



## **2026 1Q Christ in Philippians and Colossians**

### **Lesson 1: Persecuted but Not Forsaken!**

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Read the second paragraph,

- Consider the purpose of the plan of salvation: uniting heaven and earth. Sound impossible? Humanly speaking, it certainly is. Nevertheless, just before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave the apostles a seemingly impossible assignment: “ ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you’ ” (Matt. 28:19, 20, NKJV). *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 2.

Do you agree that the plan of salvation is the plan that unites heaven and earth?

What is required to do that? The plan of salvation then is the solution to the sin problem, right?

What was necessary then to solve the sin problem? Jesus? Of course! We know Jesus is the solution, the connecting link, the bridge, the unifier—but how?

We know that the plan has to do with something about sin, sacrifice, and blood for the Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. But how does the blood of Jesus unite heaven and earth?

Do we need to have some understanding of the cause of the divide in order to know how the solution fixes it?

So what has caused the division between heaven and earth? Why are heaven and earth not united?

Is the divide caused because God is not powerful enough?

Did the divide occur because Lucifer and 1/3 of the angels thought God was not as powerful as they are?

Did the divide happen because God is not trustworthy, not good, not reliable?

Was the divide because Lucifer deceived the angels and then Adam and Eve into believing God is not trustworthy, not good, not reliable?

Are there Bible verses that support this idea?

So what caused the divide? Distrust of God, based on lies told by Satan.

What happens when lies are believed about someone?

What happens inside a person when they believe a lie that someone they love and trust is a cheat, an abuser, a fraud—even though the person is not any of those things, what happens inside a person who believes the lies?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust, which immediately cause fear and selfishness. This is what happened to humankind when Adam and Eve believed lies about God—they broke their love and trust connection with God, infected their spirit, heart, animating motivating energy with fear and selfishness. And they ran and hid from God because they were afraid of Him—they no longer trusted Him.

From then on, their life, their animating motivating energy was no longer in harmony, union, unity with God and heaven, but with Satan and his evil angels.

This is what is known as the sinful nature, or carnal nature, that they pass down to all humanity for it is the only life, the only animating energy, the only spirit they have with which to procreate. Thus we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity (Ps 51:5)—animated with a spirit of fear and selfishness from receiving the life handed down from Adam and Eve. And this life of fear, distrust, selfishness, the spirit of fear is hostile to God and cannot please Him:

- The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Romans 8:7-8 NIV84.

Our natural motivational energy, spirit, does not submit to God's law—what is God's law?

The law of love, love for God and others. And the spirit of fear and selfishness is hostile to love and trust, and will naturally flee from God, cut self off from God who is the source of life, and the natural result of separating from God is ruin and death. The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), sin when full grown brings forth death (James 1:15), those who sow to the carnal nature reap destruction (Gal 6:8).

So, how does God solve this problem? How does God reconnect a species that is infected with a spirit that is fearful and distrusting of Him and everything done from that motivational drive causes further corruption and separation from Him and heaven?

The common theory taught in the majority of Christianity, ever since Constantine became a political Christian, goes something like this. And think through the impact, result, upon people who believe this theory. Also note how this theory weaves together truth and lies.

- God is the Creator of all reality
- God created all living beings, angels and humans
- God created them all in sinless perfection
- God is a God of order
- God is sovereign has a perfect law that His heavenly government operates upon.
- Loyalty to God requires harmony with His law
- Sin is transgression of the law
- The wages of sin is death
- God will not suspend His law, He will not do away with it, He will uphold it for He is not only a God of love, He is a God of perfect justice.
- Therefore, transgression of the law requires just punishment because without punishment there is no justice. Further, without punishment there is anarchy and chaos—and God is a God of order who will not support anarchy and chaos, nor will He go along with injustice.
- So God is required by His character of love and His holy law to punish sinners for sin, the minimum punishment, as He told Adam and Eve is death.
- But God is also love and He loves us so much that rather than punish us by justly executing us for our sin, He sent His only Son to be our substitute and take our sins upon Himself and be punished in our place.
- Upon Jesus all the sins of all humans for all time were legally placed and God punished those sins fully by executing Jesus as a sinner, even though Jesus was perfectly innocent. He was not punished for His sin, but our sins.
- But because He was sinless, He could then offer His blood, which represents the death penalty being legally paid by Him to redeem humanity from condemnation of the law.
- We can now claim Jesus as our legal substitute in God's heavenly legal court system and God will check the record, find the blood payment of Jesus there, and legally account us as righteous while in reality we remain unrighteous.
- God sustains His law by having the death penalty legally paid by killing His innocent Son, and then legally pretending that we are not guilty because of a legal notation in a heavenly book that our legal penalty has been paid by Jesus.

Did you spot the introduction of the lies in this theory? What lies did you hear and what is the root lie never overtly stated but this false theory is built upon it?

What do these distorted ideas do to the heart and mind of those who believe them?

The root lie is that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules that require inflicted punishments, which leads to the lie that justice is inflicting punishment, which leads to the lie that God is the source of and wielder of death, which leads to the lie that salvation requires something be done to God so He will not kill us, which leads people to distrust God and cling to all kinds of false theologies that function to hide them and protect them from God.

Do people who believe God is the source of death really know God? If they don't know Him how can they be brought back into unity with Him? Do you see how the very teachings they cherish and claim

reconcile them with God instead put up barriers that obstruct their reconciliation with God and actively prevent them from knowing and trusting Him?

Do we believe God and Jesus are one? That God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself? Do we believe that if we have seen Jesus we have seen the Father?

Or do we believe that we need someone between us and the Father to protect us from the Father, to propitiate His wrath, to pay the legal penalty lest God use His power to torture and kill?

Is the division between heaven and earth that Christ fixes caused by rule-breaking that creates a legal problem that God solves with an legal solution operating outside the hearts and minds of sinner?

We find the true solution to the sin problem when we embrace the message of the 3 angels and return to worshipping God as Creator, which requires we realize that all of God's laws are design laws, the laws life and reality are built and operate upon, and breaking God's laws sever the sinner from life and result in death unless God the Creator acts to purge the infecting, damaging, destroying, corrupting, separating element and restore in humanity the basis of life—His living law. As the new covenant teaches He writes His law, which is love and trust, upon the hearts and minds of the saved.

So what causes the division?

Lies about God that break trust which corrupts the spirit, life, animating energy with fear and selfishness that motivates the heart and mind with fear that causes us to run from God, distrust Him, act in all kinds of ways to seek to save self, denying truth, blaming God and others, exploitation, abuse of all kinds, and more lies, including all the penal legal lies taught in Christianity that function to reduce our fear of God, to make us feel safer, but simultaneously keep the spirit of fear, the carnal nature, the old terminal life alive and hidden behind all the barriers we have erected in our minds hearts.

Then how does God, through Christ, unite heaven and earth? What did Jesus accomplish that restores humanity into unity with God and heaven?

He eliminated the spirit of fear and selfishness from the humanity He partook and replaced it with the sinless spirit of love and trust—while simultaneously revealing the truth that destroys lies and wins us to trust. He revealed in His life all truth necessary to complete the plan of salvation: 1. the truth of who God is He is love, truth, and trustworthy 2. exposed, by Satan's own actions, the truth that Satan is a liar and fraud 3. the truth that God's law is design law and the basis of life 4. the truth that there was no manufacturer's defect Adam and Eve—if Jesus could live sinlessly with the burdens and obstacles He had, the Adam could have in Eden 5. the truth that God is not the obstacle to salvation.

So Jesus revealed all truth necessary for salvation, which is required to destroy lies and win us to trust, so we will open the heart and receive salvation. But He did more, He destroyed the cause of death operating within humanity and restored the cause of life. How?

He partook of the same breath of life (spirit, animating energy) breathed into Adam and corrupted by Adam, through Mary, but because Jesus' humanity did not have a human father, He received from the Holy Spirit a spirit, breath of life, animating energy, life that was pure, perfect, uncorrupted, sinless.

In the person of Jesus, the human species that God created in Eden was cured, perfected, cleansed, healed. Jesus partook of the very life, spirit, breath of life God had given to Adam but which had been corrupted by Adam, but because Jesus had received a new breath of life from the Holy Spirit at the conception of His humanity in the womb of Mary, He was able to be tempted in all points like us but without sin because despite being tempted Jesus chose only and always to live animated by the spirit of love and trust His humanity received from the Holy Spirit.

We receive that second breath of life, that new animating energy, that new and sinless spirit at conversion when we are reborn with the Spirit who brings us the life of Christ to live in us.

And in Gethsemane and throughout crucifixion weekend, culminating at the cross Jesus was repeatedly tempted to act against love and trust, to act to use power to save self, to act in harmony with the spirit of fear and selfishness, to break away from the Father's will, the Father's plan to save humanity.

But despite being tempted in all points like us, He never, even in thought, said yes to fear and selfishness, He always said no to the temptations and with His human brain, He chose to trust His Father, despite the anguish, despite the pull of fear and selfishness from the spirit inherited from Adam through Mary. Jesus chose to voluntarily surrender His life in trust rather than act, or even think thoughts to break love and trust and use power to save self.

Therefore, in the person of Jesus Christ, the death causing principle, the spirit of fear and selfishness, was purged, eliminated, destroyed, killed, and Jesus rose from the tomb **in humanity**. The same humanity that He had created in Eden, but had been corrupted by Adam, is now purified and restored to perfect sinlessness by Himself! And Jesus then took this purified, cleansed, renewed, perfected humanity to heaven and presented it to His Father—the one lost sheep, species, has been brought home.

And each one of us can individually participate in salvation and be reconciled to God when we trust Him, when we open our hearts and surrender our life of fear and selfishness to Him. Then we receive, from the Holy Spirit, a new life, the life of Jesus, it is no longer our old selves living, but Christ lives in us (Gal 2:20). We become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).

This is reality—and this is why when the Father looks upon us in the judgment He does not see our old sinful selves, but sees the perfect righteousness of His Son—not because of some legal adjustment, covering over, erasing from record books, but because of reality, we in reality, in truth, have a new life, we have within us the life of Christ and we are sealed in heart and mind to trust in God and are described in Revelation in these words:

- They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11 NIV84.

The blood of the Lamb is symbolic language—the Lamb is Jesus, the blood represents the life, the life is in the blood (Lev 17:11). This represents the sinless life of Jesus, that Jesus said we must drink, ingest, (John 6:53-55) if we are to have part with Him.

The Bible is teaching that the saved have been reborn and have received a new life, the life of Christ **within them** and therefore, having a new life, new animating motivating spirit within, they give the same testimony that Jesus gave—they speak the truth about God that wins to trust.

But notice specifically that they are so transformed that they do not love their own lives so much as to shrink from death. The life/spirit of fear and selfishness, the survival of the fittest motivation, has been replaced with love for and trust in God such that they are like Jesus, they trust God with their lives and will not act to save self.

These people are not suicidal, they are not nihilistic, they have no death wish, they love God, others, and life—but they are transformed to know, not just cognitively, but experientially, that life only exists and operates upon God's design laws of truth, love, and freedom. Thus because they love life, they will not act upon the death-causing principle of fear and selfishness, they won't act by trying to save self. They trust Jesus with their lives, just like Job, Joseph, Daniel, the three worthies, Stephen, the apostles, and all the martyrs through history.

So what is the gospel commission quoted by the quarterly—what does it mean to make disciples of all nations and to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Do you realize that the penal model does not fulfill this commission? Why not?

What do names represent in the Bible? Character, so when we pray in the name of Jesus, that does not mean ending the prayer with the word “Jesus” but that we are praying with His character, spirit, life, operating within us through the indwelling His Spirit!

Then what would it mean to baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

And why does the penal legal model fail to do this?

Because it presents the Father and Son with different characters, different attributes. It presents the Father as the just enforcer of the law who wields the power of death and requires the blood of His Son, along with the pleadings of His Son, to propitiate His wrath so He will be merciful and not hurt us. And it presents Jesus as the loving sacrificial Savior who we can trust to protect us from the Father and His so-called just enforcement of the law.

Further, this penal legal view, baptizes people into a legal construct of rules, rituals, ceremonies, deeds and deed performance—that leads to arguments between church groups of all kinds. Including, such

things as what baptism counts and what doesn't—full immersion, sprinkling, adult baptism, infant baptism, regular water, holy water, baptism by any Christian, only by clergy, what words are used, must one recite “In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” for it to count?

And this leads people to not only have a fractured godhead in their belief system, but faith in the rituals, ceremonies, words, performance, organization, getting baptized by the right church, membership in the right denomination. All of this keeps the spirit of fear alive and obstructs people from receiving the baptism that actually saves.

The baptism that saves, which Jesus called His disciples to lead the entire world to experience, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is only **symbolized** by the water baptism. The saving baptism is when the entire self is surrendered in trust to God and the heart, mind, soul is immersed into the cleansing presence and power of the Holy Spirit and the individual is reborn with the life of Jesus, the old is gone, the new is come.

And Christianity has failed to do this because the vast majority of Christianity doesn't teach this, it teaches some form of a legal system that operates upon imposed law, rules, works, ceremonies, sacraments, deeds, all designed to hide and protect us from a god who they teach is the source of death.

Today, God is still waiting for His friends, His true disciples, to take the eternal gospel to the world baptizing people in His name, which is the same name as the Father, and the Holy Spirit for our God is one God.

## Overview of Philippians

The lesson focuses on this gospel message being taken by Paul to the Philippians and Colossians.

Paul wrote the letter to Philippi from prison in Rome, around AD 62. Around ten years before he writes this letter he had visited there. We read in Acts:

- Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16-17 NIV84.

Philippi is a city in Macedonia, and Paul went there with Timothy, Silas, and Luke.

- From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. Acts 16:11-12 NIV84.

While there a seller of purple, Lydia and her household were baptized, and when a demon possessed slave girl was following Paul and repeatedly shouting “servants of the most high God” Paul cast out the spirit. Her former masters stirred up a mob against the apostles and Paul and Silas were imprisoned. During the night an earthquake came, followed by the conversion of the jailer and his household. So the charter members of the church at Philippi were Lydia from Thyatira and the jailer and their families.

Several years later Paul made another visit to Philippi (Acts 20:6). Soon after that he returned to Jerusalem and was arrested and imprisoned eventually ending up in Rome, where he wrote the epistle to the Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.

Is it possible, one of the reasons that God permitted Paul’s imprisonment is because this imprisonment, which restricted his movements, caused him to write these letters? Prior to his imprisonment, he had already visited these cities, and perhaps if not imprisoned, he might have just gone on another journey to speak with them in person and we might not have these epistles. Could this be an example of how all things work together for good for those who love and trust God—not that all things are good, but if we stay faithful to God when bad things are happening, God can use those circumstances to bring good out of it?

## **Overview of Colossians**

Like the epistle to the Philippians it was written by Paul while imprisoned in Rome around 62 AD. Paul was imprisoned two years in Caesarea and two years in Rome.

Regarding the theme of Colossians, the SDA Bible commentary states the following:

- In Galatians and elsewhere he rebuts Judaism solely, but here his target is hybrid. Not only is Paul concerned to refute Judaizing legalism, he also must contend with certain pagan elements that sought to degrade or eclipse the office of Christ. Therefore he attacks the idea of angelic intermediaries as agents of creation and mediation. He declares that Christ is Creator and Mediator exclusively (ch. 1:16, 20). Christ is the “head” of both material and spiritual things (chs. 1:18; 2:19). There exists in Him no dualism. The same Jesus is over all (ch. 1:18). He sustains all things (v. 17). He is God (v. 15). In Him the “fulness” dwells (v. 19). He needs no subsidiaries, or emanations. Paul asserts that in Christ are “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (ch. 2:3). The consummate, saving mystery is not some esoteric knowledge concerning the various orders of angels (see on ch. 1:16), but “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (v. 27). Therefore he condemns the worship of angels, which the false teachers advocated, as a denial of Christ’s perfection as sustainer and mediator (ch. 2:18, 19). The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Vol. 7, pp. 184–185). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

What is happening in the church that Paul is dealing with?



Two types of lies are introduced and causing problems: 1—the imposed law legal lies from the Judaizers, which results in all kinds of legal behavior requirements in the form of ceremony and ritual. These types of doctrines and teachings inflame fear and work to create barriers between the soul and God, to hide, protect, and plead for the sinner so this punishing god won't hurt them.

This made them vulnerable, or perhaps sympathetic, to the mystical lies of spiritualism, teaching that other spiritual beings, angels, act as intermediaries to minister the plan of salvation. These mystical ideas entered Christianity in many forms, like the ideas related having souls/spirits of the dead interceding in our behalf in heaven, or needing our intercessions for them, praying to the dead, etc.

And these distortions together led to fracturing of Christianity over the years into what we see today, 41,000 different groups arguing this doctrine and that doctrine.

But the Bible teaches that when we accept Jesus and are reborn into His family, there is a unity inherent in our faith. What is that unity?

Is there a difference between unity and uniformity?

Is unity achieved in Christ by denominational affiliation?

What interferes with Christians experiencing the unity today? Does doctrinal conformity get substituted for spiritual unity?

Do people in our denominational churches sometimes refuse to believe advancing truth because of fear of causing fractures in the church?

Could the leaders in the denominational churches actively interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing unfolding truth because the leaders are trying to maintain organizational unity, trying to prevent fractures and division?

But can we achieve God's goals by apply Satan's methods? Can we maintain unity in the church by resisting advancing truth?

Did that happen in the SDA church in 1888? Yes, listen to last week's lesson where I provide the evidence for that.

Is membership in a denominational church the same as being saved, as being a member of the church triumphant, or the remnant church? But could some people believe this?

And if people believe that membership in the denomination church is the same as membership in the remnant church invisible, might they become fearful of losing membership in that organization? And might they then stop thinking and searching for truth for themselves, but filter their beliefs through the church's biblical research institute, or college of cardinals, or pastors and board of elders, rather than

studying for themselves? And are there others who live afraid to speak because of fear of losing positions in the church, perhaps employees afraid for their jobs?

The Bible tells us that within denominations the wheat and the tares grow up together. There are many people in church organizations that are not part of the body of Christ, that are working for God's enemy. Just consider the religious leaders who crucified Christ.

So, Satan confuses people by getting them to accept a lie that belonging to a denomination is the same as belonging to the true church of God through Jesus. It is not.

But having accepted this lie, then Satan can cause further corruption by getting his agents in the church to lead people to believe false things, practice false practices etc., just like the religious leaders who crucified Jesus, imprisoned the apostles, and the church leaders in the Dark Ages.

I can tell you with certainty, that God has many of His true saints, members of His body, throughout the world in all the denominations. Remember the Magi that came to honor Jesus were not Jews.

We have a responsibility to share the truth and love of Jesus as effectively as we can, in our homes, in our communities, in every organization to which we belong, and in our corporate churches. I used to think God wanted everyone who loved Him to leave their denomination and join ours, but I realize that was my childish thinking, God needs His true saints everywhere, He needs people sharing His truth and love in every group around the world and His Spirit regenerates, matures, heals, every single person who trusts Him.

And we need to be careful not to confuse salvation, membership in the true church invisible with organizational affiliation—we affiliate together for common mission and purpose.

Consider this Bible commentary:

- As the **light and life of men was rejected** by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so **it has been rejected in every succeeding generation**. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the **religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. **In our day** few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. **Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth** in whatever guise it may be presented. **Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God**. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching **obliged to leave the church of their fathers**, that they may render obedience. *The Desire of Ages* p. 232, emphasis mine.

As members to any organization we keep our duty to God first and if conflict arises in the organization so significantly that one's duty to God is compromised by that organization then it is time to separate

from it, otherwise, we do all we can, like Jesus did, to shine the light in the hallways and associations of that organization.

## **SABBATH**

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Read Memory Verse:

- Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Philippians 4:4 NIV84

What does this verse mean to you?

What does it mean to realize Paul wrote this while in prison?

Is it possible to rejoice while being falsely accused, falsely imprisoned, being attacked, persecuted, and mistreated for doing what is right?

How are we to do this?

Did Paul say rejoice in your circumstances always or Rejoice in the Lord always?

Is our ability to rejoice in the Lord dependent upon circumstances?

If not on circumstances, then upon what?

Would our ability to rejoice in the Lord depend on who we understand God to be?

## **SUNDAY**

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read Ephesians 3:1

- For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles Ephesians 3:1 NIV84.

What does this verse tell us that can be beneficial in rejoicing in the Lord always, but especially during the difficult times?

“For this reason” having a reason, recognizing a larger purpose, realizing the Lord is accomplishing something through these circumstances, understanding you are a member in the Lord’s family and you are taking forward the gospel message, you are on a mission for the heavenly kingdom, that your suffering is not meaningless, without purpose. And knowing that, also means that you are not

forgotten, that you are not suffering alone, you are not abandoned, you are not rejected, cast off, that God has His eye on you and in some circumstances, God is counting on you.

Consider Joseph sold by his brothers and spending 13 years as a slave. Joseph suffered, didn't understand along the way, but stayed faithful and came to understand that while the brother's intended it for evil, God permitted it for good. God had a purpose—and that purpose was not only for the protection of Jacob and his children, not only to keep open the avenue for the Messiah, it was also to reach the non-Hebrews, Potiphar, Pharaoh and his family, and to be a witness to billions down through time who read about this story.

Like Daniel and the three worthies in Babylon who were not cast off, forgotten, and through them Nebuchadnezzar and others were reached and their lives also are encouragements to billions down through time.

Does it help you when going through difficult times to remember you are under God's care, and while He is not bringing evil upon any of His children, if He permits it it is because there is a reason, a larger purpose, and He will be there with you?

I think this is what Paul is experiencing and expressing; he knew he was on mission, there was a reason, a larger purpose. And he references a reason just stated, so in the verses immediately preceding we read:

- For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:14-22 NIV84.

What was the reason Paul was able to stay rejoicing in the face of persecution?

What is Paul saying here?

Here are a few verses of this passage from *The Remedy NT Paraphrase*

- For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause division, mistrust, prejudice, and hostility. He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive

along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan's lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God's original ideal; and in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust, and removed fear, selfishness, and hostility. Ephesians 2:14-16  
REM.

## MONDAY

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The lessons suggests we read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 for other insights into Paul's positive attitude in the face of suffering:

- We carry this precious Remedy within these frail human bodies made of dirt to show that the supreme power to heal our characters is from God and does not originate in us. We are under constant pressure but are not crushed by it. While we often don't understand the immediate reason for the stress, we don't get discouraged, because we know the ultimate outcome. We are attacked by the enemies of love and truth but are never left without friends. We may suffer injury, but we are not destroyed. In this defective body, which tempts to selfishness, we surrender to die to self—as Jesus did—so that the perfect life of Jesus may be fully revealed in us. For we who are alive are only alive because we surrender to die to selfishness—for Jesus' cause—so that his perfect life may be reproduced in our decaying bodies. Therefore we die to self in order to bring you the Remedy of Jesus—that his life may work its healing power in you. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 REM.

What do you understand the reason for suffering is in this context?

Have you ever been injured and gone to physical therapy? Was there discomfort involved?

Once there is brokenness or woundedness of any kind, there are no pain-free options.

We are born with a condition that causes dysfunction, pain, suffering, and death if not cured. But to be healed, because we are already wounded, that will entail pain, pain of denying the cravings and longings of the flesh, cutting out of our lives the things we once cherished, detoxing from unhealthy actions, friends, beliefs. But it is reality, it is the only way to have life, to die to selfishness and live to love and trust.

Consider what Peter wrote:

- Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God 1 Peter 4:1-2 NIV84.

Wow—done with sin? What does this mean? How is this true?

When we choose Christ, the truth, to live by the Spirit of love, we will deny the spirit of fear and selfishness, the flesh, and it will protest, it will suffer, but if it is suffering, we are no longer being controlled by it.

## **WEDNESDAY**

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The question at the bottom of the page, in reference to Onesimus a runaway slave that Paul instructed to return to Philemon, with the letter to Philemon in which Paul counsels to treat Onesimus like a son, asks:

How do we come to terms with the fact Paul didn't condemn slavery, tell Onesimus to continue to hide etc? Why didn't Paul tell all Christian slaves to run away?

- In that society if the slaves would have run away what kind of life would they have had?
- Where could they have gone?
- Was there a country to flee to that would have protected their human rights?
- Would they have less stress or more?
- Would they be able to have a home of their own, get a good job, establish a family and live in peace and security or would they live in fear of getting caught and crucified, always looking over their shoulder, always on the run?
- What does that kind of never-ending fear do to a person? Does it enhance love or destroy it? What happens in their character?

Why didn't Paul tell all Christians who owned slaves to set them free?

- If the Christian slave owners set the slave free would that mean the newly freed slave had Roman citizenship?
- Then what could happen to them? Could they become a slave again to someone else?
- But what if the Christian slave owner began practicing the principles of Christ that Paul recommended they do and they treated their slaves like family? Would the slaves within that home, while technically still being slaves, also have more freedom, more security, and be protected in the Roman society from others who would exploit them because they were under the protection of the Christian who was their owner?

Does the fact that Paul didn't condemn slavery mean that slavery is good or that Christianity supports slavery? Absolutely not!

The situation in the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is quite different from Rome during Paul's time. In the US there was a strong abolitionist movement that originated from Christians, with many states and leaders opposing slavery. In fact, it is historically true, that wherever Christianity becomes dominate, slavery is abolished.

In Rome there was no support from any society leaders to end slavery. In the US runaway slaves could find safety in the northern state, protected by those state governments and leaders so they could get a job, establish a family and live in relative security without the fear of being sent back into slavery or being executed for running away. In Rome there was nowhere for a runaway slave to go and be protected by government.

## THURSDAY

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The lesson asks us to read Ephesians 1:1-3:

- Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:1-3 NIV84.

What do you understand this means?

What are the spiritual blessings in Christ that we have been blessed with in the heavenly realms?

The spiritual blessings would be all those brought to us by the Holy Spirit, but what of the blessings in heavenly realms?

I think this is in reference to reality as God created it—one breath of life breathed into Adam and from Adam all of us share that same breath of life, and Jesus partook that same life and destroyed the cause of death and restored into the human species sinless perfection, His sinless life and all who surrender to Him, in faith, are grafted into Him the vine and receive His life and have new life, the life of Christ, and we are connected to Him who is seated in heaven.

- For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new

life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous. Romans 5:17-19 NLT

We all inherit the spirit of fear and selfishness from Adam and thus are all born in sin, terminal, but Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light and through faith, we receive His life and are renewed.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**The God of Reality: Separating Truth from Fiction Seminar:** August 13-16 2026 Orlando, Florida—More information coming soon.

**New Pamphlet:** *The Trap of Perfectionism and The Fear of Making Mistakes*. These are available for free shipped to any US Postal address, they will also be in our resource section under the publications to print and share. You can read this online, download pdf, share with others, print your own. If you are not in the US, we anticipate our various hubs (Australia and South Africa) will eventually get this in print also, but until then, please use the online resource.

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**South Africa:** Jacques van den Heever is Director and has many of our resources in print and available in English and Afrikaans. You can contact Jacques at: [comeandreason.sa@gmail.com](mailto:comeandreason.sa@gmail.com) (Additionally, Afrikaans material is available for download on our website under the languages tab).

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