


ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

BIBLE COMMENTARY NO.49

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PRODUCTION

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DATE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EPISTLE'S WRITING

This epistle to the Ephesians dates back to Paul's house arrest in **Rome 61-63AD**. It has teaching on a variety of subjects as worship, prayer, family and civil relationships, the Christian life as warfare and the believer's walk with God. Ephesians is well known for its emphasis on God's grace (cf. 1.7 where he speaks of the "exceeding grace of God" and 2.4 & 6 where the famous coupling of "salvation by grace alone" is set forth) and for the two fine examples of Paul's prayer life set out in its early section. To an extent the book is a manual for Christian conduct. **Ephesians, I believe, is the tool of the Holy Spirit and the apostle is His penman as He commends and promotes that deepening covenant love relationship with the Father and that Christ likeness that brings eternal glory to God. It conceives of us as "seated in the heavenlies" and challenges us to become what the LORD designed us to be.** Ephesians is written against the background of Roman military life on which the apostle draws heavily for his imagery of the Christian life as soldiering.

The Church at Ephesus benefited by the ministry of Paul and Timothy and later John the divine. It is thought that the latter arranged for the mother of our LORD to spend her later life on the high southern hill overlooking the city. The commentary you are about to study majors on our relationship with God in Christ which is the sheet anchor of the Christian life and issues:

- (a)** In our relationship within the family and the church, and
- (b)** With the wider world.

This "special "In Christ" I take to be the key or legend of the epistle and it is further explained in the following paragraph.

HEAVENLY UNION, AGE-LONG PURPOSE AND INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP NB 4.20

Paul rejoices in an awesome intimacy that resulted in radical and swift change in his own life and has kindred effect in those who meet Christ today. He sought to convey the experience of the pure fulfillment and satisfaction of knowing Jesus – which added value to family life and daily work but enabled men and women to live and even die for Jesus when loyalty to Christ made that demand. In the earliest days this enthusiasm and passion for Christ carried phalanxes of humanity into the fold of Christianity. Christ was without

peer – and still is! I have tried to act as a *spiritual humming bird* to extract this essence of virtually heavenly intimacy that characterises Paul’s teaching in the epistle. I have condensed the teaching at various points applying to Paul’s *εν χηριστω* Greek usage the term “**Harmony Knot**” – a term I have coined for the intimacy I find expressed in various contexts within the letter. The concept of “union with Christ” brings with it joy and the expansive synergism of fellowship with His elect and His sovereign plan for history is factored in the original Pauline usage besides one’s own personal experience; my term answers both to the expansive and experiential aspects. With this in mind you will easily fall into step with Paul’s “in Christ” teaching of this prison letter. On the personal level Paul, even under house arrest and later in the dark Mamertine, enjoyed sweet communion with the loveliest and best Man that ever lived – Luther called Him “the proper man”; the sweetness and aroma of that relationship is the great gift of this epistle. Paul’s greatest weapon, as this epistle teaches, was the long-range intercessor – Jesus Christ, who continued intimately to work with his apostles and hear their every cry as He continues to do today!

The letter’s many *εν χηριστω* **Harmony Knots** beautifully express the inspiration joy and rich fellowship experience and “heavenly ambience” of being “in the circle” of Jesus day by day; of being well assured of security and love in “the covenant” ties with the LORD and committed as a bond slave like one rowing in a trireme only in unison with others and “united to Christ” as the theologians describe this *εν χηριστω* faith relationship cf. Chapter 4.1 & 4.4 & **Exodus 21.6**. Paul writing under house arrest and as a bondman of Christ teaches Christ’s bondmen to rejoice over and over again.

May you be led to appreciate the closeness and wonder of our relationship with our LORD Jesus Christ; to rejoice in Him, and to love Him more dearly and follow him more nearly day by day? May you also explore the dimensions of this union in its church and prophetic contexts?

The 1st knot of living with Jesus As the Christians were bound to Ephesus as their home they were bound to Christ as Saviour. They were also *εν χηριστω* literally “in covenant union with Christ” “Bound by faith and love to Jesus” Paul – 10 years back – founded the Ephesian church. *Ephesus* means hurled” – and the term refers to the fabulous stone-image of Diana or Artemis. Christ – our living stone – both came from heaven & returned as high-priest – cf. Numbers 6.24 referred to in v.2. Though they *existed* in Ephesus they truly *lived* closer to Christ! His faith like that of *the famous St Cecilia – her throat cut – her 4 fingers telling in death of a Trinitarian faith.*

(1) WORSHIP OF THE FATHER 3-6

The 2nd knot – bound to Christ through His eternal plan

Our heavenly blessings began when He bound us to himself in love in heaven (v3)

“He called us out” before he laid the cosmic foundation so that we should be “holy” and “without brand” or “criticism” – right close beside Him in a circle of love. The Father *saw us on the horizon* long, long ago and put us in the

position of sons through all that Christ would ever do for us. This is the stated “pleasure” of a personal choice [*θελημα*] – not just a passing inclination – and it deserves the biggest public praise of the expectation and hope which He thus attached to his grace.

This GRACE is in Gods character. It is a uniquely beautiful characteristic

(2) WORSHIP IN THE SON WHO BINDS US CLOSE 7-12

The 3rd knot – loved for Christ’s sake

In the pleasure of His will he has shown us once for all grace in the one He loved as Himself –

He bore our iniquities sorrows stripes sins – to Him we are eternally bound in love.

The 4th knot of redemption [*απολυτρωσις*] past present & future and the forgiveness of all our blunders & wrong routes in life – our Lord is “immensely rich” [*πλουτος*] in grace. The promise of redemption from sin and out – redemption from the world itself has built a strong bond between the Master and ourselves as His disciples...

The Greeks said that *riches came from the underworld in the form of corn.*

Very well, our riches lies in the “seed that fell into the ground and died to bring forth much fruit” that is, Christ’s death & resurrection from the tomb.

The 5th knot of new capabilities & gifts

God has in addition showered overflowing riches on us in the form of “wisdom” (*skill in understanding*) and “prudence” (practical character building skill). He thus binds us the closer to Him by gifts for service and what John Newton in his famous “Letters” called the ‘sweets and delicacies’ of his daily providences toward His children.

The 6th knot of relationship to the Father.

In order to bring all things to account in the economy of the fullness of the times –

The 7th knot of the headship of Christ in His church

Paul speaks of all things in heaven and earth being brought under one head – in Him. The Father will in the final age be “all in all” and so even the golden age is itself preparatory to the “new heaven and earth” in which righteousness finds its permanent home. To be “in Christ” yields title to that fair city – the New Jerusalem” in its eternal setting.

The 8th knot of our calling

In Him we have been called out – seen on the horizon long ago according to the proposed purpose of working all things according to *the inclination* of his will (*Note – He was willing to defer or bend down in grace without prejudice to His purpose of holiness*). What strengthening and deepening of the union with Christ results from the joyful knowledge that we, along with the apostles & earliest believers, shall be to the public praise – of His expectation; we of the 21st century along with those who first placed hope absolutely in Christ.

(3) WORSHIP IN THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT SEALS US 13-14

The 9th knot of the Spirit’s seal

Wood was sealed in Ephesus with the seal of the owner-purchaser and floated to where it was to be used. We are sealed and are used as God's timber for God's temple. You having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation – believed and were sealed *like purchased timber* by the holy Spirit of promise – the *αρραβων* – *down payment* on the possession in safekeeping until its *taking home from the marketplace* – for the public praise of His expectation...So ends a praise section 213 words long in Greek. Ephesus was a big timber exporter and in those days timber was stamped with the buyers seal before it was shipped. In our lives the Holy Spirit gives us assurance and sense of our destiny – we are destined to stand around His throne and enjoy His presence!

The 10th knot of fellowship 15-23 cf. 6.18

The new resource – a long-range weapon – in our risen Lord

Paul under house arrest was thrilled with the faith & love of Ephesians; through prayer at long range and concert with visiting believers he testified to deep experience of union with Christ in the 10th knot of fellowship, linking him with Jesus & the Christians. Paul was a man now with limits to his freedom, a man under orders. His comfort was Jesus – his encouragement the church at Rome & far away, to them he spoke & wrote & prayed – as this letter shows – they were the milk of human kindness that strengthened his bond with the mediating Lord – to whom he prayed that they might have:

- (a) The spirit of wisdom – **unveiling [apokalupsis]** Christ so as to share what He is like
- (b) The eyes of their minds enlightened to know **the hope** of His calling
- (c) Sense of the riches of the **glory or expectation** of His inheritance in the saints, and
- (d) Sense of His overwhelming power within which he here compares to a *long range sling*. Greek *υπερβαλλον*. Like the sling Jesus' resurrection empowered believers according to the effective nature of God's control of the amount of power exerted in Christ – that is to say – the same power by prayer & by the Holy Spirit was continuing to shape the world of New Testament times.

The 11th knot – Christ's resurrection power at work in us...for He raised Him **and set** Him in heavenly places – high above all rule, administration, rising power and lordship and every name *of this age and any in future (A challenge to the claim of later prophets)*. All is under His feet as head of the church-His body – the fullness of the one who fills all things in every circle. The bond with Christ links us corporately to the sovereign of the universe who is a friend to our every need yet profoundly divine – showing mercy to our weakness yet developing our spiritual life and holding the reins of history firmly toward that *“one divine event to which the whole creation moves”* – to quote the text inscribed on the dome of the capitol building in Washington on the

orders of a farseeing Christian of past days who looked for the Lord's appearing.

CHAPTER 2

This letter has 8 lessons about our "walk" or way of life – and 2 are here (cf. verses 18 & 20).

1. The Satan inspired agenda.
2. The new union by faith employed in the works of God.
3. The glorious "foundation of God" which was the first principle of Solomon's temple and
4. The first tenet of his teaching – i.e. "the awe of the Lord

1 THE ORIGINAL STATE; DEATH IS INHERITED WITH NATURAL GENERATION¹⁻⁴

"You existed as Dead". The word for "being" is with "dead" "living dead" Greek *οντας νεκρος*. So man can exist for a term without spiritual life – first as a "transgressor" in infancy and early youth and then as a "sinner" in "grown up" years. In sympathy with scripture we reckon man by nature a sinner. Our former "walk" was after the AION – the way of the world-according to Satan – the *archon* (authority) of the air – the spirit who now energises the sons of disobedience.

Greek "*archons*" took the lead in independent action-instigated war – though there was also the treasury official *BASILEUS* and the six *THESMOTHETAI* or draconian legislators. Satan operates with high hand "acting apart from God" – at war with our king and creator. He becomes god by default - proclaims "a grey area" e.g. "hath God said?" and assumes authority in Eden. Pretender that he is, he tries again with Jesus-saying to the Lord, "Cast yourself down" – but time & again gets his rebuke from the Lord who refers him back to scripture, "Worship the Lord your God, serve Him only".

Paul urges that we all lived our "daily life" by the "will and purpose" of the flesh SARX (the singular is indicative of "thighs" and can refer to strength /sex /child-bearing / the will of the intellect – our own ideas. By natural generation we pursued our own agenda by which we can only fall under God's wrath

2. THE QUICKENED STATE COMES THROUGH MERCY OR GRACE 5

"By grace you have been saved" indicates the past reality in continuance-it is an experience enjoyed-final in nature. One is reminded of the reply of Bishop Westcott to a Salvation Army lassie who asked him "Are you saved." His reply was "do you mean *esothern*? Or do you mean *sozominos*? Or do you mean *sothesomai*? The then first scholar of biblical Greek alive was also a humble Christian and he was saying "Do you mean have been saved? Or am I being saved? Or will I be saved?"

The 12th Knot of quickening 6

He *has raised us together* and placed us in the heavenlies in fellowship with Christ to show us His kindness in the eternal ages. *Only gods are placed in the*

heavens in Greek thought. The assurance of a seat in heaven deepens our love and appreciation of His grace.

The 13th knot of anticipating his face and a “happy ending”

Once there we will experience the “overwhelming power of what we will then call “kindness” *CHRESTOTES* – which in Greek thought was associated with a “happy ending.” The riches involved far exceed anything on earth –of first hand experience of Jesus

*Yes that will be glory – for me, glory – for me, glory – for me
When by His grace I shall look on His face
That will be glory, be glory for me*

3. THINK OF YOUR LIFE AS A POEM 7-10

All the good things we do have been written before in His book. Cp. Rev20.12 with v10 The extent to which our spiritual lives are independent is nil-they are united to Christ as were his works to the Father – cf. Jn5.36. We are “poems” if you like-written to permanently record the works God planned that we should live out and ensample. The great poems THE ODESSEY and the ILIAD recount battles of long ago. The lives of Christians are an Odyssey of colour and gripping story of our way home to God and an Iliad of the spiritual battle and sacrifices made.

The 14th Knot of inspired works is *Christ’s great ODYESSEY of the strife with Satan* – with its crescendo in the apocalypse. Ethical works that require great energy; the energy of the Holy Spirit – were prepared that we might spend our life engaged in them.

Cf. Malachi 3.16 “They that feared the Lord spoke every man to his friend and the Lord sharpened his attention QASHAB and a book of remembrance was written for his face (i.e. reading) concerning those who feared the Lord and spoke of His name.” In judgment the books are opened again Revelation19.12

4. HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR FORMER SINS TINKLING LIKE OLD SUNKEN WRECKS? 11-14

You were gentiles called uncircumcised in the eyes of the technically “circumcised” Jew, aliens from Israel’s polity – without circumcision, tallith, fringe, phylactery, twin-pointed beard & strangers to covenant promise – without God in the world. It is said of an old puritan that *he took a walk among his old sins* to avoid becoming proud of the better deeds God wrought in him. Right now [*νυν* this Greek term means “exactly at this point in time”] like the Ephesians we experience The 15th knot of *the blood of Christ*. v13 This is not primarily a reference to the Jewish sacrificial system but to the cross of Christ. Jesus is our peace – making both one –having broken down the middle wall. There was a notice at the edge of the court of the Gentiles in the temple area “Let no man of the nations go beyond this point on fear of death” a notice

might ban Gentiles – none can keep us apart from Christ. This ever-deepening fellowship was the joy of the apostle

My father's favourite hymn rendered that bond more meaningful to him. It is after all the blood that brings us nigh to God.

There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains
I do believe I will believe that Jesus died for me
That on the cross He shed His blood from sin to set me free

5. THE NEW MAN 15-22

The Lord created a *new humanity* – reconciled both Jew & gentile in one body to God through the cross – slaying enmity and **preaching peace** to the people of Ephesus as gentiles. By Him we have a means of access by one Spirit to the Father. “You are, he says, “no longer strangers without citizenship – fellow citizens, householders – built on the prophetic apostolic foundation – and Christ the cornerstone – the building grows proportioned together into a holy temple indwelt of God in the Spirit.”

A MOODY TESTIMONY TO RADICAL SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Dwight L. Moody's first convert was an adult in a San Francisco Sunday School. He came to the Lord as the Sunday school teacher, soon to become evangelist, chalked up a list of earthly & heavenly treasures on a black board in these two lists: “GOLD LAND HOUSES FUN BUSINESS DRESS RUM” and “JESUS ANGELS CROWNS TREE OF LIFE PURITY SONG.” The man took thought that very day and said in the words of an old hymn,

Take this world but give me Jesus

All its joys are but a name

He will grace and comfort give you

For time and eternity the same

6. KEY OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES 17

Paul uses references to Isaiah 57.19 & 52.7 that proclaim that the gospel of Christ is for all the nations. God's word of repentance and faith comes both to those “near” and “far off”.

We can re-educate, not re-generate; re-stock the mind not renew it; save from worldly excess but not its contagion, patch up the old but we cannot make a new creature. That is divine work. The hypothesis stands, “If any man be *in Christ* (having experience of the union and bond this great epistle highlights a few dozen times) then he is a new creature (2Cor.6.17).”

(b) A POETIC TESTIMONY FROM MASEFIELD'S POEM “SAUL KANE”

Kane tore his clothes to shreds and ran into the street ringing a fire-bell – then the wrath of his evil heart subsided when Christ came to him. The former poet laureate give him these words, “*I did not think I did not strive – the deep*

peace burnt my me alive – the bolted door had broken in – I knew I had done with sin – I knew that Christ had given me birth.”

(c) A TESTIMONY FROM JOHN NEWTON'S DIARY

John Newton's diary records: *I went to Africa that I might sin to my heart's content. I was a wild beast on the African coast-but the Lord caught me and tamed me*

He was sure of heaven and said "Three wonders about heaven will be – some I would have expected to see will not be there, some I did not expect to see will be there and the greatest wonder of all will be to find myself there." His epitaph reads, "John Newton, once a libertine and blasphemer and slave of slaves in Africa, but renewed purified, pardoned, and appointed to preach that gospel which he had laboured to destroy!"

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIC TESTIMONY TO NEW LIFE

1. Daniel 12.3 "They that turn many to righteousness shine ever & still on". Daniel is clear that a huge body of righteous ones will arise in the latter day. His death made one new man v17
2. Isaiah 52.7 & 57.19 "His feet publish peace" "I create fruit of lips" Isaiah, who foretold the death of the Lamb of God, knew that message would bring many souls to peace. He said "He shall see of the travail of his soul" v17.
3. Zechariah 9.10 Ephraim no longer battles – but speaks peace to the nations – He speaks peace from sea to sea. This prophet of the Second Advent foresees a world renewal in the distant future v17
4. Isaiah 28.16 "Behold me lay a chief cornerstone in Zion – believers will not run for other help or seek other pleasure." Again Isaiah directs all eyes to Calvary and confirms that to experience this work is profoundly fulfilling v20.

The 16th Harmony Knot links Jew & Gentile

[συν-αρμο-λεγουμενη literally "agreeing" or "fitting together"- the base of our word "harmonising"] Ephesians 2 v.21

Isaiah records God's word "Look **at me laying** the stone – here the prophet directs us to the divine foundation of renewal as he does to the lamb atoning for the sins of *all humanity* in his 53rd chapter. The effect of the Hebrew is that **the gaze of nations of men and women is directed to Calvary** where Christ lays the foundation of salvation in sacrifice.

There was a children's' song that went something like this,

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Whatever their name, whatever their hame,
All are precious in His sight.
Jesus loves **the little children of the world.** (Adapted)

The royal prophet Isaiah speaks of the many virtues of Christ “the stone” in the Prophecy of Isaiah 28.16 – The Hebrew speaks both of the *Chaldean slab* – Abraham’s faith and offering at Jerusalem and of a common *stone of the field* buried and raised – which speaks of Christ’s death and real humanity; there was the *tested stone*—Christ’s sinless life & trials; there was the *precious stone*—the beloved Son – the word YAQAR is used of “Kings daughters” Who are given away; there is the *foundation stone* – NB in 2Chron3.3 Solomon was shown the place of sacrifice before he built the temple. All this is prophesied in Isa28 and effected in Christ

LOOK AND LIVE

Well might Isaiah call us to “behold” God at work in the yet undisclosed atonement that Jesus accomplished on the cross of Calvary? It was as Jesus testified in “looking at the serpent on the pole” that Israel was healed according to the account in Numbers 21.9. It is in looking by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ as the atonement for all our sins that we are guaranteed forgiveness and our names entered on the book of life, His spirit given as a seal of the ultimate purchase when Christ returns and the danger of condemnation gone by because He was punished for our sin.

(d)THE TESTIMONY OF CHARLES HADDEN SPURGEON

The famous Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon heard a preacher say,” Young man, “Look unto me and be saved, all you ends of the earth. He records, “I looked till I could have looked my eyes out”. He was reportedly a lone figure in the congregation that day – but the Lord was there and spoke mightily to his soul – the glorious result was – he was saved to serve

READER, TAKE TIME

Do, please, take time to understand the profound matter of Christ’s purpose to found a new creation of persons renewed by the Holy Ghost – look within John chapter 3 to grasp it better. Beaver away at the 5th chapter of Romans till you find that peace that invades the soul – by which alone the world can be wrestled from the power of darkness. Put your name in the 5th verse of Isaiah 53 and rejoice that Jesus was wounded for you – in the great exchange by which you receive pardon because He took your guilt on the cross. Don’t leave this great bible chapter on salvation until you yourself are sure you are saved. When with the ransomed in glory His face I at last shall see
Twill be my joy through the ages to tell o f His love for me
How marvellous how wonderful – and my song shall ever be
How marvellous how wonderful –is the Saviour’s love for me.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter expounds the mystery of “Gods love” revealed & “Christ settling down”v17 in us. All bond service, diaconate, preaching and prayer relate to the great central theme of the death of Christ. Grace

established all the church offices – bishops deacons pastor evangelists etc. to herald and train men to herald a wonderful Saviour. Ordinary people in an extraordinary fellowship are building for eternity – towards the divine event of His kingdom.

17th Knot: harmony in the family of God

1. PAUL THE BONDSERVANT 1-6a

Paul was bound to Christ by the grace of God [*χαρις*]. We don't know how much the Ephesians among whom the apostle laboured had come to know of Paul's life and stewardship since conversion. There is some autobiography in the Galatian epistle. His conversion experience was recorded by Luke (cf. Acts 9) and is quite apocalyptic – enhanced by Ananias' vision of persecution ahead. As to why Paul got involved in preaching – that was on account of God's plan – not understood before New Testament days – but revealed by the Spirit in or to the apostles and prophets

2. PAUL THE DEACON 6b-7

Paul's is the DIAKONEIA of the gospel – to carry it forward. This was an honour and gift of God's grace and in line with the energising of Paul's life by the increasing power of God. We find the NT deacons do not diminish in role – they go on to adopt considerable preaching roles, as in the case of Stephen and Paul

3. PAUL THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS 8-13

He was given grace as a preacher

- (a) Bringing good news of the riches of Christ to the gentiles. The pagan riches sources at Delphi – but one cannot trace Christ's. Eventually the trail leads heavenwards

The 18th knot

- (b) It was Paul's ministry to bring others into fellowship of **the hidden mystery** – veiled by God, who in Christ created all – so that NOW to powers & authorities the variegated wisdom of God should be seen in the church according to – the climax of covenants

The 19th knot

- (c) The union with Christ is consolidated by of boldness and the LORD'S promise of access to God's presence at any time and any place through the confidence of Christ.
- (d) So Paul asks that they be not fainthearted on account of **his tribulations** for them – their glory – clearly he was hoping that his endurance would strengthen the church.

4. PAUL THE INTERCESSOR ON HIS KNEES 14-21

Compare Paul's solemnity & awareness of the covenant with that of Solomon in 2 Chronicles 6.7

- (a) **As Paul is at the very foundation stage of the church Solomon is at the font of kingship – cf. 2Chronicles 3.1ff cf. 2 Chronicles 6 – Solomon intercedes for the people like Paul for the church**
- (b) Further he sought that they would be strongly held by the power of the Spirit in the inner man
- (c) That Christ be at home in them as they root downward in love
- (d) That they be strengthened to campaign as soldiers to comprehend the dimensions of love
- (e) That they would know the ***mighty new long distance armour – i.e. our intercessor who loves us and is praying in glory***

The 20th Knot: fullness of the Spirit

- (f) And be filled with His fullness that can do more than any asks – in accordance with His power at work within us – to His glory in the church – not all generation of the age of ages. Paul may be thinking of the **exponential advance of the church** into the future and **of the great final church of Jew & Gentile in the last age.**

KEEPING THIS VISION BEFORE US

*“Thy kingdom come! **On bended knee**
The passing ages pray;
And faithful souls have yearned to see
On earth that kingdom’s day*

*But the slow watches of the night
not less to God belong;
and for the everlasting right
the silent stars are strong.”*

This great demonstration of divine love and purpose which even now frustrates and binds Satan and will lead to his being arrested by Michael at the rapture or “calling out” of the church and then the world is to witness the subsequent exponential millennial growth of the Kingdom purpose of God. Paul will not have us relinquish this vision. Satanic powers will grasp & seek to revolt against its grandeur bringing persecutions of the last period of the church – paralleling witness unto death in the church’s early days-yet will come that golden age long prophesied. Paul is concerned in prison that the church never concedes that this ordained bright era of the kingdom will fail to come. We are to “wait” for it’s emergence in utter faithfulness – battling on – conscious of our “super weapon”-the intercessions of our risen lord & Mediator – and his sovereignty over the ages

*The day in whose clear-shining light
hand with peace
All wrong shall stand revealed
When justice shall be throned in might,
righteousness
And every hurt be healed*

*When knowledge, hand in
shall walk the earth abroad
the day of perfect
the promised day of God.*

F.L.Hosmer 1840-1929

CHAPTER 4

THE “CHRISTIAN’S WALK”

The first of four effects of the risen Lord settling in our hearts and arming us with intercession

Do study the 4 “Therefore” occurrences in **4.1,4.17,5.1,5.15 with 5.8** .The bulk of the practical teaching of the letter connects to the introductory thesis that in the risen Lord a mighty new spiritual weapon of long-distance love care & intercession has been unveiled. **Therefore** He is very near and binds us in the **Harmony knot of fellowship which means: – walking worthy of our calling**

- (a) Walk in unity
- (b) Walk in holiness not with a dark empty mind & hard heart
- (c) Walk in love as mimics of Christ
- (d) Walk in the light
- (e) Walk carefully buying opportunities in service

(1) WALK WORTHY 1

The bond slave Exodus21.6

The 21st knot – Coming alongside another

Union with Christ has much to do with our ability to help others – to comfort. As people called to follow Jesus, to serve our neighbour in love, to tell out the good news, we make a thorough-going decision to walk worthy – i.e. “have a valuable life” “bringing a return”. How? A tract distributor John Allen is on record as saying *58 people become Christians every minute*. To get involved in that task would be valuable! Paul, however, emphasises Christ-like walk or graces and the capacity to live in harmony.

A SERIES OF GREEK PHRASES ENCAPSULATES THE FAITH 1-6

1. *ταπεινοφροσυνη, πραοτητος* – *meaning* “Lowly” as a tapestry carpet to make others feel wonderfully comfortable, “mild” not wild – gentle and lovely as a tame animal.

2. *μακροθυμιας, ανεχομενοι αλληλων* – *meaning* “with finer feelings that last” “deep passion for souls” and a capacity to “hold up the wedding torch for others” or “raise up hands for others in prayer”

3. *σπουδαζοντες τηρειν την ενοτητα του Πνευματος* – *meaning* “With the eagerness of those in courtship”, “the concentration of a student”, “the application of an athlete” and “the zeal of a guard” whose life depended on his attention to duty (and Paul speaks as one under house arrest) we are to preserve “oneness” or unity. Peace means “joined together”. God’s peace unites us by the Spirit.

4. *εν σωμα,εν πνευμα, μια ελπις* – *meaning* Christianity is the body of Jesus’ people, inbreathed by the **one Spirit, one hope** – in our risen returning Lord.

5. *εις Κυριος μια πιστις εν Βαπτισμα* – *meaning One sovereign* who possesses, leads the fight, rules as king; *one faith* assurance or confidence; *one baptism that imbues us all and changes us*. The first use of the word “baptism” in Greek was in respect of cloth dyeing and steel tempering. We thus take on the colour of Christ and his strength too. This is only possible by the work of the Holy Spirit – not by ceremony. Water baptism in the orthodox sense was always Trinitarian.

6. *εις θεος και πατηρ* – *meaning haste to help characterises our father God*. God is “over” all, He is “from end to end” father of all who believe and “within reach” of all. Luke 15 presents the Father “running”.

MINISTRY AND GIFTS FROM THE RISEN LORD 7-16

To each one of us grace has been given according to the measure (used of the size of a harbour /corn measure)

To divert momentarily to Psalm 68.18a and “taking captivity captive” may refer to martyrs of “better resurrection” fame – Heb 11.35 & Matthew 23.35. Whoever – they had part in the resurrection story. Cp Matthew 27.53. Revelation 6.9, 8.3 & 9.13

In line with this is [*τα κατωτερα*] – He went into the “younger” or, I think “**earlier**” **parts of earth and its history**. This understanding is preferable to the Lord’s going into the depths of earth to satisfy a contemporary notion of the position of hell. The Lord does not move in the realm of our faulty ideas but acts within the real created order

He gave “on the one hand” APOSTLES – the foundational distinctive ministry. “On the other hand” prophets who declare God’s word, pastors who cherish guide & feed the flock of God, teachers who teach, admonish and rehearse the truth.

SEVEN PURPOSES SERVED BY THE GIFTS 12-13

- (1) To reform repair or set broken bones – that is to heal the hurts of His people
- (2) To give active service – as jugs that refresh dusty runners – that is to encourage those who work for Christ
- (3) To build – overseers acting like architects – following God’s plans – that is to establish & develop the church
- (4) Till we all come down as a united gathered flock with the shepherd into the unity of the faith – not scattered on the hills. That is, to prepare the church for the advent of Christ
- (5) And the acquaintance of God’s Son – that is – to further encourage devotion and experiential religion
- (6) Towards fatherhood or fruit & nurture – that is to develop evangelists and teachers
- (7) Towards the flowering of service and the fullness of God’s purpose in our lives-that is-to develop our serving

FIVE HINDRANCES AND HAZARDS TO MINISTRY 14

- (1) Not speaking of Jesus – remaining a babe
- (2) Being raised up or disturbed and carried around winds of teaching
- (3) Being troubled by the “dice” or different sides of men
- (4) Disturbed by those willing to do anything – that hold no principle
- (5) So that we allow our lives to move towards methods of deceit not truth.

SPEECH AND MINISTRY OF THE WORD 15

We are to speak candidly “actively truthful” [*αλεθευω*] – like Jesus whose “yes” was “yes” and “no” “no”-but our frankness should be laced to “love” – showing Christ-like. He is likened to the head-the body must grow in harmony with His character and increase through the getting to grips Greek *αφης* “wrestling” with maintaining constant spiritual supplies [*επιχορηγω*] “first & second courses danced to the guests” according to the operation in the capacity of each single member to inspire growth in the body towards building itself up in love.

WALK WORTHY (2) 17-32

The 22nd Knot – sharing and counselling

Don't walk or get trained in error, don't become dizzy in mind [*σκοτισμος*], being foreign to the life of God through want of perception – through hardening of the heart *πωρωσις* – literally, “callusing after a broken bone injury”. Such people are past grieving or distress and have given themselves to lewdness and moral extravagance to be employed greedily in it (*a reference to prostitution*) – but you have not learned the anointed one or Christ (*the play is on his fragrance as opposed to that of prostitutes*) if, as is unlikely, you heard Him and were taught in his circle

The 23rd knot – Intimacy of discipleship

It is true in the circle of Christ it is as if you are to be stripped once for all according to your earlier way of life, of the old man – which was destroying itself by lusts of deception to be renewed in the spirit of your mind and to put on once for all the new man created in Gods' image in righteousness and holiness belonging to truth.

The 24th knot – stripping off the old

Here the play on the prostitute's habit is turned to the good as the Christian is stripped of the former evils. Closer union with Christ comes with deeper commitment and “the expulsive power of a new affection.” As John Newton famously said “I am not what I ought to be but I am not what once I was”.

THE NEW MAN

1. So put away the lie and gossip the truth with your neighbour (*this is evangelism*) for we are members one of another – this refers to fellow-creatures. This is “love of neighbour” at its best
2. Be angry with yourself (*middle voice of the verb*) – get irritated with yourself; let not the sun set on you as you are provoked to anger
3. Don’t give a classic place for the devil come in and test you
4. Let the thief no longer steal –rather work till tired working or harvesting to give to the needy
5. Let no poisonous word proceed from your mouth-but what will build up the poor and give grace to the listener
6. Do not grieve or harass by attack the Holy Spirit-by whom you were sealed as Gods possession for the day of taking home in redemption.
7. Put away every cutting remark, wrath, swelling desire, shouting, evil bragging speech and every evil.

25th knot – kindness

8. Become good-natured and beneficial to one another, become affectionate and speak graciously as couples [*εαυτοις used for αλληλους probably first dual*] allowing the emphasis let this be your domestic conduct as couples. Be kind as God in Christ was so kind to you” This knot of kindness received and given binds us together

OT REFERENCES

- v.8 Psa.68.18 **The prophecy of gifts – even for former rebels**
v. 24 Gen. 1.26 **The further purpose of creation – the new man**
v.25 Zech.8.16 The prophecy of of blessing conditioned by peace and truth
v.26 Psa.4.4 Reverence God & sin not – commune in the night on an issue
v.30 Isa.63.10 Don’t grieve the Spirit-to invite divine hostility.

CHAPTER 5

THE BRIDAL BEAUTY CHAPTER

In this chapter are found the 3rd 4th and 5th parts of our walk, directions for the “spirit-filled” life, and classic teaching on marriage as it reflects our loving bonds with Christ the bridegroom.

(3) WALK IN LOVE – cp the mimicry picture 1-6

Children love to copy adults. Paul’s favourite theme of “Christ-likeness” adopts the idea of copying mature manners. Have you not often seen a little girl walk in her mother’s shoes? The affection between parent and child promotes an attraction to be alike – to model mother in this case. Christ’s great love *αγαπη* was noted as he walked about. John said, “Behold the lamb of God”. He was giving himself in love, virtue flowed from Him, and compassion marked his steps. His life was sacrificially lived. He loved us so as to make a three fold offering

(1) A *προσφορος* offering Greek “prosperous”, but in the sense of “increasing in service” as reflected by Christ’s service right until His substitutionary death of the cross and beyond

(2) A *θυσια* offering. A “burnt offering” – the Greek reflects in our word “enthusiasm” – He gave His all. A burnt offering was consumed. He made his soul a sacrifice for sin.

(3) The *οσμην ευοδιας* “sweet-smelling” – the mark of an accepted offering. Dr Hodge speaks of Noah as entering a new “restful” era with the “sweet smell” of post-diluvian faith – Genesis 9.21-22 when man and beast and bird bowed before the peacemaker humanity glimpsed momentarily the peace of a far off golden age. God’s love was to persevere to the cross and onwards to the rapture. So Paul uses this as a backdrop to encourage us to move forward morally & spiritually with the Lord. He has ever in mind that “far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves” just like that American founding father that had this phrase inscribed on the dome of the capitol.

THINGS NOT TO BE NAMED – NOT TO COME BACK INTO OUR LIVES

Paul lists things to be mortified. Fornication, moral foulness, overbearing attitudes and greed for gain are not to be named; disgrace and silly talk and that type of talk common among Ephesian orators – dexterous in turning all to fun – a cross between course usage and the jest that robs God (Aristotle made it a mean but Paul condemned it because it denies the total sacrifice of our lives). Thanksgiving or gratitude – Calvin reads “gracious speech” here is rather to be characteristic of the new man

For you are aware of this – that every fornicator, or un-cleansed person or selfish arrogant person who is an idol worshipper has not inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Paul teaches from Genesis 6.5 & 19.5 teaches that “evil imagination” and “speech” fired the divine wrath v6. We are not to allow ourselves enjoy this type of friendship or partnership *μετοχοι*.

(4) WALK AS CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

The 26th knot v8 – Fellowship that tests what pleases God. The Holy Spirit bears fruit in our lives in goodness righteousness and truth shared in our living – we apply these three rigorous tests: Is life lived well? Is it righteous? Is it lived true or openly? Much like we say “Is it right? Is it kind? Is it necessary in respect of speech?

So we rather “expose” the hidden works of darkness, refuse our compliance – even to converse at that level.

Here Paul has various passages of Isaiah in mind – and he quotes Isaiah 26.19 and Isaiah 60.1 “Arise sleeper & Christ will be your beacon”

Light examines and tests everything. So our High Priest with the lights URIM & THUMMIM is ever the best guide to what we are to engage in and cease from in life. His word & spirit give many directives- this test “Would it please Jesus” is a good one. One saint tested invitations and companions by the litmus – “Can I bring Jesus with me there?”

(5) WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY 15-21

This is the final direction on walking like Jesus walked. We are to walk as “meek and united to Christ & others”; as “moved by personal knowledge of Jesus”; as “mimics of the Lord we love”; as “manifesting spiritual fruit”; as “mathematical in the market of opportunity”. The Greek word here is **ακριβως** giving us the term “acrobat”.

(a) **Evangelism** The original word means to “weigh up” and so we are to take our chance to witness in the world. It is a “moment” **καιρος** - that like an open-air market closes quickly. We must make haste in the spiritual harvest for, as Amos said, the times are evil (Amos 5.13 cf. v.16). The call is to be sober in buying up opportunity

Wesley’s way of using time

John Wesley determined to prevent “leakage of time” by dividing his weeks of 168 hours into 3 segments of 56 each for sleep business and preaching & study respectively.

(b) **Fullness of the Spirit** Remember drunkenness spoiled the brave new world of Noah (cf. Proverbs 23.31). We are to eschew intoxication **ασοτια** – being “past redemption” or rather being “God-intoxicated”. We are to use scripture thoroughly – its **psalms** from the writings; its **hymns** from the prophets and its **spiritual songs** from the law are to pluck our heart-strings touch our heart and express the work of God in our souls even in private melody. Ours is to be a thankful lifestyle – living ever grateful – for everything – o the Father of our Lord Jesus.

(c) Submitting as partners in marriage, as family members & children, as serving – in reverence for God and with the mutual purpose, co-ordination and the order of an army led by our captain of salvation. Submission **υποτεινω** speaks of a base beneath a pillar – it speaks of “support”. The partners in a marriage are to be mutually supportive and the wife has a special support capability which strengthens her husband and home.

THE MARRIAGE DIRECTIVE 22-33

Wives are to submit to their husbands as Christians. The man in his marriage mirrors Christ in His church. Equally the husband owes unconditioned self-sacrificing love to his wife.

Now of the church Paul speaks in its cleansing by the water of the word, as without blemish of impurity or furrow on the bridal face – **one glorious church** (this strengthens the call to faithfulness in marriage) – to be presented at the rapture-**beyond criticism** – this strengthens the teaching on grace within marriage – such “words with salt” as avoid criticism that poisons.

It is natural to take care of our bodies so Christ cares for us – nourishing us from youth and cherishing us always. Husbands should act likewise. We are members of Christ – the parallel here is Eve-taken from Adams flesh and formed from his rib. So we are mystically created anew. In the stead of Christ a husband will leave his family and be **welded or inlaid** (as a stone in a setting or a piece of marquetry) with his wife as a family and they will be physically

one. This is a great open secret – why Christ should leave heaven and be joined to us. On this analogy is placed the strongest discipline of marriage – that a man should love his wife and the wife respect her husband – because he put her interests so high in his affections.

1 Abraham Lincoln sagely said, “Woman was not taken from Adam’s feet – so we must not abuse her; nor his head – to show she must not rule him-but from under Adam’s arm so she must be protected from injuries and harm.”

2 William Tyndale said “Marriage was ordained for a remedy – for increase of *man* in the world and for the man to help the woman and vice-versa.”

3 Mike Mason (writer on marriage) “To have & to hold” 1Cor 7.4 “Love is the total willingness to be owned-mutual proprietorship” cf. Mike Mason – *mystery of marriage...*

4 Humour with a message “*Cherish*” A Farmer and his wife were in bed when a tornado struck. They were tossed in the air by tornado. She began to cry. He asked why? She replied “It’s the first time we have been out together in twenty years!”

CHAPTER 6

CHRIST AND WARM RELATIONSHIPS VERSUS DIANA AND COLD PAGANISM

This hunting goddess was insensitive to love set a harsh tone to Ephesian paganism. The equivalent of frontline science in from Homer’s time and into Paul’s day was the quest for world dimensions – how broad was the world? Dynamically how long had it been growing? What height was it? The people of those Roman times would literally would “climb every mountain” in pursuit of this quest. Homer in especial had a pet interest in the world’s depth – so *the underworld* was his pet theme. For Paul God’s love was the bigger experiment that men and women should be pursuing.

A USEFUL SUMMARY

Henrietta Mears, the redoubtable conference speaker of thinks of the book of Ephesians as a temple of six rooms: –

The Experimental room – 1.1-2.22

The Eternal room – 3 1-21;

The Ecclesiastical room – 4 1-32

The Moral room – 5.1-20;

The Social room – 5.21-6.9

The Martial room – 6.10-24

18 OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES IN EPHESIANS 6

References are from a trance of Old Testament books – and number in this way Isaiah 6 references; Deuteronomy 4 references , Proverbs 2, Psalm 2, Nahum 1, Hosea 1, Exodus 1, 2Chronicles 1.

COMMENT ON OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES

Prophecy tells of Justice for the poor; the rod of His mouth; the concealed polished arrow; the beautiful feet of Messiah putting on the breastplate of righteousness & helmet of salvation when truth was failing on the earth.

Deuteronomy talks of his statutes, the call for heart circumcision; the bondservant (15.16) and His bringing Israel out of Egypt to bring them in to Canaan – as a picture of our redemption from sin. The **Exodus** reference is “Honour your parents”; Proverbs tells of “disciplining a son” and “Training up a child”

Chronicles presents God “without partiality” – in the **Psalms** we see “God is angry daily” with sinners – and “sharpens His sword of judgment for the impenitent.” Here too David urges “don’t hide the sins of history from your children – but also tell how He chose you as he did David’s house” Nahum presents the beautiful feet of Christ wounded on the mountains yet getting the message through; Hosea presents Ephraim’ love as the morning mist along with the call for covenant love not animal sacrifice.

THEME ONE – THE FAMILY 1-3

Incentives for children

One – learn to appreciate the circle of Christianity at home.

Two – the word “well” implying ease abundance, moral well-being is the corollary.

Three – understand that the promise of long life (*Greek – MAKROCHRONIA*) going with obedience is not entailed in the converse which Wesley calls “flat rebellion”.

THE THREE DUTIES OF A FATHER 4-8

One – to avoid absolutely “long passionately anger” against children

Two – to rear your children like plants – mainly ensuring they are rooted in Christ so as to be growing

Three – to systematically train young people in Christ’s teaching and commands for their admonition

THEME TWO: MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIPS 9

In Paul’s day half population of Rome & its empire were slaves

Christianity has dealt a blow to slavery through the Herculean efforts of Wilberforce & others. We must, however, observe that scripture shows in Genesis 9.22 & 25 that Ham through rebelling at home became a “servant of servants” – a more modern example is the prodigal son. Even enslavement to addictions may begin in a good home. Chrysostom says “The slave is the fruit of rebellion against parents. He who rebels against his father has departed from the nobility of birth”

Obedience is to be **respectful, sincere, and whole-hearted**. “Fear & trembling” and “simplicity of heart” and “pleasing God” – all are seen in Gethsemane when servant-hood costs in salvation. Also [*ευνοια*] – “ready good-will” is called for – not compulsion. **The Lord will reward what man**

overlooks – to freedmen and bondmen. We are to make our **work and industry a spiritual service too**.

Masters are to “relax on threatening”. Paul is **calling for a change of manner** in dealing with servants. The higher principle is Christ’s overall Lordship under which one man is not a favourite above another. **William Carey** the missionary who is the Father of modern mission and who gave the scriptures to India once said “My business is His service – cobbling pays the bills” Christ is Lord over all – whatever rank *the guinea* stamps on men.

THEME THREE – WARFARE AND ARMOUR 10-13

“Finally” is a word Paul uses in his letters to great effect

His final word to Thessalonica is “pray always”, “Rejoice & count the good things”; he says to Philippi, “Rejoice and aim for perfection” is the word to Corinth. **Here to Ephesus it is “prevail” like Jacob** (Is this not a disguised call to prayer? Cf. v18). We are to remember that the strength of the exalted Lord who intercedes for us at the throne is our anchor [*αγκυραν*].

We are to “put on” the full armour with “all prayer” – praying in every context. A foot-soldier in Paul’s day possessed shield, helmet, breastplate, greaves, sword and lance.

Thus we hold out “once for all” on the field against the cunning enquiries and systematic prosecution of the adversary. The struggle is like wrestling – we must “throw” and “keep our adversary down” – and he is not another soldier but “empires in succession” “magistracies with license & resources” “world rulers of the darkness of this age” “spiritually inbreathed powers belonging to the roguery and evil in the phenomena of the heavens” – i.e. the panels of gods promoted by Satan. This adversary is invidious and parades as a provider and prognosticator through supposed prophecies of those who misapply the ancient zodiac to fortune-telling and dissimulate as to convince us they know our future.

But we are encouraged to “take God’s panoply – i.e. make final preparation for battle and having completed the once for all preparation we are to stand victorious – i.e. when our adversary has left the field.

ARMOUR FOR A LIFE-LONG AND AGE-LONG STRUGGLE 14-17

1. The belt of truth. The Roman officer had a special belt. Those who carry the truth are officers of Christ
2. Paul does not here refer to the *diploos* though it was “dart proof” – it is Christ’s righteousness. The average soldier wore some metal – those who could afford it had chain metal – Paul cites the best
3. The Roman *caliga* with its studs or the half-boot *calceus* – strapped up to mid-leg – used by officers – this is the gospel – or good news of peace achieved through struggle-that of Christ – every soldier has grip
4. Then the *thureos* which extinguishes all darts – door shaped – could interlock above – or water soaked leather

5. Take the helmet of bronze with cheek pieces – only Christ gives it – it is the emblem of sure salvation – defying arrows & spears and comfortable with sponge or felt lining.
6. And the *macheiros* or short Roman sword – the single offensive weapon – used by the Spirit and running to discern between thought and intent – and convert.

PAUL CONTINUES TO WITNESS BEFORE RULERS IN HIS LIFE-LONG FAITH STRUGGLE NEVER DEVOID OF HIS JOYOUS HARMONY WITH THE LORD 18-24

The apostle now encourages vows and requests with a moment by moment commitment in the Spirit – adhering faithful to and requesting for other saints and him – that grace should already be given him (Passive) as he opens his mouth in speaking everything – i.e. whole gospel – to make known its “open secret” – **Jesus**. He wants to act as an ambassador – he wants to declare the whole counsel of God as is essential – once for all – to Nero, no less. A footnote indicates that Tychicus a deacon is the emissary of Paul – to bring comfort and encouragement to the Ephesian church.

His last words are that there would be great peace and heavenly love along with faith from the Father and the Lord – and grace for all who love the Lord without corruption and immortally. This valiant last word signals the intimacy of Paul with his LORD and his harmony with all the saints – the mark of one who will seal his faith with His blood as a Christian martyr set fair to “keep the faith”. So ends a great epistle which is among the late writings of Paul.

In it the “bond of harmony” with Christ is adamant and the 26 references to that unbreakable “in Christ” link reach a crescendo in Paul’s treatment of marriage and union of husband and wife which is both picture and miniature of the bond between Christ and His church. If that tells us anything it tells of a love that is stronger than death.

*O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not seek to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust, life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.*

George Matheson

FINIS

**Bob Coffey Aramaic & Greek Bible Companion
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