

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

Jan/Feb 2001
Volume 15, No. 1

Bible Explorations Online:
email: info@bibleexplorations.org www.bibleexplorations.org

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

A Study In The Book Of Ephesians Lesson 5, Chapter 3

Read verses 3:1- 11

76.a. In verse 1 Paul declared that he was a prisoner for whose sake?

b. How did this differ from his claim a few years earlier in Acts 28:20?

77. "Gentile" is the word meaning "nation" or "one of the nations." How do we know that those Gentiles, for whom Paul became a prisoner, included the circumcised believers (Jews)? vs 1; Eph. 2: 14-16

78.a. A dispensation is not a period of time. It is the dispensing of an administration or the administering of house rule. For example, we in the U. S. were once under the Roosevelt dispensation or administration. What is the dispensation called that was given to Paul? vs 2

b. Had God given such a "dispensation" to any man before?

79. God gave this dispensation to Paul for whom? vs 1,2

80. Where do we find what Paul had written before about the Mystery (secret) of that dispensation that had now been revealed unto him? vs 3,4; Eph. 1:3-8

81. What change was made in the status of members of God's new creation, the Body of Christ? vs 5,6;

82. Why could no one know this secret before God revealed it to Paul in a Roman prison?

Eph. 3: 4,5; Eph. 3: 8; Eph. 3: 9; Col. 1: 26

83. In times past, during the years of Acts, the promises of God had belonged only to Israel. (Ro. 9: 4) Gentiles had merely shared in some of Israel's blessings. (Rom. 11) A few years later, after Israel's hope and blessings had been postponed, Gentiles are said to be joint (equal) partakers of God's prom-

ise. (Eph. 3: 6)

a. What was the promise that Gentiles now shared with Jews and which had not been revealed before? 2 Tim. 1: 1

b. When did God make that promise? Titus 1:2

c. Who became a minister and an apostle to make known the good news concerning this promise? vs 6-8

84.a. Why did Paul count it great grace and mercy that God made him a minister of this glorious new gospel? vs 8; 1 Tim. 1: 15, 16; Acts 26:9-11

b. When we see God's grace and mercy to Paul, what application can we make to our own lives?

85. Who, other than Christ and the Father, are now in heavenly places? vs 10

86.a. What can those in heavenly places know now? vs 10

b. What had God done that showed them this?

87.a. "Eternal purpose" in verse 11 is literally, *purpose, or plan of the ages*. What does this verse tell us about the happenings of men and events in the ages?

b. In Whom are all God's purposes made?

Read verses 12- 21

88.a. Why can we have boldness and access to the Father and be confident of our place in his eternal purpose? vs 11, 12

b. Why did Israel have confidence in *their* access to God and in *their* place in God's purpose? Lam. 3:22-24

89. In verse 1 Paul had said, "For this cause (reason)..." and then he digressed. Now, in verse 14 he repeats that phrase and starts to pray. What had he said that might have caused him to stop and

pray? See 2:18-22

90.a. In verse 16, what do we read that Paul prayed for those in the Body of Christ? Tell this in your own words.

b. Why would this be vital for those in the days that Paul wrote?

c. Why is this vital to us today also?

91. We hear people say, "Let Christ come into your hearts." But Paul prayed that Christ might dwell in their hearts, "by faith." vs 17. From Paul's earlier writings, tell how is it possible for Christ to dwell in the hearts of His people? Ro. 10:17

92. Paul prayed that they might know (experience) the love of Christ. How is the greatness of God's love described in verses 18, 19?

93. Paul prayed that they might be, "filled with all the *fulness* of God." Does this mean that they might be filled full of God to their capacity? Or, is it that they might be filled with all of God? For help with this question, the word rendered "complete" in Col. 2: 9, 10; 4: 12 means "filled full to capacity".

94. Why are all these prayer requests made by Paul only reasonable and their fulfillment to be expected? vs 20

95.a. What is the service of the church that is Christ's Body? vs 21

b. How do we know that members of the Church will be raised to serve the Lord for an untold number of years in the future? vs 21

J. Heltzinger

Phoenix Bible Conference

April 6-8th, 2001. Featured guest speaker is Michael Mecikalski of Boscobel, Wisconsin. More information to follow in next issue.

Form, Likeness And Fashion #2

As They Pertain to Man

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)

In the Scripture above we note that the words *form*, *likeness*, and *fashion* are used to describe Christ’s self-humbling. These words are translations of three different Greek words, each with its own meaning. *Form* here is the translation of “morphe” and denotes **inner** characteristics and attributes along with those outwardly visible. *Likeness* is the translation of “homoioma” and means similar to or made like unto. *Fashion* is from “schema” and has reference mainly to **external** condition or appearance.

The noun “morphe,” translated “form,” occurs only three times in the New Testament and is reserved for Christ alone. He existed in the *form* of God before His incarnation. He WAS God. (Phi.2:6) In flesh He took the *form* of a servant. He WAS God’s willing and obedient servant. (Phi.2:7) And, after His death and resurrection, “...**He appeared in another form unto two of them** (disciples).” (Mr.16:12) He WAS different then from what He was before His death and resurrection.

Christ also, “...**was made in the likeness of men.**” He was similar to men in that He lived in flesh. And, “...**being found in fashion as man,**” His manner and appearance was that of a man.

Having seen how the words *form*, *likeness*, and *fashion* teach of Christ’s self-humbling, we wondered what these words might teach concerning men. We found that while the noun “morphe” (form) is **never** used pertaining to men, a derivative, “morphosis,” is also translated “form” and it is used **only** of men. It occurs twice and carries a very differ-

ent meaning from “morphe.” Dr. Bullinger’s Lexicon defines it as, “embodiment, form without substance.” In other words, it is **not all that it appears to be.**

While Israel’s hope was preached, Paul told some religious Jews that they had only, “...**the form** (morphosis) **of knowledge and of the truth in the law.**” (Ro.2:20) They appeared to keep the Law but actually, they denied it, breaking the very commandments that they taught to others. They did not have the inner heart-knowledge of the Law that gave men holiness and humility.

Then again, after Israel’s hope was postponed and while Paul made known the secret of the Church which is Christ’s Body, he warned of the same sort of persons. He said that there were those then, “**Having a form** (morphosis) **of godliness, but denying the power thereof.**” (2 Tim.3:5) Their godliness was a pretense that they put on. It was self-promoting and was not true godliness that comes from the power of God within men.

Another derivative of “morphe” is used only twice in the New Testament and both references concern believers. It is “summorphos,” a compound word made up of “morphe” and “sum” which means “together with”. We may say then that “summorphos” means “formed together with.” It is translated “conformed” in Romans 8:29 where saints of Israel’s hope were told that they were predestined to be, “...**conformed to the image of His Son.**” The Father marked them out to be formed together into the image (likeness) of His Son. The emphasis here is on inner character.

“Summorphos” is translated “fashioned like” in Philippians 3:21. There members of the Body of Christ are told that the Lord Jesus Christ “...**shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.**” This tells us that members of the Body of Christ shall have bodies of glory that are essentially the same, both inwardly and outwardly, as Christ’s

present body. Not only shall they be with Him, but their bodies shall also be like His. Such a wonder is beyond our human comprehension.

We found that “homoioma,” translated, likeness, made like, similitude, and shape, is used of men twice. First Paul used it in Romans 5:14. We read there, “...**death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.**”

Men from Adam to Moses did not sin in a way similar to Adam for he was a law-breaker. He received a commandment from God, and he was told the consequences of disobeying it. Thereafter, men did not have laws from God until the time of Moses. Then God gave the Law and commandments to men, but not to all men. He gave them only to Israel, and He also told them the consequences of disobedience to His Law. About 1500 years later, when Israel was divorced from God and their Messiah was sent to the nations, (Acts 28:28,29) that Law became void. God no longer recognized Israel, to whom the Law applied. They became “lo ammi,” (not My People). Since then no person has been a law-breaker like (homoioma) Adam.

The second time that (likeness) “homoioma” is used of men is in Romans 6:5, where we read, “**For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.**” Here the Apostle Paul reminded saints that, (in God’s view) they had died like Christ died and that they would also be resurrected in a way similar to His resurrection.

The words *form*, and *likeness* speak volumes concerning us as believers, both as we are in our old Adamic natures and as we are in our new natures. They teach us that we will never have the *form* (morphe), the whole essence of God but that we may be (summorphos) “associated together with” Christ in His form.

J. Heltzinger

God's Perfect Ways

(Reprinted from *'Thy Testimonies', Volume 1, No. 12*)

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom 11:33)

Megat's Translation: What a fathomless wealth lies in the wisdom and knowledge of God! how inscrutable His judgments! how mysterious His methods! *Weymouth's Translation:* Oh, how inexhaustible are God's resources, and God's wisdom, and God's knowledge! How impossible it is to search into His decrees, or trace His footsteps! *Arthur Way's Translation:* O fathomless abyss of God's rich bounty, of His wisdom, of His knowledge! Who can explore His decisions, who track out His paths!

Well might the Psalmist exclaim: **"As for God, His way: is perfect!"** (Ps. 18:30) But that way is often wrapped in mystery. His 'way' in His dealings with Israel is a fascinating study, and the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from which the above is an extract, is a portion of Scripture with which every Christian should be acquainted.

Before the Lord commenced His ministry in the flesh, John the Baptist said of Him: **"Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the SIN OF THE WORLD"**, and the Lord said of Himself **"I came not to judge the world, but to SAVE THE WORLD."** And yet, when the Syrophenician woman came to Him in deep distress, we read: **"He answered her not a word"** (Matt. 15:23); moreover, when some Greeks came to Philip with the request: **"Sir, we would see Jesus"**, instead of responding to the desire the Lord hid Himself. What is the explanation of this apparently anomalous attitude? If He came to save the world, why did He discriminate in bestowing His blessing? The Scripture we are considering will help us. Dating from the unconditional covenant made with Abraham, God's deal-

ings with the world centered in the Jewish people, and the Lord's earthly ministry could be summed up in His own words: **"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"** (Matt. 15:24).

In this eleventh chapter of Romans, we are invited, under the picture of an olive tree, to consider the Jewish nation. Verse seventeen tells us that some of the branches were broken off and a 'wild olive' (the Gentiles) grafted in. One instance of this is found in Acts 13 where, at Antioch in Pisidia, the Jews **"spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."**

Another branch was broken off at Corinth, recorded in Acts 18, 'Paul ... testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. **"And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."**

But the **'gifts and calling of God are without repentance'** and the time will come when 'the natural branches' will be grafted 'into their own olive tree', and in that day 'all Israel shall be saved'. In the meantime, the Church of this dispensation is running its course, and we do well to profit by the study of God's ways with Israel since **'all these things happened unto them for ensamples'** (1 Cor. 10:11).

Taking, first, the word 'Judgment' in our verse (Rom 11:33), we may note that it by no means always indicates condemnation. The root meaning is: 'to come to a decision'. In connection with such an event as a flower show, for instance, the 'judging' is in order to allocate prizes. A further illustration of

the use of the word is the case of a person reaching a crisis in his affairs, and having to make a decision. Indeed, our own word 'crisis' comes from the very word used in the original here. We see, therefore, that one point of our study is to note God's DECISIONS; and then to see how His ways operate in carrying them out. One of God's 'decisions' conveyed to Abraham was that his seed should be 'a stranger in a land that is not theirs' for 400 years (Gen. 15:13). The 'seed' started with Isaac thirty years later, and the period of homelessness then commenced. After various vicissitudes, including a famine, and the treachery of Joseph's brethren, Jacob's descendants are found in Egypt in a condition of bondage. How interesting it is to read of God's ways in carrying out His decision made known to Abraham! The record in Exod. 12:41 is: **"And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt."** Then we are told in Ps. 105:37: **"...there was not one feeble person among their tribes."**

Alas, the people who had promised to be obedient went into idolatry, and the time came when they were taken captive to Babylon. God's decision in connection with that event was declared in Jer. 29:10: **"For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place."** What were God's ways in carrying out His decision in this case? In Egypt it was **"with a mighty hand and ... signs and wonders, great and sore ... upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household"** (Deut. 6:21,22), but the release from the Babylonian captivity was quite different. **"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah ...continued on backpage**

God's Perfect Ways ...cont'd

might be fulfilled, **THE LORD STIRRED UP THE SPIRIT OF CYRUS king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem ...and build ...** (Ezra 1:1-3).

It might be profitable to note some other cases in Scripture of the manner in which God's ways operated. Jonah was 'disobedient to the heavenly vision' and ran away from his Divinely appointed task. God's decision, however, was that Jonah should be His ambassador to Nineveh, and His ways in carrying out the decision were so remarkable that unbelievers and some professed Christians among them discount the story. At the moment that Jonah was thrown overboard from the ship in which he was sailing, God had prepared a great fish to receive him, and in this strange vehicle he was taken

towards his preaching station!

The prophetic word declared that Christ was to be born at Bethlehem, but His mother was living at Nazareth, miles away. What could induce her husband to undertake such a journey in such circumstances? The answer was an edict of the Roman Emperor that enrollment was to place in the location associated with the ancestry of the individual, the seemingly impossible was, perforce, accomplished, although 'there was no room for Him in the inn', and the Lord of life and glory was born in a stable!

We have been considering cases in which God's ways operated in carrying out decisions which were previously known, but we may surely conclude that He has a plan for our lives, though this may not be known. It may well be that, as we move towards God's objective, we shall pass through unexplainable trials, but God's way is as perfect in our case as in others we have had before us. A verse in the first Epistle to the Corinthians is very opposite: "**There hath no temptation (trial) taken you but such as is common to man (a human experience): but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to**

Bible Explorations is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

be tempted (tried) above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10. 13). 'The way to escape' is the translation of a Greek word which occurs in only one other place in Scripture, viz. Heb. 13:7: "**Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation**". The word here is 'end', and implies 'issue'. Carrying this thought into the Corinthian passage we have: 'God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also bring in the object of it, that ye may be able to bear it.' God's permissive will may not be understood as we pass through some trial, but there is a plan behind it, and God's way in working out that plan is perfect.

1-2001

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 48
SUN CITY, AZ

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS
P.O. BOX 26608
Phoenix, AZ 85068-6608