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...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

By Faith... #2

If we ask to name the 'faith chapter' in the Bible, most would answer "Hebrews chapter 11". There is no doubt that this list of faithful saints has been selected for a reason and that specific acts of faith have been recorded for our edification. But, if we limit our study to this one chapter, and assume that the Holy Spirit intended only those names and events were to be the sum of the examples necessary for our faith, we may miss the entire point. For, we will be missing the perfect example of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The list of faithful examples begins in Chapter 10 and concludes in Chapter 12: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful That promised;)" (Heb. 10:22, 23) "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of *our* faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) (* The word *our* is not in the original.)

Without His example, all other examples are meaningless. For His faith is the source of the faith of all of the great cloud of witnesses and any other person who has called on the name of the Lord. In Romans 1:17, Paul states that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The very act of faith

when we believe unto salvation has been and must be bridged by His faith. The understanding of His faithfulness is just one step toward understanding the depths of His grace toward us.

In Heb. 12:2, He is said to be the "Author" of faith. The word author in the Greek is "*archegos*" and is translated "Captain" in Heb. 2:10 and "Prince" in Acts 3:15. It means "leader" or "first in rank". The Greek word "*arche*" means "beginning" and is also translated "principality".

We see this principle of being "first in rank" in Colossians 1:18, where we read of Christ, "Who is the beginning (*arche*)". He is "the principality" or authority (hence from the root word author). We further read in Col. 2:10 "And ye are complete in Him, Which is the head of all principality (*arche*) and power:" Those who recognize Him as the head of the church which is His body and understand the meaning of "...in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18), must recognize that this truth was not revealed because of our faith, but by the "Author of faith".

Thus we see the importance of the Apostle's charge to those Hebrew believers whose faith was being tested. And to those Colossian saints whose faith was being challenged by vain philosophy (Col. 2:8, 16-23). To rest in Christ's faith is the solution to being faithful under all circumstances.

If our faith is not based on the realization of His faithfulness, then we should reevaluate our intentions. If our faith is a result of agreeing with the opinions of

others (including this writer), apart from the Scriptures, then our faith is in vain. But, if our faith comes by "...hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), then we have learned the secret of faith. And that is, that Christ (only) is the Author of faith.

He is also described as the "Finisher" of our faith, which in the Greek is "*teliootes*". "*Teliostees*" is a word associated with endurance. It has the idea of finishing or completing something, or taking something to its end. This is confirmed in the remainder of Heb. 12:2,3, "...Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him That endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself..." Surely this is the apex of unselfishness, putting all things aside to fulfill the service to which He was called. Our service (if any) is pale by comparison.

So the book of Hebrews gives us the perfect example of faith, Christ. It shows us the one and only true source of faith, Christ. And in Christ we see the unselfish nature of faith.

May we ever acknowledge His faith and rejoice in the great lesson that the Apostle Paul came to know, to "...be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil 3:9)

B. Bagby

A Study in the Book of Ephesians

When we open our Bibles we read in the first few verses of Genesis that God created the heaven and earth, and that they became waste and void. We are not told in Genesis why or how they were ruined, but we learn why in the later writings of Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel 28. We learn that sin entered God's creation when Lucifer rebelled against God's authority. Revelation 12:7 tells us that angels joined Lucifer in his revolt.

With the entrance of sin came chaos, degeneration, and decay, those processes of change whereby passage of time is reckoned. Time, as we know it, began. And with time, the ages began that are spoken of in Scripture.

But what about that era of timeless perfection before sin brought ruin into God's creation? What was in the mind of God then? No man could know what was His desire and plan at that point until He revealed it. God did not reveal His plan until the Apostle Paul was in a Roman prison. It was an untold number of years after Lucifer's sin and about 4000 years after Adam's sin, that God revealed what He had kept secret in Himself. He revealed "The Great Secret" to the Apostle Paul and commissioned him to make it known. The epistle entitled "Ephesians" tells us of that Great Secret and gives instructions to those whom it concerns.

In the following series of questions on the epistle called "Ephesians" we may learn: What secret did God keep hidden in Himself for thousands of years? What is the place of the Jew and Gentile in God's purpose for today? What supernatural gift or power is God giving to believers today? In what manner should we worship God today?

There will be references to help in the study. There are available "Suggested Answers" for each lesson. You may write for them if you want to compare your findings with those. We also welcome your comments and questions concerning the Scriptures.

Lesson 1: Chapter 1, Read verses 1-14

1a. Who was the writer of Ephesians?

b. By what name was he called before? Acts 13:9

c. What do these two names suggest about Him?

2. "Apostle" is from the Greek "apo" (away) plus "stello" (send). It is one who is sent away, as on a mission. He represents and speaks with the power and authority of his sender. What evidence of apostleship is seen in the apostles of Christ?

a. Jn.15:27

b. Lk.6:13

c. Ac.1:8; Mr.16:20

d. Ac.1:21-25

3. How do the following references show that Paul was an apostle?

a. Ac.26:16,17

b. Ac.22:14,15

c. Gal.1:11,12;

d. 2Cor.12:11,12

e. Eph.3:1-3

4a. Who was the greatest apostle on earth? Heb.3:1,2

b. What evidence of an apostle was seen in His life? Jn.17:3,8; Mt.28:18

5. Paul was made an apostle after Christ ascended. Were any others appointed then? If so, name some. See Ac.14:14; Ro.16:7; Eph.4:10-12

6. "Saint" is the translation of the Greek word "hagios," meaning holy or set apart to God. One is not a saint because of his own purity, but because God set him apart as His own possession. However, because he is God's, he should live a pure life. The order of the Greek in verse 1 suggests this epistle is addressed to *faithful* saints. What would be the difference between a saint and a faithful saint?

7. Why can we say that this letter is for us also? 1:13

8. The meaning of the name "Christ" is "Messiah" which means "anointed." It is the name of that glorious One in Whom are all God's plans and through Whom they will be fulfilled. "Jesus" is the name of God in flesh, in His humility, with His glory laid aside. It is associated with the shame He endured. Though the KJV reads "Jesus Christ," in verse one, the Greek is "Christ Jesus." Since the first name is given emphasis, what is being emphasized about Him here?

9. Did Paul know the Lord in His glory or in His humanity? Acts 26:15

10. Why should we take careful note of the names and titles given to Christ?

11. "Peace" was the greeting common among Jews. "Grace" was the greeting common among the Gentiles. Paul's greeting in verse 2 indicates it is addressed to whom?

12. The word "blessed" in verse 3 is from the Greek "eulogeo," eu (well) plus "logos" (word, speak). It means TO SPEAK WELLOF, EULOGIZE, or PRAISE. "Blessing" in the same verse is a similar word meaning BENEFIT, or GIFT. Write verse 3 using those meanings and discover God's grace to us.

13. Who is spoken well of (praised) in Ro.1:25 and 9:5?

14a. Describe the blessings promised to Israel in the following verses.

a. Gen.15:18; Heb.11:16; Micah 4:1-4; Deut.28:2-8

b. Ex.19:6

c. 2 Kings 8:19; Jer.33:17,18

d. Ro.9:4,5

14b. How do they differ from those mentioned in verse 3?

15a. In whom are these in Ephesians blessed? vs 3

b. With whom will those of Israel's hope be blessed? Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:9

The Question Of Predestination And Rightly Dividing The Word #2

GABAL (Hebrew)

In part one, we looked at the Greek word *proorizo*, and its roots, determining that there was a connection to the concept of the formation of boundaries. To expand our thinking, we decided to look into the Old Testament as well. We began with the Septuagint. Seeing that *proorizo* was not listed, we went on to look at the root words, *horion* and *horizo*. From those words, we were able to find and look up (in Strong's concordance) the Hebrew word *gabal* (Strong's Concord. H1379). It means "to bound (as by a line), border, set bounds about".

Going back to the Septuagint Concordance, we found that *horion* (Greek) had been used to translate eleven different Hebrew words, all of them, in some manner or the other, dealing with boundaries. However, we will limit ourselves to just a selection of the eleven that correspond to our findings. There were three forms of the word *gabal*: *gibawl* or *gibowl*, *gibalah*, and *gabal* (Heb.) all of which were translated into one of the following: border(s), bounds, coasts, quarters, landmarks, space, and limit. Since there are too many references to give here, we will give a sample or two of each:

·*border(s)*: Genesis 10:19, Exodus 34:24; Numbers 20:16, 17; Joshua chapter 15; Psalms 74:17

·*bounds*: Ex 23:31; Deut 32:8

·*coasts*: Exo 10:14; Num 20:23; 21:13; Deut 2:18; 3:14 & 17; Num 32:33

·*quarters*: Exo 13:7

·*landmarks*: Deut 19:14; Job 24:2; Prov 22:28; 23:10

·*space*: Ezek 40:12

·*limit*: Ezek 43:12

Scripturally, the main purpose of creating and announcing borders or boundaries was to clearly assign portions to the Hebrew people as well as to the other peoples of the earth. In other words, it was also to indicate the "inheritance" for each of these groups.

Many of the references for this word are closely associated with inheritance. Deuteronomy 32:8 is a significant verse to quote in this regard as it sets the tone for others: "**When the MOST HIGH divided to the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.**"

The second reason why boundaries were created was that people were clear of what their own inheritance was, and took care of what was assigned to them. The third reason for boundaries or limits was to ensure that persons to whom specific boundaries were assigned did not violate these limits. Boundaries set by the Lord were not meant to be violated, and there were consequences for doing so. Let us look briefly at some segments of scripture:

1a. Boundaries are set to limit, but also to keep us safely within what was designed for us, even the forces of nature: Psalms 104: 6-9: "**The waters stood above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled; At the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys Unto the place which Thou has founded (= didst prepare) for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; That they turn not again to cover the earth.**"

b. Exodus 19:12, 13: "**And thou shalt set bounds unto the People round about, saying, "Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.**"

2. To cross the limitations set up by the LAW by Jehovah, God and Creator,

was considered rebellion — and even the natural elements obey by staying within the bounds set for them: Jeremiah 5:22 & 23: "**Fear ye not Me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence, Which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it. But this People hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.**"

3. Rebellion, overstepping the boundaries set by God, had consequences attached to it: Jude 6: "**...the angels which kept not their first estate (their own principality), but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.**" (cf. 2 Peter 2:4)

We are reminded of Lucifer, "son of the morning" who was also thrown out of heaven for overstepping his bounds: Isaiah 14:12-14: "**How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, "I will ascend into heaven (the heavens), I will exalt my throne above the stars of GOD: I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north*: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the MOST HIGH.**"

* Companion Bible note: "North" localizes the dwelling place of God. See Psalms 75:6; Job 26:7.

In the light of the information on *proorizo*, *horion*, *horizo*, and *gabal* and their connections with "boundaries" and "inheritance", in part three we will take a brief look at how this could apply to Ephesians 1:5 & 11.

L. Ayers

Esther's Courage And Its Consequences #4

After Haman was hanged, there were immediate consequences which helped the Hebrew people; but as a result of all this, there were also long term consequences. In concluding this article, we will look at both short and long term results briefly.

It is very interesting that after Haman was hanged, the king gave his ring (the seal) to Mordecai, and Esther's cousin became "next unto king Ahasuerus" (10:3). However, they could not repeal the decree that Haman had already sent out. As Ahasuerus said, "...for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse." (8:8). However, they wrote another decree which not only allowed the Jews to protect themselves on the specific day the slaughter had been planned, but it instructed them to prepare for it. So, not only were the Jews then able to counteract their enemies' attacks, but they were able to destroy a large number of them and even became rich on the spoils.

Ironically, the feasting that followed has become a joyous Jewish festival - Purim. The word "Purim" is taken from the Persian word "Pur" which means

"lot" and is connected to soothsaying. Haman had used "Pur" to determine the day of destruction (3:7). Instead of turning out to be an auspicious day for Haman, his family, and associates, it became a day of success for the Jews all around the kingdom. Not only is it something that is today on the Jewish calendar, but because of Esther and Mordecai, the festival of Purim became one that was decreed throughout the Persian empire. Chapter 9:32 says, "**And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book**". Purim is a festival of great joy even today.

Haman was not the only one that was destroyed. They made sure all his sons were hanged too. Haman is called "the Jews' enemy" four times (3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24). In the Companion Bible, Bullinger points out that no one else in the entire Bible had been called by this title. Haman was used by Satan just as Pharaoh had been used in earlier times to try to destroy not just one person, but a "people".

Esther's rule as queen finally led to the freeing of the Jews, their return to their land, and to the rebuilding of the

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temple that had been destroyed many years before. How did this happen? Esther's son was Cyrus. Read Ezra and Nehemiah to discover how the various edicts and orders finally allowed the Jews to return to their land and to rebuild. Cyrus gave the first order for dispersed Jews to return to their land. He also ordered and even numbered all the items that had been stolen from the temple and had these returned. Ezra deals mainly with the rebuilding of the temple and Nehemiah with the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. All this would not have occurred without divine intervention in the person of Esther.

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