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a *Grace Notes* course

ACTS 200

## **The Acts of the Apostles**

an expositional study  
by Warren Doud

Lesson 205: **Acts 9:10 to 31**

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## ACTS, Lesson 205, Acts 9:10-31

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**Acts 9:10-31****Acts 9:10**

**Acts 9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.**

Acts 9:10 ¶ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, here am I, Lord." [NASB]

**a disciple at Damascus, named Ananias**

The Greek Orthodox tradition says that Ananias was one of the 72 disciples of Jesus, one of those who went out two-by-two in evangelism. They also say that he became the bishop of Damascus and was martyred there. Other tradition suggests that his house was turned into a church. But these traditions can't be relied on for historical accuracy.

However, this may be, from Acts 22:12 we learn that he was a devout man according to the Law, having a good report of all the Jews that lived in Damascus.

Ananias name was very common among Jewish people, and means "Jehovah is gracious," very appropriate for this man of God, if not so for another Ananias, of Acts 5:1. Note that Daniel's friend, Hananiah, had that name (Dan. 1:6).

Ananias seems to have been well established in Damascus. He had a home and was available for the service the Lord called him to. It is not likely that he was one of the Christians who fled Jerusalem at the persecution, if only that he would probably not have had time to settle in.

We have another indication that he was a settled citizen of Damascus in verse 13, where he states "I have heard by many of this man." He was not an eyewitness of Saul's persecutions, but he had heard the accounts from many other people, probably from those who had actually fled from Jerusalem.

We know nothing concerning Ananias except what we learn from Luke or from Paul. He was a Jew who had become a disciple of Christ, and he was well reputed and held to be "devout according to

the Law," among "all the Jews who dwelt at Damascus (Acts 22:12). He is never mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistles; and the later stories respecting his history are unsupported by proof. Though he was not ignorant of the new convert's previous character, it seems evident that he had no personal acquaintance with him, or he would hardly have been described as "one called Saul of Tarsus," lodging in the house of Judas. He was not an Apostle, nor one of the conspicuous members of the Church. And it was not without a deep significance that he who was called to be an Apostle, should be baptized by one of whom the Church knows nothing, except that he was a Christian disciple and had been a devout Jew.

**and the Lord said to him in a vision**

From Acts 9:17 we see that it was the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to Ananias, for we see later that Ananias told Paul that it was the "Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto you in the way..."

Acts 9:17, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

The vision may have been in the form of a dream; some manuscripts add that the vision was "in the night." In any case, this method was used by the Lord to communicate some very special directions to Ananias.

**Acts 9:11**

**Acts 9:11 And the Lord said to him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prays,**

Acts 9:11 And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, [NASB]

**the Street which is called Straight**

In modern times, a long street called the Meidan stretches along the southern part of the city,

passing beyond the city wall and terminating at the BAWWABET ALLAH ("The gate of God"), which is the starting-point of the annual HAJ, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

In the Greek and Roman period most of the city lanes were crooked, but the street called "Straight" a long street, which had columns at regular intervals on both sides of the thoroughfare, ran through the city.

Archaeologists have uncovered parts of this street, and have determined that it runs from east to west, with the Jewish Quarter on the South and the Christian quarter on the North.

On the West end of town the street ends in a bazaar, north of which is the Moslem quarter of the city, in which are the citadel and the Great Mosque.

Parts of the city wall have been preserved with a foundation going back to Roman times, with Arab rebuilding above it.

### Judas

There is no information on who Judas was; except that we might infer that he was also a Christian believer with a gift for hospitality. Against that idea, some claim that Judas' house was merely a place where Saul was in the habit of staying when he came to Damascus, and that his companions brought him there, ignorant of any of the Christian implications of this event.

### Saul, of Tarsus

This is a good time to study the topic of Paul's Childhood in Tarsus. Tarsus in Cilicia was a great city in its day, rivaling Alexandria and Athens in the arts, sciences, and Greek culture and philosophy. The same city was called Tarshish in the Old Testament. In the time of Julius Caesar, the people of Tarsus showed themselves helpful in making many exertions and sacrifices for Rome during the civil wars of Rome, so they were given Roman citizenship, by the declaration of the Roman emperor, Augustus. It is on this basis that Paul later claimed the rights due him as a Roman citizen, something which was of considerable service to him and to the cause of Christianity.

### Topic: Paul's Childhood in Tarsus

#### behold, he prays

This tells us how Saul spent his time during the three days he was blind and fasting. This remark made to Ananias would serve somewhat to reduce the obvious apprehension he felt when he was told to seek out Saul. As Ananias would learn, these prayers were those of a brokenhearted sinner, and his prayer was in dependence on the grace and mercy of God, not on his own righteousness as a keeper of the Law.

#### Acts 9:12

**Acts 9:12 And has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.**

Acts 9:12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight. "[NASB]

Saul himself also had a vision from God; he was being prepared for Ananias' visit so that he could better profit from it. Some manuscripts do not have the phrase "in a vision;" however, even if we just read "And he has seen a man named Ananias coming in...", the fact that he had some foreknowledge of the meeting indicates that the Lord was preparing him by some supernatural means.

This information was given to Saul to identify Ananias and to assure him about Ananias, that he was no impostor.

Then, the information that Saul had received a vision was told to Ananias, in order to give him further encouragement that it was safe, and proper, for him to go to Saul. Even with the information that Saul was in prayer, and that he had received a vision from God, Ananias still had serious misgivings.

#### Acts 9:13

**Acts 9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem:**

Acts 9:13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; [NASB]

Saul's reputation had preceded him. Saul was notorious as a fanatical persecutor of Christians. Ananias had every reason to fear approaching Saul, especially in view of the mission Saul was on, to arrest and imprison Christians. You can see that Ananias had real fear of Saul, because that, even though he knew that God was speaking to him, he was still fearful of putting himself into the hands of someone who had been such a violent persecutor.

Here is the first use, chronologically, of the term "saints" in reference to Christian believers.

The "harm" done to believers in Jerusalem is described in the early verses of Acts 8, in which Saul "dragged men and women" from their homes and put them in prison.

#### Acts 9:14

**Acts 9:14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on your name.**

Acts 9:14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name. " [NASB]

Ananias had also heard about the authority which Saul had received from the high priest. This information may have been carried from Jerusalem by Christians who had escaped there and who reached Damascus before Saul did. Or, the news may have come in letters from Jerusalem. In any case, Ananias was urging this as a reason why he should have no connection with such a dangerous man.

#### Acts 9:15

**Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:**

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My

name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; [NASB]

#### Go your way

The Lord interrupts Ananias here and prevents him from going any farther with his reasoning. In effect, He dismisses Ananias' argument and gets him moving.

#### He is a chosen vessel unto me

This is **skeuo~ ekl ogh~** in Greek. The word literally signifies a vessel, but it was used in Greek, means any kind of instrument, or the means by which an act is done. So Polybius, speaking of Damocles, used **skeuo~** in this sentence, "He was a useful instrument, and fit for the management of affairs." Paul, in 1 Thess. 4:4, used the same word for the "body", as a vessel.

The phrase "chosen vessel" comes from the Hebrew and means a "well-adapted instrument." Whoever studies the life and character of Paul can agree that he was well-suited for the great work to which God had called him.

Keep in mind that God chose Saul long before Saul chose Christ. The phrase literally "a vessel of election." When Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, he said of himself that he was an earthen vessel, unworthy of so great a treasure (2 Cor. 4:7). Yet the Lord in eternity past chose the poor things of this earth to confound the wise.

#### to bear my name ...

Paul was to carry the emblem of the Cross among the Greeks and Romans, as well as to the Jews. He was called the Apostle (Teacher) of the Gentiles in several places in the Bible (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; see also Gal. 2:7,8 and Eph. 3:8). He begins immediately to preach Christ among the Jews, but the Lord moves him quickly into his ministry with the Gentiles (Acts 10).

#### Acts 9:16

**Acts 9:16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

Acts 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake. " [NASB]

#### he must suffer

So Saul, instead of proceeding as a prosecutor (and persecutor) of Christians, in the plan of God for his life he will suffer many things in preaching that very doctrine which he has hated. As you can see from later in this chapter, Paul began to preach Christian immediately, in Damascus, and immediately began to have his life threatened for it.

2 Cor. 11:23-28, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

"Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

The Lord prophesied this to Ananias as a way to encourage him that it was safe to approach Saul.

### Acts 9:17

**Acts 9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 9:17 And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [NASB]

Ananias had no more room to excuse himself! So he made his way to Judas's house. Gill says that he "quietly yields, and cheerfully obeys."<sup>1</sup> Well, there's no mention of cheerfulness in the Greek here, though Gill may be excused for imagining such, given the joyful results which came from Ananias' visit to Saul.

### putting his hands on him

This is what Saul had seen in his vision, a man coming in and putting his hands on him. There are several reasons that might be offered for Ananias' laying hands on Saul. It was customary in those days to do this as a prayer gesture or as something that accompanies communication. Or, this might have been a healing gesture, in which case we would suppose that Ananias had the spiritual gift of healing. Or, the laying on of hands might have been that Saul might receive the Holy Spirit. Or, it may have been for all of these reasons.<sup>2</sup> Barnes says that this was not "ordination" but could simply have been the usual modes of imparting blessing.

### Brother Saul

By this time, all suspicion has vanished; Ananias takes Saul to himself as a brother, not as a brother Jew but as one who is to be a brother in Christ.

It is worth considering the question here as to exactly when it was that Saul became a Christian believer. At what point in time did he actually place his faith in Christ as Messiah, as Savior? We know that he was very bewildered by the vision on the road and that he received no particular explanation from the Lord at that time. Then, while staying at Judas' house he received a vision, but according to this passage the vision only contained information about Ananias' coming to him.

Nevertheless, in the next verse his blindness went away, and he was baptized; so that at sometime he must have professed faith in Christ.

### the Lord, (even) Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Gill, Acts 9:17

<sup>2</sup> Gill, Acts 9:17

The Greek here is *ὁ κύριος ἰησοῦς*. There is nothing in the Greek to indicate the modifying word “even”, and indeed it’s not used in the NASB.

### be filled with the Holy Spirit

*πνευματοῦ ἁγίου* The special enabling which an apostle requires for his ministry is given to Saul at this time, and is in line with the promise of Jesus in Acts 1:8.

### Acts 9:18

**Acts 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight, and arose, and was baptized.**

Acts 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; [NASB]

From Conybeare and Howson, chapter 4:

“Ananias came into the house where Saul, faint and exhausted with three days’ abstinence, still remained in darkness. When he laid his hands on his head, as the vision had foretold, immediately he would be recognized as the messenger of God, even before the words were spoken, “Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

“These words were followed, as were the words of Jesus Himself when He spoke to the blind, with an instantaneous dissipation of darkness; “There fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, or, in his own more vivid expression, “the same hour he looked up on the face of Ananias” (Acts 22:13). It was a face he had never seen before. But the expression of Christian love assured him of reconciliation with God.

“He learned that “the God of his fathers” had chosen him “to know His will,” “to see that Just One,” “to hear the voice of His mouth,” to be “His witness unto all men.” (Acts 22:14,15) He was baptized, and the “rivers of Damascus’ became more to him that “all the waters of Judah” (See 2 Kings 5:12) had been. His body was strengthened with food, and his soul was made strong to “suffer

great things” for the name of Jesus, and to bear that name “before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

“He began by proclaiming the honor of that name to the children of Israel in Damascus. He was “not disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19), but “straightway preached in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God,”<sup>3</sup> and showed unto them that they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance.

“His Rabbinical and Pharisaic learning was now used to uphold the cause which he came to destroy. The Jews were astounded. They knew that he had been at Jerusalem. They knew why he had come to Damascus. And how they saw him contradicting the whole previous course of his life, and utterly discarding that “commission of the high-priests,” which had been the authority of his journey. Yet it was evident that his conduct was not the result of a wayward and irregular impulse. His convictions never hesitated; his energy grew continually stronger, as he strove in the synagogues, maintaining the truth against the Jews, and “arguing and proving that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.” (Acts 9:22)

“The period of his first teaching at Damascus does not seem to have lasted long. Indeed it is evident that his life could not have been safe had he remained. The fury of the Jews when they had recovered from their first surprise must have been excited to the utmost pitch, and they would soon have received a new commission from Jerusalem armed with full powers to supercede and punish one whom they must have regarded as the most faithless of apostates. Saul left the city, but not to return to Jerusalem. Conscious of his divine mission, he never felt that it was necessary to consult “those who were apostles before him, but he went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus.” (Gal. 1:17)”

<sup>3</sup> Acts 9:20, where “Jesus” and not “Christ” is the true reading. Verse 22 would make this probable, if the authority of the MSS were not decisive.

**Acts 9:19**

**Acts 9:19** And when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

Acts 9:19 and he took food and was strengthened. ¶ Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, [NASB]

This verse is a continuation of verse 18 and properly belongs in the same paragraph with it.

A Christian church existed in Damascus from these very early times of the Church and for many centuries thereafter. Some religious histories, or more accurately, legends, suppose that Ananias was a pastor or bishop of the church in Damascus. However that may have been, there were representatives of the church of Damascus who attended the Council of Nicea at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. In the fifth century, a bishop of Damascus was in the council at Ephesus; and later in that century it was considered a metropolitan church in Asia. The church there flourished until the late 8<sup>th</sup> century when the Saracens took over the Christian temple in Damascus and dedicated it to Mohammed.

It's not known how long Paul stayed in Damascus; it was long enough for him to receive some training from Ananias and other believers, and to begin preaching the Gospel in the synagogues. Some commentators say that he went to Arabia for three years, and returned to Damascus, before he returned to Jerusalem. See the discussion in verse 26 on "Saul in Arabia."

Paul's great conversion did not imply that he must have had, miraculously, a mature knowledge of Christian doctrine. He would have had to have taken time to be taught many things, in order to be able to preach successfully. <sup>4</sup>

**Acts 9:20**

**Acts 9:20** And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Acts 9:20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." [NASB]

The Greek of this verse [Westcott and Hort, and many manuscripts, including the Alexandrian, Syriac, and Ethiopic, and the Latin Vulgate] uses the word **iesou**~ rather than **Cristo**~ to refer to the Savior. (Note that the NASB considers this to be more likely.)

This is important, because the great question which had to be answered for the Jews was that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is the Messiah. The Jews already believed that the Messiah (Christ) was to be the Son of God. Paul wanted to convince people that the crucified Jesus was their Savior, and so he was proclaiming Him. Paul's object was to establish the identity of Jesus the Nazarene as the Messiah. <sup>5</sup>

**Acts 9:21**

**Acts 9:21** But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came here for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

Acts 9:21 And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" [NASB]

**amazed**

**epistemi**, in the imp. ind. 3p, "to put out of its place, to change or alter utterly,". The word is also used as a metaphor in Greek as "to drive one out of his senses." These folks were "amazed" to say the least; they were astounded to see Saul, who career as a persecuter of Christians they knew well.

<sup>4</sup> Clarke, Acts 9:20

<sup>5</sup> Vincent, Acts 9:20

**destroyed**

**porqhsa-**, aor. act. ptc. of **porqew** “to destroy; to ravage; to plunder.” Used in secular Greek to describe the devastation of a city during a siege.

Gal. 1:13,23, “For you have heard of my way of living in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the assembly of God, and **ravaged** it.

Gal. 1:21-23, “Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he **destroyed**.”

**which called on this name in Jerusalem**

[See comment in 9:2 on the use of “this Way”.]

**and came here for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?**

**Acts 9:22**

**Acts 9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.**

Acts 9:22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. [NASB]

Saul was gaining physical and spiritual strength. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he was absorbing Christian doctrine like a sponge. Furthermore, his vast knowledge of the Old Testament enabled him to correlate very rapidly all of the legitimate Jewish teaching with Christian Bible doctrine. Saul's life is a great testimony of God the Father's ability to take a willing and open intellect and make great use of it.

**confounded**

Imperfect passive indicative of **sunepeow**, “to pour together; to co-mingle; to make confusion.” The more Saul preached, the more the Jews were confused.

**proving**

This is a verb (**sunbibazow**) which means “to make to go together; to coalesce; to knit together.” Here Saul took various facts about Jesus' life, ministry, and deity and found in them the proof that He was really the Messiah.

This is a method of argument that Paul continued to use with the Jews.

Acts 17:1-4, “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

“Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

“And *some of them believed*, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.”

**Acts 9:23**

**Acts 9:23 And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:**

Acts 9:23 ¶ And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him,

**after many days**

It is at this point in the narrative that there is some difference of opinion among commentators as to the timing of events. We learn from Galatians 1:16-18 that Saul went from Damascus to “Arabia” and returned again to Damascus. Robertson believes that Saul's trip to Arabia took place between Acts 9:22 and 9:23, so that the “many days”, which is a reference to an indefinite but lengthy period of time, is the same period as the “three years” which the Apostle speaks of in Galatians. That is, Saul, after his conversion, spent a short time in Damascus, took a trip to Arabia, returned to Damascus, was threatened by the Jews there, escaped by the basket over the wall, and went to Jerusalem.

We don't know how much time he spent in Arabia, but the whole period of all of these activities was three years, or at least parts of three years.

This phrase "many days" is used in the Septuagint on Exodus 2:11 and 23 and 4:18, to refer to a considerable length of time. 1 Kings 1:18 states "and it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year."

We don't know what Saul did in Arabia; he probably preached Christ in various synagogues, but we don't know with what results.<sup>6</sup> Luke is certainly silent about it, and any assertion you might read about is, at this historical distance, would be speculative, at the least.

#### took counsel to kill him

"took counsel" is the aor. mid. ind. of **sunboul euw**, which means "counselling together." This had reached a climax, and the situation in Damascus seems much worse for Saul than when he left. The Lord's prophecy that he would suffer many things was about to see some of its fulfillment. The Jews meant to do away with him. They were filled with indignation at the things he preached, and were just as enraged as were those who "gnashed their teeth" at Stephen and stoned him to death. They not only "took counsel" but they made every attempt to carry out the murder.

#### Acts 9:24

**Acts 9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.**

Acts 9:24 but their plot became known to Saul. And they were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; [NASB]

#### their laying await

Actually, as the NASB states, "their plot" in the correct reading. The Greek is **epiboul n**, from **epi**, "against", and **boul n**, "a plot", hence "their plot against" Saul.

<sup>6</sup> Clarke, Acts 9:23

In fact, the plotters had the active cooperation of the King of Syria, Aretas, whose high official, the "governor" or Ethnarch, was one of those who "kept guard", watching for Saul.

2 Cor. 11:32,33, "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

Possibly the Jews obtained the consent of the Ethnarch and had him appoint some of themselves as guards at the gates of the city.

But Saul got knowledge of this plot from some source and was able to make his escape.

#### ARETAS<sup>7</sup>

Aretas was king of Arabia-Petraea, with his capital at Petra; his daughter was married to Herod Antipas.

His daughter returned to him when her husband committed adultery with Herodias, the wife of Herod-Philip, Aretas' half-brother (Luke 3:19-20; Mark 6:17; Matt. 14:3). This led to a war between Aretas and Herod Antipas, and Herod's army was completely destroyed (A.D. 36).

Aretas, taking advantage of the complications created by the death of the Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 37), took possession of Damascus (2 Cor. 11:32; compare Acts 9:25). This was about the time that Paul returned to Damascus from Arabia.

#### Acts 9:25

**Acts 9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.**

Acts 9:25 but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket. [NASB]

#### took him by night

Saul was threatened with death and needed to escape as quickly as possible. His Christian acquaintances arranged to help him; they would

<sup>7</sup> Bible Encyclopedia at [www.christiananswers.net](http://www.christiananswers.net).

have been arrested by the Jewish police if they were caught helping him.

### let him down

“Let down” is **calaw** “to let loose; to lower.” Used in the nautical sense, to “lower” the anchor (Acts 27:17), or to “lower” boats (Acts 27:30). Saul escaped, in somewhat the same way the spies in Jericho escaped, who were helped by Rahab to get out of Jericho (Josh. 2:15 ff).

### by the wall

Actually, **dia tou teicou~**, “through the wall”, or “through a window in the wall”. Paul describes the scene in 2 Cor. 11:33, where he uses the words **dia qurido~**, “through the window”. Some people had homes built into the walls of cities; so Paul may have been hidden in such a home of a Christian believer.

### in a basket

**sfuridi** – common for “basket.” But Paul uses a different, and uncommon, word in 2 Cor 11:33, **sarganh**, which means “something braided” such as a basket or cargo hoist braided from ropes. Think of one of those nets which are used to load and unload ships; they are filled with boxes and crates and hoisted onto the ship. (However, **sarganh** is used only twice in Greek, so there’s not much to go on for the translation.)

### Acts 9:26

**Acts 9:26 And when Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.**

Acts 9:26 ¶ And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. [NASB]

### when Saul came to Jerusalem

Rather, “when he had come to Jerusalem”, because in **paragenomeno~ de eij- lJerusalem**, the verb is an aorist participle, and translated in the NASB correctly as a past participle.

### he tried to join himself to the disciples

Saul wanted to associate himself with the Jerusalem Christians. He was eager to have fellowship with them and to continue his ministry. Also, he was probably seeking safety with the Christians, since he was undoubtedly being sought by Jewish authorities. But ...

### they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.

There were reasons to be cautious, and skeptical. The Jewish Christians were under severe persecution from the Jewish leadership. Also, they may easily have thought that Saul would fake a conversion to Christianity in order to infiltrate their community. It is not unnatural to have such doubts, especially since he had been gone from Jerusalem for up to three years.<sup>8</sup>

### Acts 9:27

**Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.**

Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. [NASB]

### But Barnabas took him

Barnabas saw the situation and took Saul under his wing. This shows a lot of insight, and not a little courage; this was a crucial time in Saul’s life, and the evidence seemed to be against him.<sup>9</sup>

We don’t know how Barnabas heard of Saul’s conversion and ministry. We can suppose that he had somehow got information from Damascus that Saul had been saved and was preaching Christ there; it’s likely that the situation would have been very sensational among believers. However it was, Barnabas used his great influence to convince the

<sup>8</sup> Barnes, Acts 9:26

<sup>9</sup> Robertson

apostles, and Peter in particular, and James, that Saul's claims were genuine.

**and declared unto them ...**

Barnabas told the apostles, and other Christians, Saul's complete story, from the time of his first seeing Christ on the way to Damascus. Saul was Peter's guest for two weeks, they had great fellowship.

Gal. 1:18,19, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

**Topic: Barnabas**

Bible references to Barnabas: Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22, 25,30; 12:25; 13:1, 2, 7, 43, 46, 50; 14: 12, 14, 20; 15:2, 12, 22, 25, 35, 36, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 2:1, 9, 13; Col. 4:10.

**Acts 9:28**

**Acts 9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.**

Acts 9:28 And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. [NASB]

Barnabas, Peter, and James opened all the doors for Saul; so Saul was received into full fellowship with the Christians of Jerusalem and participated fully with them in their witnessing and teaching.

**Acts 9:29**

**Acts 9:29 And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.**

Acts 9:29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. [NASB]

**Grecians**

The word "Greece" is from the Latin Graeci, the name given to them by the Romans, who applied to the whole people the name of the first tribe the Romans came across, the Graioi, a Boeotian tribe that took part in the colonization of Cyme in Italy.

The various Greek city-states referred to themselves by the name Hellenes; they called their

country Hellas, and their language the Hellenic language [ **hje|lhnik| glossa**]. Even today, the Greeks use these names, and the official name for Greece is "The Hellenic Republic" [**ELLINIKI DIMOKRATIA**]. A Greek person, then, is a Hellene.

(NAS: Hellenists) from **Ellenisto**~ The Revised Version of Acts 6:1 says "Grecian Jews," because "Grecians," in English, might be thought to mean Gentile Greeks. In the NASB, "Hellenists" means Jews.

The word Hellenist refers to a Jew, not a Greek, who comes from outside Palestine, from such areas of Greek influence like Alexandria or Cyrenia (coast of Libya). The contact of Jews with Greeks first began when Alexander forcibly settled 8,000 Jews in Egypt, in the Nile delta, where they formed a large part of his new city, Alexandria. From Egypt the Jews gradually spread along the whole North African coast. Jews were also removed by Seleucus Nicantor, from Babylonia to Antioch and Seleucia, and under various persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes and other Greek rulers, scattered themselves through Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, and the Greek islands of the Aegean.

The majority adopted the Greek language, and many forgot the Aramaic dialect which had been the Jews' language since their captivity.

A **Hellenizer** was a Jew who followed Greek philosophy and culture instead of the Jewish religion and practices.

**Hebrews**

Any man was a Jew [**ipudiao**~] who could trace his descent from Jacob. The word "Jew" is a racial identity.

A Hebrew was a Jew who spoke Hebrew and retained Hebrew customs, following the ancient religion closely.

The Hebrews whose families had come from Aram were called Arameans. This word refers to Aram, or Padan-Aram, the district of Mesopotamia surrounding the city of Haran, and the territory included the city of Damascus. Aram was the 5th son of Shem, Noah's oldest son; Haran was the elder son of Terah and Abraham's brother; he was

the father of Lot. The Jews from these areas spoke Aramaic (Assyrian), as did the Palestinian Jews of the time of Christ. Parts of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic, and Jesus spoke Aramaic.

Note: King Ahab fought against Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, whose capital was Damascus.

The distinction between a Hebrew and a Hellenist was a distinction *within* the Jewish nation, not between the Jews and other nations. Paul calls himself a “Hebrew of Hebrews,” that is, a Hebrew and of Hebrew parents, speaking Hebrew and following Hebrew customs.

In this verse, both the Hebrews and the Hellenists are Jews and are Christian believers, but there is still the line of cleavage between the two groups, which had the potential for conflict.

### Topic: Hellenism

### Topic: Hellenists and ARAMEANS

Paul relates, in Acts 22:17,18, that the Lord appeared to him in the Temple and told him to leave Jerusalem.

Acts 22:17,18, “And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; “And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.”

### Acts 9:30

**Acts 9:30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.**

Acts 9:30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. [NASB]

The Christians saw clearly what the danger was, so they quickly “conducted” (**katagw** “to lead down; to conduct away”).

We can only guess what Saul’s parents, relatives, and acquaintances in Tarsus had to say when they heard that he had become a Christian. Were there great recriminations from his Pharisee father? Was he counted as dead by his family, as are many converted Jews today? Luke is silent about this;

and there’s no other source of information about this brief phase of Saul’s life.

### Acts 9:31

**Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.**

Acts 9:31 ¶ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase. [NASB]

### the churches

The singular “church”, which we see in the NASB, is the true reading here, since all the important manuscripts have it that way. There were, of course, many churches throughout the region, but all the believers are members of the body of Christ, or may be considered as part of a single community of believers.

### had rest

**eijrhnh**, “peace”. They kept on having peace, because the persecution had become much less severe. Many of the disciples came back to the city in these days, and the apostles and others increased their preaching tours out of the city.

### and were edified

This is the most important result of all of the efforts of preaching and teaching that was being done by apostles and other disciples of Christ, save only for the winning of new souls to Christ.

“Were edified” is **oikodomoumejh**, which is the present passive participle of **oikodomew** “to build.” This concept of the building up of believers in the faith was to become one of the keynotes of the Apostle Paul’s ministry. It is very important, at a place like this in the study of Acts, to study the doctrine of Edification very carefully, so that it is clear how Christians in those days grew so much in strength and courage that they could face terrible persecutions.

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**Topic: Edification**

This is a continuous message with Paul.

**Ephesians 1**

**Ephesians 3**

**1 Corinthians 14**

Also, Peter makes great emphasis of edification. 1 Peter 2:5, “You also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

**walking in the fear of the Lord**

This is the concept of Occupation with Christ, which is the central idea in the study of the doctrine of the Christian’s walk with the Lord.

**Topic: Occupation with Christ**

**Topic: The Christian Walk**

**and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit**

They were walking in the consolation which the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, produced.

John 14:16-18, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

Romans 5:1-5, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

“And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

**Topic: The Sustaining Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

**were multiplied**

**pl hqjnh** “to multiple; to increase”. Barnes says, “No wonder that the Church of God increased, when such lights as these shone among men. This is a short, but full and forcible description of the righteousness, purity, and happiness of the primitive Church.” <sup>10</sup>

**Paul's Early Life**

From “The Life and Epistles of St. Paul” by W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, Eerdmans

**Paul's Infancy**

There is therefore little doubt that, though the native of a city filled with a Greek population and incorporated with the Roman Empire, yet Saul was born and spent his earliest days in the shelter of a home which was Hebrew, not in name only but in spirit. The Roman power did not press upon his infancy; the Greek ideas did not haunt his childhood; but he grew up an Israelitish boy, nurtured in those histories of the chosen people which he was destined so often to repeat in the synagogues, with the new and wonderful commentary supplied by the life and resurrection of a crucified Messiah. “From a child he knew the Scriptures,” which ultimately made him “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” as he says of Timothy (2 Tim. 3:15). And the groups around his childhood were such as that which he beautifully describes in another part of the same letter to that disciple, where he speaks of “his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice.” (1:5)

We should be glad to know something of the mother of St. Paul. But though he alludes to his father, he does not mention her. He speaks of himself as set apart by God “from his mother’s womb,” that the Son of God should in due time be

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<sup>10</sup> Barnes on Acts 9:31.

revealed in him, and him preached to the heathen. But this is all. We find notices of his sister and his sister's son (Acts 23:16), and of some more distant relatives (Rom. 16:7, 11, 21); but we know nothing of her who was nearer to him than all of them. He tells us of his instructor Gamaliel; but of her, who, if she lived, was his earliest and best teacher, he tells us nothing. Did she die like Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, the great ancestor of his tribe; leaving his father to mourn and set a monument on her grave, like Jacob, by the way of Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16-20; 48:7)? Or did she live to grieve over her son's apostasy from the faith of the Pharisees, and die herself unreconciled to the obedience of Christ? Or did she believe and obey the Savior on her own? These are questions which we cannot answer. If we wish to realize the earliest infancy of the apostle, we must be content with a simple picture of a Jewish mother and her child. Such a picture is presented to us in the short history of Elizabeth and John the Baptist, and what is wanting in one of the inspired books of St. Luke may be supplied, in some degree, by the other.

The same feelings which welcomed the birth and celebrated the naming of a son in the "hill country" of Judea (Luke 1:39), prevailed also among the Jews of the dispersion. As the "neighbors and cousins" of Elizabeth "heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her, and rejoiced with her," so it would be in the household at Tarsus when Saul was born. In a nation to which the birth of a Messiah was promised, and at a period when the aspirations after the fulfillment of the promise were continually becoming more conscious and more urgent, the birth of a son was the fulfillment of a mother's highest happiness; and to the father also (if we may thus invert the words of Jeremiah) "blessed was the man who brought tidings, saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him glad." (Jer. 20:15)

On the eighth day the child was circumcised and named. In the case of John the Baptist, "they sought to call him Zacharias, after the name of his father. But his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John." And when the appeal was made to his father, he signified his assent in obedience to the vision. It was not unusual to call a Jewish child after the name of his father; but it

was a common practice, in all ages of Jewish History, even without a prophetic intimation, to adopt a name expressive of religious feelings. When the infant at Tarsus received the name of Saul, it might be "after the name of his father;" and it was a name of traditional celebrity in the tribe of Benjamin, for it was that of the first king anointed by Samuel. Or, when his father said "his name is Saul," it may have been intended to denote (in conformity with the Hebrew derivation of the word) that he was a son who had long been desired, the first born of his parents, the child of prayer, who was thenceforth, like Samuel, to be consecrated to God. "For this child I prayed," said the wife of Elkanah, "and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord." (1 Sam. 1:27,28)

Admitted into covenant with God by circumcision, the Jewish child had thenceforward a full claim to all the privileges of the chosen people. His was the benediction of the 128<sup>th</sup> Psalm, "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life," From that time, whoever it might be who had watched over Saul's infancy, whether, like king Lemuel,<sup>11</sup> he learned "the prophecy that his mother taught him," or whether he was under the care of others, like those who were with the sons of king David and king Ahab (1 Chron. 27:32; 2 Kings 10:1,5), we are at no loss to learn what the first ideas were with which his early thought was made familiar. The rules respecting the diligent education of children, which were laid down by Moses in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> chapters of Deuteronomy, were doubtless carefully observed; and he was trained in that peculiarly historical instruction, spoken of in the 78<sup>th</sup> Psalm, which implies the continuance of a chosen people, with glorious recollections of the past, and great anticipations for the future; "The Lord made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children; that their posterity might know it, and the children which were yet unborn, to the intent that when they came up, they might show their children the same; that they might put their trust in

<sup>11</sup> Prov. 31:1; cf. 2 Tim. 3:15 with 1 Tim. 1:5.

God, and not to forget the works of the Lord, but to keep his commandments (vv. 5-7).

The histories of Abraham and Isaac, of Jacob and Samuel, Elijah, Daniel, and the Maccabees, were the stories of his childhood. The destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the thunders of Mount Sinai, the dreary journeys in the wilderness, the land that flowed with milk and honey, this was the earliest imagery presented to his opening mind. The triumphant hymns of Zion, the lamentations by the waters of Babylon, the prophetic praises of the Messiah, were the songs around his cradle.

### The Tribe of Benjamin

Above all, he would be familiar with the destinies of his own illustrious tribe.<sup>12</sup> The life of the timid Patriarch, the father of the Twelve; the sad death of Rachel near the city where the Messiah was to be born; the loneliness of Jacob, who sought to comfort himself in Benoni “the son of her sorrow,” by calling him Benjamin<sup>13</sup> “the son of his right hand;” and then the youthful days of this youngest of the twelve brethren, the famine, and the journeys into Egypt, the severity of Joseph, and the wonderful story of the silver cup in the mouth of the sack; these are the narratives to which he listened with intense and eager interest. How little was it imagined that, as Benjamin was the youngest and most honored of the Patriarchs, so this listening child of Benjamin should be associated with the twelve servants of the Messiah of God, the last and most illustrious of the apostles!

<sup>12</sup> It may be thought that here too much prominence has been given to the attachment of a Jew in the Apostolic Age to his own particular tribe. It is difficult to ascertain how far the tribe-feeling of early times lingered on in combination with the national feeling which grew up after the Captivity. But when we consider the care with which the genealogies were kept, and when we find the tribe of Barnabas specified (Acts 4:36), and also of Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:36), and when we find St. Paul alluding in a pointed manner to his tribe (Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5; and compare Acts 13:21 and 26:7), it does not seem unnatural to believe that pious families of so famous a stock as that of Benjamin should retain the hereditary enthusiasm of their sacred clanship. See, moreover, Matt. 19:28; Rev. 5:5; 7:4-8.

But many years of ignorance were yet to pass away before the mysterious Providence, which brought Benjamin to Joseph in Egypt, should bring his descendant to the knowledge and love of Jesus, the Son of Mary. Some of the early Christian writers see in the dying benediction of Jacob, when he said that “Benjamin should ravin as a wolf, in the morning devour the prey, and at night divide the spoil,” a prophetic intimation of him who, in the morning of his life, should tear the sheep of God, and in its evening feed them, as the teacher of the nations. When St. Paul was a child and learned the words of this saying, no Christian thoughts were associated with it, or with that other more peaceful prophecy of Moses, when he said of Benjamin, “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.” (Deut. 33:12)

But he was familiar with the prophetic words and could follow in the imagination the fortunes of the sons of Benjamin, and knew how they went through the wilderness with Rachel’s other children, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, forming with them the third of the four companies on the march, and reposing with them at night on the west of the encampment. (Num. 2:18-24; 10:22-24) He heard how their lands were assigned to them in the promised country along the borders of Judah (Josh. 18:11); and how Saul, whose name he bore, was chosen from the tribe which was the smallest (1 Sam. 9:21), when “little Benjamin” (Psalm 68:27) became the “ruler” of Israel. He knew that when the ten tribes revolted, Benjamin was faithful (2 Chron. 11; see 1 Kings 12); and he learned to follow its honorable history even into the dismal years of the Babylonian Captivity, when Mordecai, “a Benjamite who had been carried away” (Esther 2:5,6), saved the nation; and when, instead of destruction, “the Jews,” through him, “had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor;” and in every province, and in every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had a joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land become Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.” (Esther 8:16,17)

Such were the influences which cradled the infancy of St. Paul; and such was the early teaching under which his mind gradually rose to the realization of his position as a Hebrew child in a city of Gentiles. Of the exact period of his birth we possess no authentic information.<sup>14</sup> From a passage in a sermon attributed to St. Chrysostom, it has been inferred (on the supposition that he died AD 66, at the age of 68) that he was born in the year 2 BC of our era. The date is not improbable; but the genuineness of the sermon is suspected; and if it was the undoubted work of the eloquent Father, we have no reason to believe that he possessed any certain means of ascertaining the fact. Nor need we be anxious to possess the information. We have a better chronology that that which reckons by years and months. We know that St. Paul was a young man at the time of St. Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7:58), and therefore we know what were the features of the period, and what the circumstances of the world, at the beginning of his eventful life.

He must have been born in the later years of Herod, or the earlier years of his son Archelaus. It was the strongest and most flourishing time of the reign of Augustus. The world was at peace; the pirates of the Levant were dispersed; and Cilicia was lying at rest, or in stupor, with other provinces, under the wide shadow of the Roman power. Many governors had ruled there since the days of Cicero. Athenodorus, the emperor's tutor, had been one of them. It was about the time when Horace and Maecenas died, with others whose names will never be forgotten; and it was about the time when Caligula was born, with others who were destined to make the world miserable. This is the epoch fixed in the manner in which the imagination most easily apprehends it. During this pause in the world's history St. Paul was born.

### Social Position of St. Paul's Family

It was a pause, too, in the history of the sufferings of the Jews. That lenient treatment which had been begun by Julius Caesar was continued by

<sup>14</sup> As regards the chronology of St. Paul's life, it is enough to refer to Chapter 4 and the chronology in the Appendix to this work.

Augustus;<sup>15</sup> and the days of severity were not yet come, when Tiberius and Claudius drove them into banishment, and Caligula oppressed them with every mark of contumely and scorn. We have good reason to believe that at the period of the apostle's birth the Jews were unmolested at Tarsus, where his father lived and enjoyed the rights of a Roman citizen. It is a mistake to suppose that this citizenship was a privilege which belonged to the members of the family, as being natives of this city. Tarsus was not a *municipium*, nor was it a *colonia*, like Philippi in Macedonia, or Antioch in Pisidia; but it was a "free city,"<sup>16</sup> like the Syrian Antioch and its neighbor city Seleucia on the sea. Such a city had the privilege of being governed by its own magistrates, and was exempted from the occupation of a Roman garrison, but its citizens did not necessarily possess the *civitas* of Rome.

Tarsus had received great benefits from both Julius Caesar and Augustus, but the father of St. Paul was not on that account a Roman citizen. This privilege had been granted to him, or had descended to him, as an individual right; he might have purchased it for a "large sum of money" (Acts 22:28); but it is more probable that it came to him as a reward for services rendered, during the civil wars, by some influential Roman.<sup>17</sup> We should not be in serious error if we were to say, in language suggested by the narrative of St. Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 6:9), that St. Paul's father was a Cilician *Libertinus*.<sup>18</sup> That Jews

<sup>15</sup> Caesar, like Alexander, treated the Jews with much consideration. Suetonius speaks in strong terms of their grief at his death. Augustus permitted he largess, when it fell on a Sabbath, to be put off until the next day.

<sup>16</sup> It appears that Antony gave Tarsus the privilege of an *urbs libera*, though it had previously taken the side of Augustus and been named Juliopolis.

<sup>17</sup> Great numbers of Jews were made slaves in the Civil Wars and then manumitted. A slave manumitted with due formalities became a Roman citizen. Thus it is natural to suppose that the apostle, with other Cilician Jews, may have been, like Horace, *libertino patre natus*."

<sup>18</sup> This suggestion is due to Wieseler, who translates the verse which described Stephen's great opponents, so as to mean "Libertines" from "Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia." We think that another view is more natural, but at least

were not unfrequently Roman citizens we learn from Josephus, who mentions in the *Wars of the Jews* (II:14.9) some even of the equestrian order who were illegally scourged and crucified by Florus at Jerusalem; and (what is more to our present point) enumerates certain of his countrymen who possessed the Roman franchise at Ephesus, in that important series of decrees relating to the Jews, which were issued in the time of Julius Caesar, and are preserved in the 14<sup>th</sup> book of the *Antiquities* [Joseph].

The family of St. Paul were in the same position at tarsus as those who were Jews of Asia Minor and yet citizens of Rome at Ephesus; and thus it came to pass that, while many of his contemporaries were willing to expend a "large sum" in the purchase of "this freedom," the Apostle himself was "free-born."

The question of the double name of "Saul" and "Paul" will require our attention hereafter, when we come in the course of our narrative to that interview with Sergius Paulus in Cyprus, coincidentally with which the appellation in the Acts of the Apostles is suddenly changed. Many opinions have been held on this subject, both the ancient and modern theologians.<sup>19</sup> At present it will be enough to say that, though we cannot overlook the coincidence, or believe it accidental, yet it is most probably that both names were borne by him in his childhood, that "Saul" was the name of his Hebrew home, and "Paul" that by which he was known among the Gentiles. It will be observed that "Paulus" the name by which he is always mentioned after his departure from Cyprus, and by which he always designates himself in his Epistles, is a Roman, not a Greek, word. And it will be remembered that, among those whom he calls his kinsmen in the Epistle to the Romans, two of the number, Junia and Lucius, have Roman

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we should observe that we find Saul, a *Roman* citizen, actively operating in persecution with those who are called *Libertini*.

<sup>19</sup> Origen says that he had both names from the first, that he used one among the Jews and the other afterwards; Augustine, that he took the name when he began to preach; Chrysostom, that he received a new title, like Peter, at his ordination in Antioch; Bede, that he did not receive it till the Proconsul was converted; and Jerome, that it was meant to commemorate that victory.

names, while the others are Greek (Rom 16:7, 11, 21). All this may point to a strong Roman connection. These names may have something to do with that honorable citizenship which was an heirloom in the household; and the appellation "Paulus" may be due to some such feelings as those which induced the historian Josephus to call himself "Flavius," in honor of Vespasian and the Flavian family.

If we turn now to consider the social position of the Apostle's father and family, we cannot on the one hand confidently argue, from the possession of the citizenship, that they were in the enjoyment of affluence and outward distinction. The *civitas* of Rome, though at that time it could not be purchased without heavy expense, did not depend on any conditions of wealth, where it was bestowed by authority. On the other hand, it is certain that the manual trade, which we know that St. Paul exercised, cannot be adduced as an argument to prove that his circumstances were narrow and mean; still less, as some have imagined, that he lived in absolute poverty. It was a custom among the Jews that all boys should learn a trade. "What is commanded of a father towards his son?" asks a Talmudic writer. "To circumcise him, to teach him the law, to teach him a trade." Rabbi Judah said, "He that teaches not his son a trade does the same as if he taught him to be a thief;" and Rabban Gamaliel said, "He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced."

And if, in compliance with the good and useful custom of the Jews, the father of the young Cilician sought to make choice of a trade, which might fortify his son against idleness, or against adversity, none would occur to him more naturally than the profitable occupation of the making of tents, the material of which was hair cloth, supplied by the goats of his native province and sold in the markets of the Levant by the well-known name of *cilicium*.<sup>20</sup> The most reasonable conjecture is that his father's business was concerned with these markets and that, like many

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<sup>20</sup> Hair cloth of this kind is manufactured at the present day in Asia Minor, and the word is still regained in French, Spanish, and Italian.

of his scattered countrymen, he was actively occupied in the traffic of the Mediterranean coasts; and the remote dispersion of those relations, whom he mentions in his letter from Corinth to Rome, is favorable to this opinion.

But whatever might be the station and employment of his father or his kinsmen, whether they were elevated by wealth above, or depressed by poverty below, the average of the Jews of Asia Minor and Italy, we are disposed to believe that this family were possessed of that highest respectability which is worthy of deliberate esteem. The words of Scripture seem to claim for them the tradition of a good and religious reputation. The strict piety of St. Paul's ancestors has already been remarked; some of his kinsmen embraced Christianity before the Apostle himself (Rom. 16:7), and the excellent discretion of his nephew will be the subject of our admiration, when we come to consider the dangerous circumstances which led to the nocturnal journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea (Acts 23).

### Paul's Boyhood in Tarsus

But, though a cloud rests on the actual year of St. Paul's birth, and the circumstances of his father's household must be left to imagination, we have the great satisfaction of knowing the exact features of the scenery in the midst of which his childhood was spent. The plain, the mountains, the river, and the sea still remain to us. The rich harvests of corn still grow luxuriantly after the rains in spring. The same tents of goat's hair are still seen covering the plains in the busy harvest.<sup>21</sup> There is the same solitude and silence in the intolerable heat and dust of the summer. Then, as now, the mothers and children of Tarsus went out in the cool evenings and looked from the gardens round the city, or from their terraced roofs, upon the heights of Taurus. The same sunset lingered on the pointed summits. The same shadows gathered in the deep ravines. The river Cydnus has suffered some

<sup>21</sup> "The plain presented the appearance of an immense sheet of corn stubble, dotted with small camps of tents; these tents are made of hair cloth, and the peasantry reside in them at this season, while the harvest is reaping and the corn treading out.", Beaufort's *Karamania*, p. 273.

change in the course of 1800 years; instead of rushing, as in the time of Xenophon, like the Rhone at Geneva, in a stream of two hundred feet broad through the city, it now flows idly past it on the east.

The channel, which floated the ships of Antony and Cleopatra, is now filled up; and wide unhealthy lagoons occupy the place of the ancient docks.<sup>22</sup> But its upper waters still flow, as formerly, cold and clear from the snows of Taurus; and its waterfalls still break over the same rocks, when the snows are melting, like the Rhine at Schasshausen.

We find a pleasure in thinking that the footsteps of the young apostle often wandered by the side of this stream, and that his eyes often looked on these falls. We can hardly believe that he who spoke to the Lystrians of the "rain from heaven," and the "fruitful seasons" and of the "living God who made heaven and earth and the sea," (Acts. 14:15,17) could have looked with indifference on beautiful and impressive scenery. Gamaliel was celebrated for his love of nature; and the young Jew, who was destined to be his most famous pupil, spent his early days in the close neighborhood of much that was well adapted to foster such a taste. Or if it be thought that in attributing such feelings to him we are writing in the spirit of modern times; and if it be contended that he would be more influenced by the realities of human life than by the impressions of nature – then let the youthful Saul be imagined on the banks of the Cydnus, where it flowed through the city in a stream less clear and fresh, where the wharves were covered with merchandise, in the midst of groups of men in various costumes, speaking various dialects.

St. Basil says that in his day Tarsus was a point of union for Syrians, Cilicians, Isaurians, and Cappadocians. To these we must add the Greek merchant and the agent of Roman luxury. And one

<sup>22</sup> In Strabo's day there was an inconvenient "bar" at the mouth of the Cydnus. Here (as in the case of the Pyramus and other rivers on that coast) the land has since that time encroached on the sea. The unhealthiness of the sea coast near the Gulf of Scanderoon is notorious, as can be testified by more than one of those who visited there.

more must be added – the Jew – even then the pilgrims of commerce, trading with every nation and blending with none. In this mixed company Saul, at an early age, might become familiar with the activities of life and the diversities of human character, and even in his childhood make some acquaintance with those various races which in his manhood he was destined to influence.

We have seen what his infancy was; we must now glance at his boyhood. It is usually the case that the features of a strong character display themselves early. His impetuous fiery disposition would sometimes need control. Flashes of indignation would reveal his impatience and his honesty.<sup>23</sup> The affectionate tenderness of his nature would not be without an object of attachment, if that sister, who was afterwards married (Acts 23:16), was his playmate at Tarsus. The work of tent-making, rather an amusement than a trade, might sometimes occupy those young hands, which were marked with the toil of years when he held them to the view of the Elders at Miletus.<sup>24</sup>

His education was conducted at home rather than at school; for though Tarsus was celebrated for its learning, the Hebrew boy would not lightly be exposed to the influence of Gentile teaching. Or, if he went to a school, it was not a Greek school, but rather to some room connected with the synagogue, where a noisy class of Jewish children received the rudiments of instruction, seated on the ground with their teacher, after the manner of Mahomedan children in the east, who may be seen or heard at their lessons near the mosque.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See Acts 9:1,2; 23:1-5. Compare Acts 13:13 and 15:38 with 2 Tim. 4:11.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 20:34, "Ye yourselves know that *these hands* have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." Compare 28:3; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8.

<sup>25</sup> This is written from the recollection of a Mahomedan school at Bildah in Algeria, where the mosques can now be entered with impunity. The children, with the teacher, were on a kind of upper story like a shelf, within the mosque. All were seated on this floor, in the way described by Maimonides. The children wrote on boards and recited what they wrote; the master addressed them in rapid succession; and the confused sound of voices was unceasing.

At such a school, it may be, he learned to read and write, going and returning under the care of some attendant, according to that custom which he afterwards used as an illustration in the Epistle to the Galatians<sup>26</sup> (and perhaps he remembered his own early days while he wrote the passage) when he spoke of the Law as the slave who conducts us to the School of Christ. His religious knowledge, as his years advanced, was obtained from hearing the Law read in the synagogue, from listening to the arguments and discussions of learned doctors, and from that habit of questioning and answering, which was permitted even to the children among the Jews. Familiar with the pathetic history of the Jewish sufferings, he would feel his heart filled with that love to his own people which breaks out in the Epistle to the Romans (9:4,5) – to that people "whose were the adoption and the glory and the covenants, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ was to come" – a love not then, as it was afterwards, blended with love towards all mankind, "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile," – but rather united with a bitter hatred to the Gentile children which he saw around him.

His idea of a Messiah, so far as it was distinct, would be the carnal notion of a temporal prince – a "Christ known after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16) – and he looked forward with the hope of a Hebrew to the restoration of "the kingdom of Israel." (Acts 1:6) He would be known at Tarsus as a child of promise, and as one likely to uphold the honor of the Law against the half-infidel teaching of the day. But the time was drawing near when his training was to become more exact and systematic. He was destined for the school of Jerusalem. The educational maxim of the Jews, at a later period, was as follows: "At five years of age, let children begin the Scripture; at ten, the Mishnah; at thirteen, let them be subjects of the Law."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Gal. 3:24, where the word inaccurately rendered "schoolmaster" denotes the attendant slave who accompanied the child to the school. A Jewish illustration of a custom well known among the Greeks and Romans is given by Buxtorf. He describes the child as taken to the preceptor under the skirt of a Rabbi's cloak, and as provided with honey and honeycakes, symbolizing such passages as Deut. 32:13; Cant. 4:11; Ps. 19:10.

<sup>27</sup> We have learned from Buxtorf that at 13 there was a ceremony something like Christian confirmation. The boy was

There is no reason to suppose that the general practice was very different before the floating maxims of the great doctors were brought together in the Mishnah. It may therefore be concluded, with a strong degree of probability, that Saul was sent to the Holy City between the ages of ten and thirteen.<sup>28</sup> Had it been later than the age of thirteen, he could hardly have said that he had been "brought up" in Jerusalem.

## Edification

### DEFINITION / ETYMOLOGY

One of the words in the Bible used to describe Christian growth is *edification*. Edification is the process of spiritual growth in a Christian who is living according to the plan of God and who is fulfilling the command to "grow in grace and in the knowledge" of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word which is translated "edification" is οἰκοδομη (**oikodome**), a noun found in a number of New Testament passages:

**Rom. 14:19**

**2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10**

**Eph. 4:12,16,19**

**2 Cor. 14:5,12**

In all these passages, edification has two meanings.

- Collectively it refers to the building up of the body of Christ. In Eph. 4:16, you can see that the edification of individuals results in the building up of the church.
- For individual believers, edification refers to the spiritual growth and momentum in the Christian way of life, resulting in the glorification of God.
- When the collective connotation is used, **oikodome** should be translated "construction,

then called a "Child of the Law" and the father declared in the presence of the Jews that his son fully understood the Law and was fully responsible for his sins.

<sup>28</sup> That he came from Tarsus at an early age is implied in Acts 26:4, "My manner of life *from my youth*, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning."

building up," or "building process." When the individual connotation is used, **oikodome** should be translated "edification."

To grow in Christ, a Christian must be consistent on a daily basis in staying in fellowship with the Lord through confession of sin, and learning and applying Bible teaching.

Edification is the means of advancement and productivity in the Christian way of life.

Doctrine that is learned must feed both the human spirit and the human soul for capacity for both human and eternal life. Edification of the soul is the result.

Love is the means of reaching maturity and being edified (growing in applied knowledge), 1 Cor. 8

The growth of Christian love is a sign that a person has been learning and applying doctrine. "By their fruit you shall know them..." The fruit of the Spirit is a result of edification.

- Personal love for God the Father is and motivation for the reception of doctrine.
- Impersonal love for all mankind is functional love. It gives one the ability to listen objectively to a pastor-teacher regardless of his personality.
- Occupation with the person of Christ is the ultimate result of love.

### SYNONYMS FOR EDIFICATION

- Light. Eph. 5, "...walk as children of light.
- "Christ formed in you" Gal 4:19, connotes edification.
- "The new man," Eph 4; Col 3, refers to edification
- "The perfect man," James 1:4.
- "Imitators of God," Eph 5:

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PASTOR'S TEACHING IN EDIFICATION.

The responsibility of the pastor in edification is found in a number of passages.

**2 Cor. 10:8, For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up**

**and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame,**

- The Corinthians wavered so much that Paul really had to get tough with them and throw his rank around.
- The Corinthians were reacting to Paul's authority and so were doing many things detrimental to their spiritual life.
- "Our authority" refers to those with the communication gifts of pastor-teacher as well as apostleship, e.g., Apollos and Timothy. The pastor establishes his authority through the communication of doctrine.
- Paul makes it clear that edification depends upon accepting the authority of a pastor-teacher who communicates doctrinal information.

**2 Cor 13:10, "For this reason, I am writing these things while absent, in order that when I am present, I may not use severity in compatibility with the authority which God has given to me for the purpose of your edification, and not for the purpose of destroying you."**

- No one can learn any subject without accepting the authority of the one who teaches.
- Therefore, the importance of understanding that edification comes through the teaching of a pastor in communicating the mystery doctrine of the Church Age.

**1 Thess. 5:12, "But we request of you, brethren, that you respect those pastor-teachers who work hard among you [studying and teaching], who have command over you in the Lord and give you instruction."**

- The road to edification is paved with hundreds and thousands of lessons regarding the plan of God.

**Heb 13:17, "Keep obeying those who themselves are ruling over you, and submit to their authority [by learning Bible doctrine], for these same keep watching for the benefit of your souls as those who have**

**to render an account. Keep obeying them, in order that they may do this accounting with joy, and not with groaning, for this is unprofitable for you."**

- The threefold purpose of the pastor is found in Eph 4:12, "for the purpose of equipping the saints, for the production of Christian service, for the edification of the body of Christ."
- The "saints" refer to the family of God with emphasis on the baptism of the Spirit.
- "Equipping the saints" refers to God's grace policy and provision for the execution of the His plan.
- "Equipping" is the function of the pastor who, through teaching doctrine, is able to see people grow and become mature, productive Christians.
- All believers are in full-time Christian service from the moment of their salvation. Christian service is the normal result of spiritual growth but never the means.

**Eph. 4:16, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

- Body function depends upon the proper use of joints. Athletic coordination depends upon the proper use of the joints.
- The result of the communication of doctrine is edification in your soul.

#### **THE MOTIVATION OF THE BELIEVER IN EDIFICATION.**

There are two categories of motivation: Positive volition and humility

Positive volition is expressed in Rom 14:19. "Consequently, we run after [pursue] those things related to prosperity and edification."

- Running, not walking, expresses positive volition toward the mystery doctrine of the Church Age, which gives us all the details regarding God's plan, purpose, and will for our lives after salvation.

- This includes the learning, understanding, and application of the mystery doctrine of the Church Age as the means of executing the plan of God.
- Prosperity and edification go together; both are the result of continual positive volition.
- In order for consistent perception of doctrine to occur, it is important to have a mental attitude of humility.

**Rom. 12:2-5, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

"For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

"so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

- The standard of thinking from doctrine includes every aspect of divine viewpoint, orientation to life through enforced and genuine humility, and everything that makes us objective and teachable toward the Word of God.
- "Many members in one body" emphasizes that although we have different spiritual gifts and different personalities, we all belong to one family, the body of Christ.
- Without genuine humility, there is neither objectivity nor teachability. Without objectivity and teachability in life, you will be miserable, whether you are a believer or unbeliever, successful or not. Without objectivity and teachability, there is no edification.

### **EDIFICATION: THE KEY TO THE PROPER FUNCTION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.**

**1 Cor 14:12, "So also you, since you are eager to have the function of spiritual gifts, seek to abound in spiritual gifts that edify the church."**

#### **COMMENTS:**

- The Corinthians were all eager to get the gift of tongues because it was spectacular, and then they could assume they were spiritual. In reality, the worst believers in the Bible are described as having the gift of tongues.
- "Seek to abound" means you should give precedence to those spiritual gifts which result in edification. The primary spiritual gift in this category is the gift of pastor-teacher.
- The pre-canon temporary gifts did not edify the church.

**1 Cor 14:26, "When you assemble, let all things be done for edification."**

There are a number of ways in which we worship God, but they must all relate to our spiritual growth. Everything in assembly worship should be done with a view toward the objective, which is edification. The objective is to communicate the Word of God, the purpose of which is to produce edification.

The key to the correct function of the local church is edification. Edification, or the advance to spiritual maturity, is the objective of the Christian way of life.

In the context of 1 Cor. 14, the gift of tongues did not fulfill that purpose. 1 Cor 14:40 concludes that the gift of tongues did not do "all things properly and in an orderly manner."

The gift of tongues illustrated how not to do things decently and in order. For tongues did not contribute to the principle of edification, nor did it contribute to doing things "properly and in an orderly manner."

### **THE RESULTS OF EDIFICATION**

You begin with a foundation of eternal salvation and a body of teaching, the revealed scriptures,

"built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

The moment you personally believed in Jesus Christ, a foundation was constructed, comprised of the many things from God. The foundation is Jesus Christ.

**TOPIC: SALVATION DOCTRINES**

The foundation is constructed on the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross, [ See Topics: Redemption, Propitiation, Reconciliation, Imputation, and Justification ]

**2 Tim 2:19, Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal; the Lord knows those who are His.**

**1 Cor 3:11 No one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

With edification you become spiritually self-sustaining and you function under the privacy of your priesthood to resolve your own problems, including the greatest problems in life.

Problems are resolved in two ways: through the use of the biblical problem solving devices, and through understanding of specific principles in the Word of God. [ See Topics: Confession of Sin; Faith Rest; Occupation With Christ ]

**EDIFICATION MOTIVATES BELIEVERS**

Edification is the motivation in the function of love in the congregation, through which tolerance provides room for spiritual growth.

**Rom 15:2, "Let each of us accommodate his neighbor for the good to edification."**

**1 Cor 10:23, "All things are lawful, but all things do not edify."**

**Acts 9:31, "All the church were having prosperity, having been edified, and advancing in occupation with Christ."**

**The Christian Walk**

**Introduction**

Besides the examples of physical walking in the Bible, there are many references to two types of spiritual walking:

- Walking which is advancing in the Christian life through the use of divine power, and
- Walking in Evil (controlled by the sin nature and using human energy), resulting in stagnation, retrogression, or backsliding.

So, in walking, a Christian is either advancing or retreating. To advance, a believer must walk according to God's plan, stay in fellowship, and grow in Christ. To retreat in the spiritual life is to reside in Satan's cosmic system (Evil).

Therefore, "walking" denotes many functions, both pro and con, in the spiritual life.

**New Testament Words for Walking.**

The Greek word (**peripatew**) means to walk or to walk around. It is used for literal walking in Matt. 4:18. But **peripatew** is used primarily for the function of the plan of God in the Church Age in such passages as:

**Rom. 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk (peripatew) in newness of life.**

**Gal. 5:16,17 But I say, walk (peripatew) by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.**

**Eph. 4:1,2 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk (peripatew) in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love,**

**Eph. 5:1,2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk (peripatew) in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**

The spiritual walk of believers who are out of fellowship is described in the following:

**1 Cor. 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave**

you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking (peripatew) like mere men?

**Phil. 3:17-19** Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk (peripatew) according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk (peripatew), of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

The way of life of an unbeliever is also described by the word "walk":

**Eph. 2:1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked (peripatew) according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

**Col. 3:5-7** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked (peripatew), when you were living in them.

The Greek word (stoichew) means "to march in step; to march in rank; to walk in agreement with; to function in a system; to follow a leader from the ranks". It is used in the New Testament primarily for functioning under God's plan and advancing in that plan to spiritual maturity.

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

stoichew is used for the pattern of salvation by faith in Christ (walking by faith).

**Rom. 4:11,12** and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps (stoichew) of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

stoichew is used for following the rules of the new spiritual life in

**Gal. 6:16** And those who will walk (stoichew) by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

**Phil. 3:16** however, let us keep living by that same standard (stoichew) to which we have attained.

The word (poreuomai) means "to go; to proceed; to travel; to conduct oneself in a certain manner; to live; to walk". It is used for national degeneration:

**Acts 14:16** And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go (poreuomai) their own ways;

It is used for the carnal life pattern of the unbeliever:

**1 Pet. 4:3** For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued (poreuomai) a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

**Jude 16,18** These are grumblers, finding fault, following after (poreuomai) their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after (poreuomai) their own ungodly lusts."

**2 Pet. 2:10 and 3:18**

It is used for occupation with the person of Jesus Christ on the part of believers:

**Acts 9:31** So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on (poreuomai) in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

The Greek (**anastrephw**) originally meant in the Attic Greek "to upset; to overrun; to associate." Its figurative meaning was "to behave" or "to function in terms of human conduct." It was also used for the practice of principles.

In the Bible, **anastrephw** is used for the conduct and the lifestyle of the unbeliever in Eph 2:3.

It is used for motivation for Christian integrity.

**Heb. 13:18** Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct (anastrephw) ourselves honorably in all things.

It is used for the operation of the sin nature.

**Eph. 4:22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside (anastrephw) the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

It is used for life and conduct in Christian way of life.

**2 Pet. 3:11,12** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct (anastrephw) and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

The Greek word (**orthopedew**) means "to walk straight." It is used for legalistic modus operandi and resultant hypocrisy in Gal 2:14; in other words, they were not walking straight.

### Walking in the Light vs Walking in Darkness

"Walking in the light" is a term used specifically for the believer's execution of God's will, plan and purpose for the Church Age. The concept of walking in the light is found in Eph 5:8, "You were once in darkness [spiritual death], but now you are light in the Lord. Begin walking (**peripatew**) as children of light."

This command is a reference to experiential sanctification. Walking in the light is synonymous for the Christian way of life.

Just as walking in the darkness is incompatible with walking in light, so Christian degeneracy is incompatible with the plan of God.

Walking in the light is compatible with the status of being in the light. Walking in darkness is not compatible with the status of being in the light. A Christian walking in darkness is degenerate, whether moral, immoral, or both.

The command to walk in the light means that God intends for a Christian to be filled with the Spirit and to learn the Word of God under the filling of the Spirit.

The Lord Jesus is our precedent for walking in the light:

**1 John 2:6** "The person who says he abides in Him, he himself ought to keep walking in the same manner as He walked."

Our example for the Christian walk is the Lord Jesus Christ during the His life on earth, not Old Testament believers.

Walking as children of light means we are to become spiritually mature believers.

The power for walking comes from using the power of the Holy Spirit on the inside, Gal 5:16, "walk by means of the Spirit." This is a command to remain in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. Being in fellowship is the only way we can execute God's plan.

Walking describes the purpose of living in the operational will of God to glorify God in the Church Age.

We are commanded in 1 Thess. 2:12, "so that you may walk in a manner worthy of God who elected you into His kingdom and glory." This is a general reference to the fulfillment of the plan of God.

If we are going to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord after we believe in Christ, then we must be filled with the Spirit, and continually expose ourselves to the teaching of the Word of God.

If we do all of this, then we fulfill 1 John 1:7, "If we keep walking in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."

The challenge of walking in the light is found in Rom. 6:4, "Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism, in order that as Christ has been raised from the dead, so that we too might walk in newness of life."

- Walking in newness of life means we walk in the light of the Word of God.
- We walk in newness of life because we are in union with Christ.
- Walking in newness of life means using all of the assets God has provided for us: the availability of divine power; the indwelling of the Trinity; our portfolio of spiritual blessings; our universal priesthood and ambassadorship, etc.

The faith-rest principle is also a mandate for walking. Faith-rest exercise provides the poise of the Christian life. With faith-rest you control your own life under God's plan for your life.

**2 Cor. 5:7 For we walk by faith and not by sight.**

**Col. 2:6 As you have received Christ Jesus to yourselves, so keep walking by means of Him.**

The concept of walking is used for the function of problem solving in the Christian way of life.

**Eph. 5:1,2 Become imitators of your God as beloved posterity, and begin walking in the sphere of love...**

Learning and using the problem solving devices moves you along in executing the plan of God, which is walking in the light.

**Eph. 4:1,2 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, encourage you to walk in a manner worthy of your station in life [royal family of God] into which you have been called with all humility and true sensitivity with perseverance, tolerate one another by means of love.**

**as unwise, but as wise.**

All of these commands to keep walking are commands to keep learning doctrine, to keep advancing spiritually in the Christian way of life.

### Walking in Darkness is Related to Satan's Strategy of Evil

Walking is used as a warning against the cosmic system. John 8:12 is the prophecy of this.

**Living in Satan's system is called walking.**

**Phil. 3:18,19 For many [believers] keep walking, concerning whom I have often told you, even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose termination is destruction, whose God is their emotions, whose fame comes by means of dishonor, who keep on thinking about earthly things.**

**1 John 1:6 If we contend that we have fellowship with Him and keep walking in darkness, we lie and do not live the truth.**

**1 Cor. 3:3 For you are still carnal, since there is jealousy and strife. And you keep walking in accordance with men.**

Life in the cosmic system (Evil) is called walking in darkness.

**John 11:9,10 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.**

**Eph. 4:17-19**

**Walking is Related to Executing God's Plan.**

**Eph. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared in advance that we should be walking by means of them.**

- At salvation we became His creation, a new spiritual species.
- We are to walk by means of the things prepared by God for us in eternity past, such as the problem solving devices. The result is divine good: gold, silver, precious stones

**Col. 1:9,10**

This is the point at which you fulfill all the commands for walking.

Walking is used for a mandate to advance to the objective of spiritual maturity.

**1 Thess. 4:1**

### More References to Walking

Walking by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit:

**Rom. 8:1-4** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Basic Christian living: we received Christ by faith, so now we walk by faith.

**2 Cor. 5:7** For we walk by faith and not by sight.

**Col. 2:6** As you have received Christ Jesus to yourselves, so keep walking in Him.

Building up momentum in spiritual things:

**3 John 4** I was very pleased because I discovered that some of your children keep walking by means of doctrine even as we have received a mandate from the Father.

**Eph. 5:15-18; Col. 1:9,10.**

Walking related to the application of doctrine:

**Col. 4:5,6** Keep walking in wisdom toward outsiders; keep purchasing the time. Your doctrine must always be applied in grace, having been seasoned with salt, so that you should know how to respond to every person.

**Eph 5:1-2**

**Testing as part of the Christian walk:**

Rom. 13:13,14; Eph. 4:17; Phil. 3:18,19

### Occupation with Christ

#### Introduction

The Lord has made available many provisions for living according to His plan and growing in Christ. These provisions are known variously as “divine operating assets”, “techniques for Christian living”, “problem solving devices”, and so forth.

These provisions are part of the great store of blessings which God has already made available to us in Christ.

Eph. 1:3, “And has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

These provisions include:

- Confession of Sin
- The Filling of the Holy Spirit
- Faith-Rest - the ability to trust God and to enjoy His peace
- Orientation to Grace
- Personal Love for God
- Impersonal Love for Mankind
- Joy - the happiness of God which does not depend on people, circumstances, or things
- A personal destiny shared with all in God’s royal family
- OCCUPATION WITH JESUS CHRIST

This article deals with the subject of Occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, under the following headings:

- What is Occupation with Christ
- Why a Christian Needs to be Occupied with Christ
- The Bible Commands Regarding Occupation with Christ
- Mechanics - How to be Occupied with Christ
- The Results of Occupation with Christ

#### What is Occupation with Christ

Occupation with Christ is a mental attitude by which a Christian believer views all things in life with the Lord Jesus Christ in mind.

Occupation with Christ is love for the Son, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, therefore it is the expression of love for God. The Bible commands us to love God, with all our heart, soul and mind. Being occupied with Christ is a great part of our love for God. Therefore, this concept is one of the most important spiritual functions in the Christian life.

Love for God, and Occupation with Christ, results from learning, digesting, and applying Bible truth.

The Bible describes the lifestyle of wisdom and the path to spiritual maturity through the filling of the Holy Spirit and growth in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is invisible to us because He is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God. He will not become visible to us until we see Him when He returns. So, loving Christ requires a system of communications which is based on thought. The system is the Word of God, God's thoughts and God's words, guarded in the Scripture. There is no other accurate record of the mind of Christ, divine viewpoint, apart from what is contained in the Bible.

Therefore, we can only come to love Jesus Christ, to be occupied with Christ, through learning the Word of God and making His thoughts our thoughts.

1 Cor. 2:16, For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

This love for Jesus Christ can only come about through applied Bible truth.

Eph. 3:19, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.

1 Pet. 1:8, and though you have not seen Him, you love Him [occupation with Christ], and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

Joy and occupation with Christ always go together, you can't have one without the other. The glory with which you are filled is Bible truth, and this emphasizes the fact that you have come to know Christ through perception and application of the Word of God.

#### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDWELLING OF CHRIST AND OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST**

The Indwelling of Christ is not an experience. Every Christian, whether a novice or advanced believer, is indwelt by Christ, has been since the point of salvation, and always will be. You find this teaching in John 14:20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; and 1 John 2:24.

Christ indwells believers for a number of reasons: (1) as a sign that a Christian is a member of God's royal family, (2) as a guarantee of the blessings which we have for time and eternity, (3) as a guarantee of eternal life and a life after death in the presence of God, (4) as a motivation for us to stay in the plan of God, especially when we experience suffering.

Occupation with Christ, though, is one of the processes leading to Christian maturity, and not all believers experience this. Occupation with Christ is the focus of all worship. When you worship God "in spirit and in truth" you are occupied with Christ.

Occupation with Christ is the main motivation in a Christian's life. And it is the prime solution to all the problems of life. Only positive believers who choose to follow the plan of God are occupied with Christ.

The following are expressions of the process of being occupied with Christ. Notice in each case how the Christian is involved in a thought and decision process leading to occupation with Christ.

"Christ being formed in you..." (Gal. 4:19)

"Christ at home in your hearts..." (Eph. 3:17)

"Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

Occupation with Christ makes an issue out of knowledge of the Word of God, setting right priorities, being involved and active in the plan of God, and glorifying God during a Christian's lifetime.

#### **Characteristics of Occupation with Christ**

1. Jesus Christ is God; so, occupation with Christ is the greatest expression of love toward God, the objective of all Christians.  
Deut. 6:5, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."
2. Occupation with Christ becomes the means for making great decisions with an impact on history.

Heb. 11:27, “Moses gave up the crown of Egypt. He became strong under pressure, for he saw the invisible One.”

3. Occupation with Christ begins as the believer moves toward spiritual maturity, Col. 3:15-17.
4. Occupation with Christ glorifies Him, Eph. 3:17-21
5. Occupation with Christ means that human beings are not raised on pedestals, Phil. 3:7,8.
6. The means of continuing to be occupied with Christ is the daily learning and application of Bible teaching while under the control of the Holy Spirit, Jer. 9:23,24.
7. Occupation with Christ is a pastor’s prime motivation to teach the Bible so that believers grow in Christ, Heb. 6:10.
8. Occupation with Christ is related to victory in spiritual warfare with Satan and his angels. With your mind in the right place, you are confident of victory, Col. 3:1,2.

### **The Need for Occupation with Christ**

Psalm 118:9 tells us, “It is better to take refuge in the Lord that to trust in princes.” If you take refuge in the Lord, you stop expecting things from people. Your fellowship with God solves the problems that you have with people, and makes your relationships with people far better.

A person is seldom treated the way he wants to be treated, or loved the way he wants to be loved. Outside of God’s plan, this can cause frustration and instability.

This frustration becomes a major motivation in life and leads people on a frantic search for fellowship with people, instead of fellowship with God. Until a person becomes stabilized in his thinking, by occupying himself with Christ, he will be very unstable. People select their companions, their spouses, even their churches, based on the desire to be loved and treated properly.

Most of the time, people don’t find what they are looking for, so they become bitter, and indulge themselves in jealousy, envy, vindictiveness, hatred, and revenge, and are very disappointed in all categories of life.

Occupation with Christ brings about a change in priorities in a Christian’s life. Proper focus on Christ takes care of the problems of friendships, romance, marriage, business, or social life, and the problems that are caused by constant friction with people in all situations. Love for God and for Christ takes the place of frustration and bitterness with people.

Impersonal love, which is the professional attitude of a mature believer toward all people, provides a capacity for wonderful relationships with people in Christian fellowship, friendship, and marriage.

#### **The Problems of Focusing on Self, People, Things**

Jer. 17:5,6 Thus says the Lord, “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert, and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant.

Three great problems develop through failure to be occupied with Christ. The first problem is to have a focus on self. This is arrogance, or an overestimation of one’s self. When you are indignant, or offended, or angered by the way you are treated, your eyes are on yourself. You are frustrated and bitter, and you become vengeful. You make bad decisions from a position of weakness.

The second problem of wrong focus is to have one’s eyes on people. We tend to put our trust in people in many different relationships. We think people are causing our problems, and we look to other people to solve our problems. We try to find people who are compatible, but are always be disappointed in them.

There is nothing wrong with having relationships with people. In fact, they are unavoidable. But we will always be disappointed by people until we have a personal love for God, occupation with Christ, and an impersonal love for all people. This spiritual outlook is the source of pure joy and the enjoyment of a personal sense of eternal accomplishment.

You can’t change other people, even your spouse. When you try, it only intensifies the problem.

What you are doing is making an issue out of yourself instead of Christ's teaching. The only person you can change is yourself; and you cannot do that by executing some sort of psychological program for your life. Personal change comes only through growth in Christ and using the assets that God has provided for solving the problems of life.

The third problem caused by failure to be occupied with Christ is a focus on things. Sometimes when you're not being treated properly, you decide to sublimate in some way by buying something, going somewhere, seeking out recreation. If you can't get away, or you can't afford your dream package, you spend your life filled with fantasy or wanderlust.

Occupation with Christ provides a new focus on life, away from self, people, and things. When you have spiritual self-esteem, it doesn't matter how you are treated, whether you are loved or not loved, or whether you get what you want. It is your fellowship with Christ that counts!

God is perfect and can only treat you within the scope of His perfection. Within God's plan, you will be treated in a manner that is most beneficial to you, with the proper combination of pleasure and suffering, joy and sorrow, social life and solitude, a combination of blessing and testing to bring you to maturity.

So, how you are treated by people, or by life itself, is no longer an issue. You are living a life of love for Christ as your motivational solution. You have impersonal love for people as part of your functional integrity. The Lord gives you victory over hurt, anger, hatred, frustration, or antagonism toward people, even in the midst of some of the greatest expressions of frustration.

You have yourself been changed through the Word of God. You can pass all forms of testing without being destroyed. You are well positioned to conduct a powerful personal ministry for Christ, being free from the self-generated problems to which most people are subject.

The Bible Commands Us to be Occupied with Christ

Occupation with Christ is commanded by God; it is not an option. If you are going to live the Christian life according to God's plan, you must come to the place where you are occupied with Christ.

Deut. 6:5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

This verse shows that it is God's will that we be absorbed with Him in our whole being: heart, soul, and might. This means the Word of God must be our top priority. To love God - to love the Lord Jesus Christ - we must know Him. We learn about Christ, the Living Word, through the Bible, the written Word. The written Word and the Living Word eventually become our main focus in life. A Christian cannot enter spiritual adulthood (maturity) without this dual priority in life.

Christians who are not occupied with Christ will always be novices, spiritual immature, and dabblers in the faith.

Heb. 12:2, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus Christ is the author and perfecter of our faith (our doctrine). Furthermore, the Bible is the "mind of Christ", the actual thinking of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16)

The word "joy" in Heb. 12:2 refers to the happiness of the Lord Jesus as he endured the suffering of the Cross, when He was being judged for our sins. We don't usually think of happiness associated with Christ's suffering, but this was the pure joy, in Christ's case, of his being 100% occupied with the Father and with His plan.

1 Pet. 3:15, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

This verse is a command to be occupied with Christ. The "heart" is the place in the soul where wisdom and applied Bible knowledge reside. We "sanctify" Christ in our hearts by having maximum understanding and application of Bible

truth. By consistent learning of the Word, under conditions of spiritual fellowship (control of the Holy Spirit), a believer sanctifies Christ as Lord in the heart.

### **MECHANICS - HOW TO BE OCCUPIED WITH CHRIST**

You have probably already seen that occupation with Christ is accomplished through having regular interaction with the Word of God. The #1 priority is concentration on Bible truth, and organizing one's life around that #1 priority. When you do that, you are concentrating on Christ, you are occupied with Christ.

To concentrate on the Word, you must receive consistent accurate teaching from a pastor-teacher. In Eph. 4:11-16, we see that the method God the Father has chosen to bring us to maturity as individuals, and to have a mature, productive church, is Bible teaching from men who are prepared to minister (preach) the Word of God.

You must listen and learn many things from the Bible. Some of them will seem to have no immediate application, but all Bible knowledge is important in God's plan for your life. If you stay with it, the pieces will begin to fit together and it will all make sense.

If your top priority is Bible truth, your life will begin to change almost without your knowing it. You will learn doctrine every day, and you will begin to use the problem solving techniques that the Bible offers. Your mental attitude will be determined by the divine thinking that is coming into your soul.

When the Word of God is the main focus of your life, you come to the point of personal love for God the Father. You will have spiritual self-esteem. Once you begin to have love for God, and to be occupied with Christ, you will no longer feel threatened by things in life that once disturbed you. You have a relaxed mental attitude and spiritual joy, which is happiness supplied by God that you have regardless of circumstances, things, or the people in your life. This process is demonstrated in 1 Peter 1:6-8.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

that the proof (genuineness) of your faith (doctrine), being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

and though you have not seen Him (Jesus Christ), you love Him (occupation with Christ), and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

In other words, you begin to function by using the Word of God during times of testing, at the same time as you are occupied with Christ. You are actually sharing the happiness of God as you go through life.

### **THE RESULTS OF OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST**

**Occupation with Christ is the principal solution to all problems that occur in life.** God the Father has provided us with everything necessary for us to have a capacity for joy and a prosperity that is independent of people or circumstances. These provisions are known as "all blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Note that the place of blessing is in Christ. All blessings, and all problem solutions begin with Occupation with Christ.

**Occupation with Christ glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ.** (Eph. 3:19-21)

**Occupation with Christ is required in order to have complete fellowship with God the Father.** I John 1:6. Walking "in darkness" is the opposite of occupation with Christ.

In 2 Cor. 13:14, the "practice of truth" is fellowship with God the Father; and fellowship with God always leads to love for God.

I Cor. 1:9 indicates that fellowship with Christ is concurrent with, and necessary for, fellowship with God. Since you were "called into fellowship with His Son," this should be your main priority in life. But this means that you have to make the Word of God your main interest in life.

Fellowship with God the Holy Spirit is also closely tied in with occupation with Christ. Phil. 2:1,2 “Therefore, if there be any encouragement in Christ, if there is any comfort of love, if there is any fellowship with the Spirit, if there is any affection mercies, complete my happiness by thinking the same things.”

God’s happiness is completed as we have fellowship with Him, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Then we can have true fellowship with people, without putting people before God. 2 Cor. 13:14 “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love for God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” But without occupation with Christ, interaction with other people is often bad.

**Occupation with Christ, therefore, eliminates the superficiality of human hero worship.** Phil. 3:7,8 “...I count all things but loss except for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...”

As you become occupied with Christ, you have a stronger motivation to have a relationship with the Lord, and you change gradually from dependence on people to dependence on the Lord. You cannot change people; it is God who causes people to change, to grow up. And no one is fully grown up who is not making use of occupation with Christ. The key to God’s plan is that we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ.

2 Cor. 5:14-17 For the love of Christ continues to motivate us, in that One died for all; therefore, all have died. And He died as a substitute for all, in order that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and was resurrected...

**Occupation with Christ brings spiritual self-esteem and self-confidence.** You have self-esteem when you stop competing with people and undermining them. You stop slandering, gossiping, maligning, and judging other people. You have impersonal (professional) love for other people, because you are occupied with Christ. You live in grace, and you are a conduit of grace to other people, because Christ has become formed in your thinking and you love Him above

everything else. The result is 2 Cor. 5:14 “The Lord for Christ motivates...”

**Occupation with Christ is the Basis for Production and Blessing**

It is the means by which mature believers contribute to national blessing (blessing by association). Deut. 30:15-20.

It produces courage and victory in battle, Jer. 23:10,11.

It is the basis for strength during testing, Psalm 31:23,24.

It results in great blessings, Psalm 37:4,5.

It provides strength under pressure, Heb. 11:27.

It helps the Christian avoid fatigue in the soul, Heb. 12:3.

**SUMMARY REMARKS**

Occupation with Christ is the ultimate function and outlook of the Christian way of life. It is the only answer to unrealistic expectations in life, which include not being treated the way you think you should be treated, and not being loved the way you think you should be loved.

Occupation with Christ is the main problem solving feature of Christian living, and it is the key to all other solutions which God’s plan provides.

Occupation with Christ proceeds through three phases as the Christian grows in Christ. First, “Christ is formed in you”, Gal. 4:19. As a result, “the love for Christ motivates us.” 2 Cor. 5:14

Second, occupation with Christ is characterized as “Christ at home in your hearts”, Eph. 3:17, resulting in “setting apart the Lord Christ in your hearts”, 1 Pet. 3:15.

Third, in spiritual maturity, “Christ is exalted in my body, whether by life or by death,” Phil. 1:20. The result “for me, living is Christ and dying is profit,” Phil. 1:21.

Phil. 3:7-10, “Whatever things were gain to me, I have concluded them loss for the sake of Christ, I conclude all things to be loss because of the surpassing greatness of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, because I have suffered the loss of all things, and I now consider then dung in order that I may gain Christ. And that I may be

demonstrated in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Christ in the fellowship of His death.”

### Peace

The word "peace" in the Bible, from the Greek word (**eirenei**), refers to a mental attitude of tranquillity based on a relationship with God in the Christian Way of Life. It is a word which describes the result of a person's correct response to God's Grace.

The Bible uses "peace" in two ways. There is personal peace with God which comes when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. Then, there is the peace of God which is available on a daily basis as the believer participates in the Christian way of life according to the Plan of God.

So, where you find peace mentioned in the Bible it refers either to the reconciliation of a Christian in salvation, as in Eph. 2:14,17, or to the mental attitude found in the believers.

**2 Tim. 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."**

### Peace With God - Peace in Salvation

Peace with God is never available apart from Grace. The Cross of Christ is the focal point of Grace and is the source of Peace. Jesus Christ is our eternal Peace.

**Romans 5:1 "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Grace removed the Barrier and made peace between man and God. So, when the unbeliever responds to Grace by faith, the result is Peace.

Ephesians 2:14-18 provides a good illustration of how God made it possible for anyone to have peace with God, with special emphasis on the fact that such different types as Jews and Gentiles have been provided for.

Verse 14 deals with peace as a product of reconciliation. Verse 15 explains that the "enmity" between God and man, that which we call the Barrier, was "abolished" once and for all. Verses 16 to 18 explain that the enmity has been slain for both Jews and Gentiles so that now those who were near to God, the Jews, and those who were far off, non-Jews, have been brought into union with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### Peace in the Christian Way of Life

In our lifetime we can experience Peace on a daily basis. When the believer responds by faith to Grace, God provides many blessings which can result in great inner happiness.

**Isaiah 26:3,4 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."**

In the Christian Way of life, peace comes through fellowship with God and daily growth, advancement in spiritual things which brings stability, a relaxed mental attitude, orientation to the plan of God, occupation with Christ, and the ability to employ faith-rest principles in all areas of life.

READ Philippians 4:6-9

Peace, or tranquillity, precedes the enjoyment of prosperity. It is part of the preparation for prosperity. One must have Peace to have the capacity for prosperity. God may hold prosperity back until there is the capacity to enjoy it.

**Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."**

READ Jeremiah 29:1-7

Any loss of peace is followed by adjustment to the plan of God (confession and restoration to fellowship), faith-rest, and relaxed mental attitude, and Peace in the new situation.

The man or woman who receive grace and peace from the Lord is in perfect position for spiritual production, and reproduction.

<b>The Acts of the Apostles</b>	Page <b>35</b>
<b>ACTS 200, Lesson 205, Acts 9:10-31</b>	a Grace Notes study

READ James 3:13-18.

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