands, "You be holy as I am holy" (Lev 11:44-45; 1 Pet 1:16). *There is probably no theological technique or formulation that is going to keep the imperative from becoming the occasion for legalism or keep the indicative from antinomianism--such is the state yet of who we are as believers, the state of our hearts; we tend to gravitate into one or the other of those errors.* But in the midst of the challenge here, remember that the imperative no less than the indicative is a concern of *faith*. It's not like the indicative gets us beyond the "by faith" of our salvation. Those who walk by faith and not by sight are going to be able to negotiate the narrow ledge, the razor's edge that confronts us here. What faith recognizes is that on the path of sanctification, no less than that of justification, the signposts read "Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone." Or the prayer that goes back to Augustine: "Lord, give what you ask; ask what you will." We could reverse that here.

**Rom 6:1ff; 12-13:** (The larger context is 6:1-7:6.) What we are seeing as the integration of eschatology and ethics--that interpenetration is quite prominent in these verses. Particularly as Paul relates the death and resurrection of Christ to Christian experience. What we have in this passage is perhaps the most important single passage in Paul for the Christian life on sanctification. In 6:1 in the flow of Romans, Paul begins a unit--as sub-unit that continues to 7:6. The section that begins in 3:21ff emphasizes the totally gracious character of justification. It is "not by the works of the law, but by faith, in order that it might be according to grace" (4:13-16 language). And that teaching then is summarized in what immediately precedes ch 6. (It either summarizes 5:12-21 or has a bridging function, anticipating 6:1ff.)

*1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! Those who died to sin--how can we still live in it?*

Paul's taking up an objection (about can we sin that grace may multiply--probably a real objection, but this isn't for sure; it's certainly a live danger). It's sharply negated. "May it not be!" Paul counters with another question (rhetorical). It specifies on its negative side the central thesis that governs this entire argument (thru 7:6): Believers have died to sin; they are dead to sin; and they live, have been made alive to God, to righteousness. And that raises a question that has been alive particularly since the Reformation: How dead? In what sense have believers died to sin?

*3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be planted (understood) with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been justified from sin.*

What's interesting here is Paul's concern to ground his thesis in v 2. And he does that appealing to water baptism and the significance that has. It signifies and seals union with Christ--the incorporation of the believer into Christ. Baptism has reference to union with Christ in his death and resurrection. The redemptive-historical factor is decisive here. It signals union with the Christ who is what he now is by virtue of his death and resurrection--union with the *exalted Christ*. So, reasons Paul, Christ's death is the believer's death, and Christ's resurrection is the believer's resurrection. Back to the q of how believers have died to sin--it's important to see as we have in Eph 2 and Col 3, so here, in Rom 6, the union in view is not only a representative union, contemplating the past historical only, although that is undeniably in view. But the union in view is also *vital*, or, as the Puritans said, experimental. Union with the exalted Christ grounds the existential reality that is expressed in v 2--that believers have died to sin and no longer live in it. Which takes us back to the theme of walking in the Eph 2 passage. Believers have been baptized into Christ to the end that they also might *walk* in newness of life (v 4), and this amplifies the "live" of v 2 and brings out the resurrection side of the picture. In what sense dead to sin? Paul is teaching here that what believers have experienced by virtue of their union with Christ is a definitive break with sin--a decisive cleavage. A once-for-all break with sin. How? It is a break with the controlling power of sin in our lives such that the old man of unbelief has been crucified with Christ, with the outcome that believers are no longer slaves of sin. They no longer *serve*

sin. That one is free from sin and has been declared righteous. It's not just death to the guilt of sin, but death to sin as power. Paul having spoken on justification now brings us into the area of sanctification.

*10 For what he died to sin he died once for all, but what he lives he lives to God. 11 So also reckon yourselves dead to sin and living to God in Christ Jesus.* Verse 11 sums up the preceding verses. Believers are to count/reckon/consider themselves dead to sin (on the one side) and correlatively (on the other side) alive to God. And looking at the datives: for Christ (v 10) and for believers, the church (v 11).

These are datives of reference, and what they respect has to be determined by the context. So we have to say that believers are dead to sin as the controlling power of our lives--so far as service to sin or bondage to sin is concerned (cf. v 6; correlatively v 14--"sin will not rule over you").

A comment on the verbal imperative: This reckoning, counting it to be the case. It's not (like some formulations have it) a positing of some ideal, of a limiting concept that does not really measure up to the situation of believers. Paul is not an idealist. Nor is Paul a Kantian. He's not saying we make it so by saying it's so. He's not here an apostle of positive thinking, of self-esteem (of the crystal cathedral or any other variety). What we're being called to here is the reckoning of faith. It's a matter of taking into account what are the facts of my situation as a believer--how believers are in fact to understand themselves, what they are to presuppose about themselves. They are to consider who they really are. And who they are is not in themselves, but in Christ Jesus: "Become what you are in Christ."

The connection between v 11 and v 10: *houtos kai* ("so also") points us to a parallel between believers and Christ. It runs from Christ to believers: as for Christ, so for the church. And you can't reverse that. Paul is saying what is true of Christ is true also for believers. Because Christ died to sin, believers also have. The believers death to sin and living to God is not to be understood in any other terms or in any other way than union with the crucified and resurrected Christ. It is not recognized in any other pattern or efficiency than union with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ who is now life-giving Spirit. So his death to sin and being made alive with God is my death to sin and being made alive to God. As for Christ, so for believers: having died to sin is a decisive, once-for-all event. So it's permanent; it's abiding. Paul announces here to the church, "We have been rid of sin, set free from it as the dominating and controlling power in our lives, as lord in our lives, and that has happened decisively once-for-all." Yes it is the case, as he will go on in 7:7ff as it is best understood, sin remains indwelling in the believer. Is sin indwelling in the believer? Yes. Is that sin overpowering? No. That's the point of Rom 6. This freedom is not by some pattern of imitation of the Christ, not by some regimen of spiritual exercises; but the point of Rom 6 is union with Christ by faith; and union with Christ by faith, we should be clear, that is the same faith that justifies (not some additional act of faith).

*12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, in order to obey its lusts.*  
*13 Do not either present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as living from the dead, and your members present as instruments of righteousness to God.*

(The antecedent of the *autou* here is not "sin," but "the body.") Paul is summing up and at the same time advancing the argument. What we have here is overarching, general, sweeping exhortation (oun, "therefore," akin to Rom 12:1-2). And the theme of resurrection is present and decisive, pivotal. Don't

let sin reign in your mortal bodies. Don't offer your body-parts, the members of your body to sin (12). Believers are to offer themselves as living from the dead, as *resurrected*, to God; they're to offer their members as instruments of righteousness to God.

#### 4. Summary

Note how these 2 verses present an overview of the Christian life: alive from the dead in the moral body. I think nothing better brings to perspective the structure of the Christian life. This pattern or even "dialectic" of being alive in mortal bodies. We are alive with the life of the age to come as we continue to live in this present evil age (Gal 1:4). We are participants of a new creation order (2 Cor 5:17) within what Paul calls the schema, the framework of this world which is passing away (1 Cor 7:31). Or in terms of the flesh-spirit distinction: believers are not those who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit *in* the flesh (bringing together Rom 8:4 and 2 Cor 10:3). (Cf. 2 Cor 5:7--those who walk in faith and not by sight--particularly with respect to the resurrection in view.) And 2 Cor 4: 16--between inner man and outer man. Rom 8:10--if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life on account of righteousness.

#### 5. Conclusion

There is the juxtaposition of body mortality and Spirit or resurrection life.

**Alive from the dead** -- specifies the present indicative of salvation (the already) *and* indicates the basis (or the dynamic) for responding to the imperative. **In the mortal body** -- specifies the future indicative of salvation (the not yet) *and* expresses the need (and the scope of concern) that the imperative has. This is how we and the congregation has to assess its situation: Adam -- sin, condemnation, death; Christ -- righteousness, justification, life.

#### 6. Tutor Marked Assignments

- i. What is the nature of the indicative and imperative in the Christian life?
- ii.

#### 7. References for further Reading

- K. F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (SBT 48 London: SCM, 1966);  
B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (ConB. New Testament Series 11; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979);  
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