

The Holy Bible

RECOVERY VERSION

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*Unveiling the
Unsearchable
Riches of Christ
in the
Holy Scriptures*



INTRODUCING
THE RECOVERY VERSION
HOLY BIBLE

Excerpted from the Preface to the Recovery Version

Throughout the centuries, translations of the Bible have steadily improved. In general, each new translation inherits from previous ones and opens the way for later ones. While a new translation derives help from its predecessors, it should go further. The Recovery Version of the Holy Bible, following the precedent set by the major authoritative English versions and taking these versions as reference, not only incorporates lessons learned from an examination of others' practices but also attempts to avoid biases and inaccurate judgments. This version, frequently guided by other versions, attempts to provide the best utterance for the revelation in the divine Word, that it may be expressed in the English language with the greatest accuracy.

Translating the Bible depends not only on an adequate comprehension of the original language but also on a proper understanding of the divine revelation in the holy Word. Throughout the centuries the understanding of the divine revelation possessed by the saints has always been based upon the light they received, and this understanding has progressed steadily. The consummation of this understanding forms the basis of this translation and its footnotes. Hence, this translation and the accompanying footnotes could be called the "crystallization" of the understanding of the divine revelation which the saints everywhere have attained to in the past two thousand years. It is our hope that the Recovery Version will carry on the heritage that it has received and will pave the way for future generations.

As with any translation of the Bible, the determination of the original text, based upon the available manuscripts, forms the basis for the text of the Recovery Version of the Holy Bible. The translation of the Old Testament is based on the current scholarly text of the Hebrew Scriptures, Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS; revised 1990 edition). The New Testament follows, for the most part, the Nestle-Aland Greek text as found in Novum Testamentum Graece (26th edition). However, in determining the original form of any verse, the translators of the Recovery Version gave careful consideration to the larger context of chapter and book and to similar portions of the Old and New Testaments. The most recently discovered manuscripts or the manuscripts of oldest date are not necessarily the most accurate or reliable; hence, the determination of the text for this version was based largely upon the principle stated above. Departures from these editions are generally indicated in the footnotes.

The Recovery Version embodies extensive research into the meaning of the original text and attempts to express this meaning with English that is to the point, easy to understand, and readable. In those places where it is difficult to express the exact meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek, explanatory footnotes have been supplied.

The subject provided at the beginning of each book and the outline of each book take the historical facts as their base and express the spiritual meaning in each book. The footnotes stress the revelation of the truth, the spiritual light, and the supply of life more than history, geography, and persons. The cross references lead not only to other verses with the same expressions and facts but also to other matters related to the spiritual revelation in the divine Word.

The

R E C O V E R Y V E R S I O N

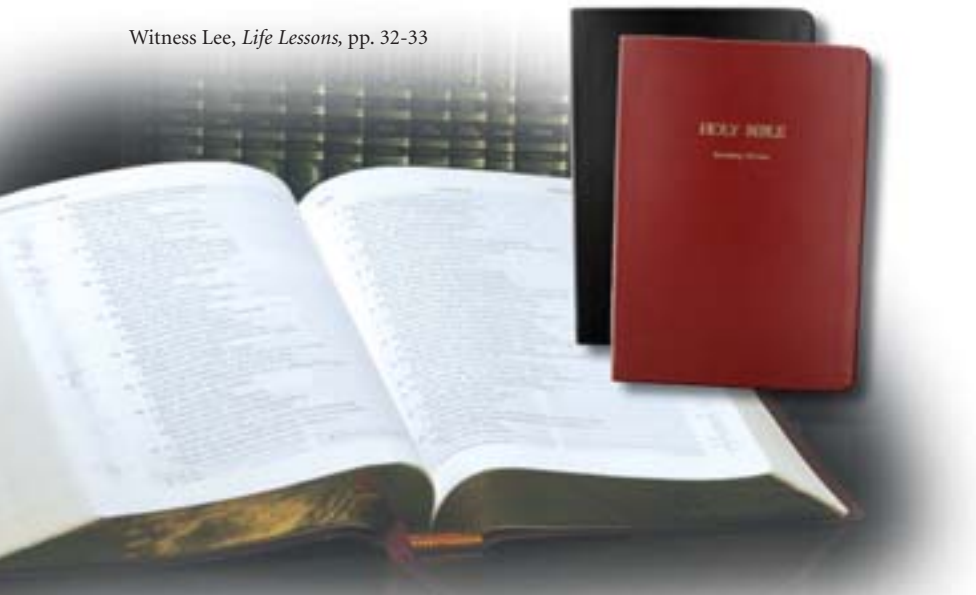
"All Scripture is God-breathed..." (2 Timothy 3:16)

The origin of the Bible is God; it was God who breathed His words of revelation through His Spirit into and out of the writers of the Scriptures. What was breathed out was not only words but also spirit.

The content of the Bible is both extensive and inclusive; the two main aspects of this content are truth and life. Truth brings us revelation and knowledge of all the realities in the universe, such as the reality of God, the reality of man, the reality of the universe, the reality of the things of the present age, the coming age, and the eternal age, and in particular, the reality of the Christ appointed by God and the church chosen by Him. Life is God coming to be our life that we may be regenerated, grow, be transformed, and be conformed into the image of Christ, who expresses God, that we may become the expression of God.

The first function of the Bible is to testify concerning Christ. Christ is the subject and content of the Bible, and the Bible is the explanation and expression of Christ. Christ is the living Word of God, and the Bible is His written Word. Without Christ, the living Word, as reality, the written words of the Bible are but empty doctrines and vain letters. Yet without the written word of the Bible as His expression, Christ, the living Word, would be abstract and intangible. Therefore, we must read the Bible if we desire to know Christ.

Witness Lee, *Life Lessons*, pp. 32-33



GENESIS

OUTLINE

- I. God's creation—1:1—2:25**
- A. God's desire and purpose—1:1—2:3
1. God's original creation—1:1
 2. Judgment and corruption—1:2a
 3. God's restoration and further creation—1:2b—2:3
 - a. The Spirit, the word, and the light coming, the first day—1:2b-5
 - b. The waters under the expanse separated from the waters above the expanse, the second day—1:6-8
 - c. The earth separated from the seas and the plant life generated, the third day—1:9-13
 - d. The light-bearers appearing, the fourth day—1:14-19
 - e. The living creatures in the water and in the air generated, the fifth day—1:20-23
 - f. The living creatures on the earth generated, the sixth day—1:24-31
 - (1) The animals of the earth—vv. 24-25
 - (2) Man—vv. 26-28
 - (a) The conference of the Godhead—v. 26
 - (b) Created by God male and female—v. 27
 - (c) Blessed by God to be fruitful—v. 28
 - (3) Man and all other living creatures satisfied by God's provision—vv. 29-30
 - (4) Everything being very good to God—v. 31
 - g. God resting in satisfaction, the seventh day—2:1-3
- B. God's procedures to fulfill His purpose—2:4-25
1. The background—no rain from heaven, no man on the ground, no life in the field, only a mist from the earth—vv. 4-6
 2. The first step—creating man as a vessel to contain God as life—v. 7
 3. The second step—having man receive God as life—vv. 8-17
 - a. Placing man in front of the tree of life—vv. 8-9
 - b. Putting man in the garden with its river—vv. 10-15
 - c. Allowing man to have free choice—vv. 16-17
 4. The third step—working God into man as life to be His complement—vv. 18-25
 - a. Man, typifying God, needing to have a complement—vv. 18-20
 - b. Man gaining a complement in and by life—vv. 21-25
- II. Man's fall through Satan's corruption—3:1—11:32**
- A. The first fall—from God's presence to man's conscience—3:1-24
1. The serpent's (Satan's) temptation and man's first fall—vv. 1-7
 2. God dealing with man's first fall—vv. 8-24
 - a. Seeking man—vv. 8-13
 - b. Judging the serpent—v. 14
 - c. The promise regarding the seed of the woman—v. 15
 - d. Disciplining man through suffering—vv. 16-19
 - e. Redemption anticipated—vv. 20-21
 - f. Closing the way to the tree of life—vv. 22-24
- B. The second fall—from man's conscience to others' control—4:1-26
1. The background—vv. 1-2
 2. Man's presumption, anger, murder, lying, and arrogance—vv. 3-9
 3. God dealing with man's second fall—cursing man and making him a fugitive and a wanderer—vv. 10-15

GENESIS

Author: Moses, the author of the five books of the Law (Deut. 31:9, 24; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:45; 5:46; Acts 28:23; 2 Cor. 3:15).

Time of Writing: Probably about 1490 B.C., when Exodus was written (see introductory material in Exodus).

Place of Writing: In the wilderness east of Egypt.

Time Period Covered: From the beginning of creation (1:1) until approximately 1635 B.C., the death of Joseph (50:26).

Subject:
God Created, Satan Corrupted, Man Fell,
and Jehovah Promised to Save

CHAPTER 1

- I. God's Creation
1:1—2:25
- A. God's Desire and Purpose
1:1—2:3
 1. God's Original Creation
1:1

1 ^{1a}In the ²beginning ³God ^{4b}created the ⁵heavens and the earth.

¹ The Bible, composed of two testaments, the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the complete written divine revelation of God to man. The major revelation in the entire Bible is the unique divine economy of the unique Triune God (Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4b). The centrality and universality of this divine economy is the all-inclusive and unsearchably rich Christ as the embodiment and expression of the Triune God (Col. 2:9; 1:15-19; John 1:18). The goal of the divine economy is the church as the Body, the fullness, the expression, of Christ (Eph. 1:22b-23; 3:8-11), which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the union, mingling, and incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God and His redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite people. The accomplishing of the divine economy is revealed in the Bible progressively in many steps, beginning with God's creation in Gen. 1—2 and consummating with the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21—22. In the Old Testament the contents of God's economy are revealed mainly in types, figures, and shadows, whereas in the New Testament all the types, figures, and shadows are fulfilled and realized. Thus, the Old Testament is a figurative portrait of God's eternal

economy, and the New Testament is the practical fulfillment.

Genesis, adopted by the Septuagint as the title of this book, is a Latin word meaning *giving of birth, origin*. As the first book in the Bible, *Genesis* gives birth to and is the origin of the divine truths in the holy Word. Thus, the seeds of the divine truths are sown in this book. These seeds grow and develop in the succeeding books, especially in the New Testament, and are finally harvested in the last book, the book of Revelation.

The book of *Genesis* is a miniature of the complete revelation of the entire Bible. It begins with a man created in God's image (1:26) and ends with a man called Israel (32:28; 48:2), a transformed person, a man not only outwardly in the image of God but a man in whom God has wrought Himself, making him His expression. The transformed Israel is a seed, a miniature, of the New Jerusalem.

Apparently, chs. 1—2 of *Genesis* are merely a record of creation; actually, nearly every item in the record of these two chapters is a revelation of Christ, who is life to God's people (John 1:1, 4; 11:25; 14:6) for the producing and building up of the church. Chapters 3—50 present biographies

^{1a} cf. John 1:1-2
^{1b} Zech. 12:1;
Psa. 33:6;
Isa. 42:5;
45:18;
Jer. 10:12;
51:15;
John 1:3

GENESIS 1:2

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2. Judgment and Corruption
1:2a

^{2a} Jer. 4:23; Isa. 24:1 **2** ¹But the earth became ^{2a}waste and emptiness, and ²darkness was on the surface of the ³deep,

3. God's Restoration and Further Creation
1:2b—2:3

a. The Spirit, the Word, and the Light Coming, the First Day
1:2b-5

^{2b} Psa. 104:30 ⁴and the ^{5b}Spirit of God was brooding upon the surface of the waters.

of eight great persons in two groups of four, representing two races of men: Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Noah, representing the created race, and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, representing the called race. What is recorded is not primarily the works of these men but mainly their life, their living, and their way with God. In Genesis God uses both the record of creation and the biographies of eight persons to reveal the life that fulfills His purpose.

¹² Referring to the beginning of time (cf. John 1:1). Time began at the creation of the universe and continues until the final judgment at the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Time is for the accomplishing of God's eternal purpose, which God made in eternity past (Eph. 3:11) for eternity future.

¹³ Heb. *Elohim*, meaning *the Mighty One*. The Hebrew name here is plural, but the verb *created* is singular. Furthermore, in v. 26 the plural pronouns *Us* and *Our* are used in reference to God, whereas in v. 27 the pronouns *He* and *His* are used. These are seeds of the Trinity. God is one (Isa. 45:5; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Tim. 2:5), but He is also three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19). He is the Triune God. It was the Triune God who created. See note 14¹, par. 3, in 2 Cor. 13.

Genesis is divided into three sections, each beginning with a name. The first section (1:1—2:25), beginning with the name *God*, concerns God's creation; the second (3:1—11:32), beginning with *the serpent*, covers the serpent's corrupting of mankind; and the third (12:1—50:26), beginning with the name *Jehovah*, concerns Jehovah's calling of fallen man.

¹⁴ *Created* here, denoting to bring something into existence out of nothing, differs from *made* in 2:4 and *formed* in 2:7, the latter two denoting to take something that already exists and use it to produce something else.

The motive of God's creation was to fulfill God's desire and to satisfy His good pleasure (Eph. 1:5, 9). The purpose of God's creation is to glorify the Son of God (Col. 1:15-19) and to manifest God

Himself (Psa. 19:1-2; Rom. 1:20 and notes 1 and 2), especially in man (1 Tim. 3:16) through His Son, Christ, who is the embodiment of God and the image, the expression, of God (Col. 2:9; 1:15). The basis of God's creation is God's will and plan (Eph. 1:10 and note 1; Rev. 4:1 and note 2). The means of God's creation were the Son of God (Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2b) and the Word of God (Heb. 11:3; John 1:1-3), both of whom are Christ (John 1:1, 18; Rev. 19:13).

¹⁵ In the process of God's creation, the heavens and the angels therein were created first, and the earth, probably with some living creatures, was created second (Job 38:4-7 and note 7¹).

²¹ God created the earth in a good order (Job 38:4-7; Isa. 45:18). *But* here and *became* later in this verse indicate that something happened to cause God's creation to become "waste and emptiness." This cataclysmic event was God's judgment on the preadamic universe following Satan's rebellion. This judgment was executed on Satan, on the angels and the preadamic creatures living on the earth who joined Satan in his rebellion, and on the heavens and the earth themselves. See Isa. 14:12-15 and notes; Ezek. 28:12-19 and notes.

²² Whenever the words *waste* and *emptiness* are used together in the Old Testament, they denote a result of God's judgment (cf. Jer. 4:23; Isa. 24:1; 34:11). The darkness on the surface of the deep also is a sign of God's judgment (cf. Exo. 10:21-22; Rev. 16:10).

²³ I.e., the deep water. In the Bible water symbolizes either life (John 4:10, 14; 7:38; Rev. 22:1) or death (7:17-24; Exo. 14:21-30; John 3:5; Rom. 6:3). The water here signifies death. As a result of God's judgment on the preadamic universe, the entire earth was covered with deep water, signifying that the earth was filled with death and was under death. See notes 23¹ in Mark 1, 1⁶ in 1 Tim. 4, and 1³ in Rev. 21.

²⁴ Verse 1 is a record of God's original creation. Verse 2a refers to God's judgment on the preadamic universe. The entire section from 1:2b—

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GENESIS 1:3—1:10

3 And God ^{1a}said, Let there be ^{1b}light; and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was ^agood, and God ^{1b}separated the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light ^aDay, and the darkness He called Night. And ^bthere was evening and there was morning, one day.

b. The Waters under the Expanse Separated from the Waters above the Expanse, the Second Day
1:6-8

6 And God ^asaid, Let there be an ¹expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it ^{2b}separate the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters which were under the expanse from the ^awaters which were above the expanse, and it was so.

8 And God called the expanse Heaven. And ^athere was evening and there was morning, a second day.¹

c. The Earth Separated from the Seas and the Plant Life Generated, the Third Day
1:9-13

9 And God ^asaid, Let the waters under the heavens be ^bgathered together into one place, and let the ^{1c}dry land appear; and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land ¹Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called ¹Seas; and God saw that it was ^agood.

2:3 refers not to God's original creation but to God's restoration of the damaged universe, plus His further creation, in six days.

²⁵ Heb. *ruach*, variously translated *spirit*, *wind*, *breath*. This is the first mentioning of the Spirit in the Bible. The Spirit of God, as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), came to brood over the waters of death in order to generate life, especially man (v. 26), for God's purpose. In spiritual experience, the Spirit's coming is the first requirement for generating life (John 6:63a).

³¹ After the Spirit's brooding (v. 2b), the word of God came to bring in the light (cf. Psa. 119:105, 130). In spiritual experience, the coming of the word is the second requirement for generating life (John 5:24; 6:63b), and the coming of the light is the third requirement (Matt. 4:13-16; John 1:1-13).

The Spirit, the word, and the light were the instruments used by God to generate life for the fulfillment of His purpose. The Spirit, the word, and the light are all of life (Rom. 8:2; Phil. 2:16; John 8:12b). Christ as the Spirit is the reality of God (Rom. 8:9-10; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 16:13-15); Christ as the Word is the speaking of God (John 1:1; Heb. 1:2); and Christ as the light is the shining of God (John 8:12a; 9:5).

⁴¹ The separation of the light from the darkness for the purpose of discerning day from night (v. 5; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14b) is the fourth requirement for generating life.

^{3a} Gen. 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Psa. 33:6, 9; Heb. 11:3

^{3b} Isa. 45:7; 2 Cor. 4:6; cf. John 1:4-5

^{4a} Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31

^{4b} cf. 2 Cor. 6:14

^{5a} Psa. 74:16; Jer. 33:20

^{5b} Gen. 1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31

^{6a} Gen. 1:3

^{6b} Psa. 104:6-7

^{7a} Psa. 148:4

^{8a} Gen. 1:5

^{9a} Gen. 1:3

^{9b} Psa. 33:7; 104:7-9;

Job 38:8-11

^{9c} 2 Pet. 3:5;

Job 38:4-6

^{10a} Gen. 1:4

⁸¹ At the end of the second day there is no record that God said that the expanse (the air) and the waters were good (cf. vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). This is because in the air there are fallen angels (Eph. 2:2; 6:12), and the water is the dwelling place of the demons (Matt. 12:43 and note).

⁹¹ The appearing of the dry land is the sixth requirement for generating life. This took place on the third day, corresponding to the day of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:4). In the Bible the sea represents death and the land represents Christ (see note 7¹ in Deut. 8) as the generating source of life. After the land appeared, every kind of life—the plant life, the animal life, and even the human life—was produced out of the land (vv. 11-12, 24-27; 2:7). This typifies that the divine life with all its riches comes out of Christ. On the third day Christ came out of death in resurrection to generate life (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3) for the constituting of the church.

¹⁰¹ Dividing the land from the waters signifies separating life from death. From the second day (vv. 6-7) God began to work to confine and limit

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

Author: Paul the apostle with Timothy the brother (v. 1).

Time of Writing: Approximately A.D. 64, shortly before Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment (vv. 9, 22).

Place of Writing: A Roman prison; see verses in the previous item.

Recipients: Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church, which was in their house (vv. 1-2).

Subject:

An Illustration of the Believers' Equal Status
in the New Man

I. Introduction vv. 1-3

1 Paul, a ^aprisoner of Christ Jesus, and ^bTimothy the brother, to Philemon our beloved and ^cfellow worker

2 And to ¹Apphia the ^asister and to ^{1b}Archippus our ^cfellow soldier and to the ^{2d}church, which is in your house:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. A Slave Reborn to Be a Brother vv. 4-16

4 I ^athank my God always, making ^bmention of you in my prayers,

5 Hearing of your ¹love and the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and to all the saints,

² According to the familial nature of this Epistle, Apphia must have been Philemon's wife, and Archippus, his son.

² Philemon lived in Colossae (v. 2 cf. Col. 4:17; v. 10 cf. Col. 1:2; 4:9) and according to history was an elder of the church there. It must have been that the church in Colossae met in his house. Hence, it was the church in his house.

⁵ In the initial stage of the life of a believer, faith comes first, and then, out of faith, love is produced (Gal. 5:6; Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4; see notes 14² in 1 Tim. 1 and 23² in Eph. 6). But here love is mentioned first and then faith, because the matter of the equal status of the believers, dealt with in this Epistle, is a matter of love, which comes out of faith. In the new man the members love one another in faith (Titus 3:15).

- ^{1a} Philem. 9;
Eph. 3:1
^{1b} 1 Tim. 1:2;
1 Thes. 1:1;
3:2
^{1c} Philem. 24;
Rom. 16:3,
21
^{2a} Rom. 16:1
^{2b} Col. 4:17
^{2c} Phil. 2:25
^{2d} Rom. 16:5;
1 Cor. 16:19;
Col. 4:15
^{4a} Rom. 1:8
^{4b} Eph. 1:16

6 That the fellowship of your faith may become effective in the ¹full ^aknowledge of ²every good thing which is in ³you ⁴for Christ.

7 ¹For I had much ^ajoy and ^bencouragement over your love, because the ^{2c}inward parts of the saints have been ^{3d}refreshed through you, ^ebrother.

8 Therefore though I have much ^aboldness in Christ to ^bcharge you what is ^cfitting,

9 Because of love I rather ^aentreat, being such a one as Paul ¹the aged and now also a ^{2b}prisoner of Christ Jesus.

10 I entreat you concerning my ^achild, whom I have ^{1b}begotten in my ^cbonds, ^{2d}Onesimus,

11 Who formerly was ¹useless to you but now is ²useful both to you and to me.

Their relationship is of love through faith. The apostle appreciated the fellowship of Philemon's faith (v. 6) and was encouraged by his love (v. 7); thus, he entreated Philemon to receive Onesimus because of this love (v. 9). These two virtues are referred to in combination here; Philemon had both of them, not only toward the Lord but also to all the saints.

⁶ I.e., full acknowledgment, full appreciation, and full recognition through experience.

⁶ Not natural things (cf. Rom. 7:18) but spiritual and divinely good things, such as the love and the faith that Philemon had toward the Lord Jesus. These good things are in us, the regenerated believers, but are not in natural men.

⁶ Some ancient MSS read, us.

⁶ Lit., unto, toward. All the spiritual and divinely good things in us are unto Christ, toward Christ, for Christ. The apostle prayed that the fellowship, the communication, the sharing of Philemon's faith toward all the saints might become effective in them in the element and sphere of the full knowledge, the full realization, of all the good things in us for Christ, causing them to acknowledge, appreciate, and recognize all the spiritual and divinely good things that are in the believers for Christ.

⁷ For introduces the reason that the apostle prayed for Philemon's faith to become effective in the saints (v. 6), the reason being that Philemon's love had refreshed the inward parts of the saints and, hence, had rendered the apostle much joy and encouragement.

⁷ Lit., bowels.

⁷ Soothed, cheered.

⁹ Or, an ambassador (Eph. 6:20).

⁹ Prisoner here, fellow prisoner in v. 23, and bonds in v. 13 indicate that this Epistle was written during the apostle's first imprisonment in Rome. See note 6² in 2 Tim. 4.

¹⁰ Through the Spirit with the eternal life of God (John 3:3; 1:13).

¹⁰ The name in Greek means profitable, useful, helpful; it was a common name for slaves. He was Philemon's purchased bondslave, who, according to Roman law, had no human rights. He ran away from his master, thus committing a crime punishable by death. While he was in prison at Rome with the apostle, he was saved through him. Now the apostle sent him back with this Epistle to his master.

¹¹ Or, unserviceable. Referring to Onesimus's running away from Philemon.

¹¹ Or, serviceable. Because Onesimus had been converted and was willing to return to Philemon.

- ^{6a} Phil. 1:9;
Col. 1:9;
3:10
^{7a} Phil. 2:2
^{7b} 2 Cor. 7:4, 13;
Col. 4:11
^{7c} Philem. 12, 20
^{7d} Philem. 20;
2 Tim. 1:16
^{7e} Philem. 20, 16;
Matt. 23:8;
Luke 22:32;
John 21:23;
Gal. 6:18;
Rev. 1:9
^{8a} 2 Cor. 3:12
^{8b} 1 Tim. 1:18
^{8c} Eph. 5:4
^{9a} Rom. 12:1
^{9b} Philem. 1
^{10a} 1 Tim. 1:2
^{10b} 1 Cor. 4:14-15;
Gal. 4:19
^{10c} Philem. 13;
Phil. 1:7
^{10d} Col. 4:9

12 Him I have sent back to you—him, that is, my ¹very heart—

13 Whom I intended to keep with myself that on your behalf he might minister to me in the ^abonds of the gospel.

14 But ¹without your mind I did not want to do anything, that your goodness would ^anot be as of necessity, but ^bvoluntary.

15 ¹For ²perhaps for this reason he was separated from you for but an hour, that you might ³fully have him forever,

16 ¹No longer as a ^aslave, but ²above a slave, a ³beloved ^bbrother, especially to me, but how much more to you, ⁴both ^cin the flesh and in the Lord.

III. A Brother Recommended for
the New Man's Acceptance
vv. 17-22

17 If then ¹you hold me as a ^{2a}partner, receive him as myself.

12¹ Lit., bowels; as in vv. 7, 20 (*inward parts*), Phil. 1:8 (*inward parts*), Phil. 2:1 (*tenderheartedness*), and Col. 3:12 (*inward parts*), signifying inward affection, tenderheartedness, compassions. Paul's inward affection and compassions went with Onesimus to Philemon.

14¹ Just as the Lord would not do anything without our consent.

15¹ For introduces the reason for the sending in v. 12.

15² Perhaps is not only an expression of humility but also an expression that shows no prejudice.

15³ Possess him entirely.

16¹ This short Epistle serves the special purpose of showing us the equality, in God's eternal life and divine love, of all the members in the Body of Christ. In the semisavage age of Paul, the life of Christ had annulled, among the believers, the strong institution of slavery. Since the sentiment of the love of the Christian fellowship was so powerful and prevailing that the evil social order among fallen mankind was spontaneously ignored, any need for institutional emancipation was obviated. Because of the divine birth and because they were living by the divine

life, all the believers in Christ had equal status in the church, which was the new man in Christ and in which there was no discrimination between free and bond (Col. 3:10-11). This was based on three facts: (1) Christ's death on the cross abolished the ordinances of the different ways of life, for the creating of the one new man (Eph. 2:15); (2) we all were baptized into Christ and were made one in Him without any differences (Gal. 3:27-28); and (3) in the new man Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11). Such a life with such a love in equal fellowship is well able to maintain good order in the church (in Titus), carry out God's economy concerning the church (in 1 Timothy), and stand against the tide of the church's decline (in 2 Timothy). It is of the Lord's sovereignty that in the arrangement of the New Testament this Epistle was positioned after the three preceding books.

16² Or, more than a slave. Onesimus was even more than a free man—he was a beloved brother.

16³ A beloved brother here, the sister (v. 2), our beloved and fellow worker (v. 1), our fellow soldier (v. 2), my fellow workers (v. 24), my fellow prisoner (v. 23), and a partner (v. 17)

13^a Philem. 10

14^a 2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Pet. 5:2

14^b cf. Rom. 12:8

16^a 1 Cor. 7:22

16^b Philem. 7; Col. 4:9; 1 Tim. 6:2

16^c Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22

17^a 2 Cor. 8:23

18 And if he has ¹wronged you in anything or owes anything, charge that to ²my account.

19 I, Paul, have written with my ^aown hand: I will ¹repay; not to say to you that you owe me even ²your own self besides.

20 Yes, ^abrother, may I have ¹profit from you in the Lord; ^{2b}refresh my ³inward parts in Christ.

21 Having ^aconfidence in your obedience, I have written to you, knowing that you will do even beyond the things that I say.

22 And at the same time also prepare me a ^alodging, for I ¹hope that through your ^bprayers I will be ²graciously ^cgiven to you.

IV. Conclusion
vv. 23-25

23 ^{1a}Epaphras, my ^bfellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you;

24 As do ^aMark, ^bAristarchus, ^cDemas, ^dLuke, my ^efellow workers.

25 The ^{1a}grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your ^{2b}spirit.³

are all intimate terms, indicating the apostle's intimate sentiment concerning his relationship with the members in the new man.

16⁴ I.e., in the flesh as a slave and in the Lord as a brother. In the flesh Onesimus was a brother as a slave, and in the Lord he was a slave as a brother.

17¹ Just as a local church with its elders is in partnership with the Lord, and the Lord entrusts to them the newly saved ones, as the good Samaritan did with the healed one (Luke 10:33-35).

17² This indicates the deep relationship of fellowship in the Lord.

18¹ This indicates that Onesimus had defrauded his master.

18² In caring for Onesimus, Paul did exactly what the Lord does for us.

19¹ Just as the Lord pays everything for His redeemed.

19² This indicates that Philemon had been saved through Paul himself.

20¹ Gk. *onaimen*, similar in sound

to *Onesimus* (both words meaning profitable). Here, this word is an allusion to the name Onesimus. This is a play on words, implying that since "you owe me even your own self, you are an Onesimus to me—hence, you should be profitable to me, i.e., should let me have profit from you in the Lord."

20² Soothe, cheer.

20³ Lit., bowels, as in v. 7. Since Philemon had refreshed the inward parts of the saints, his partner now asked him to do the same for him in the Lord.

22¹ This expectation, that he would be liberated from his imprisonment and visit the churches again, is expressed also in Phil. 1:25 and 2:24.

22² Paul considered that his visit would be a gracious gift to the church.

23¹ A contraction of *Epaphroditus* (Phil. 2:25; 4:18).

25¹ The apostle always greeted the recipients of his Epistles, in both the opening and the conclusion, with the

19^a 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11

20^a Philem. 7

20^b Philem. 7

21^a 2 Cor. 2:3

22^a Acts 28:23

22^b 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19

22^c Heb. 13:19

23^a Col. 1:7; 4:12

23^b Rom. 16:7; Col. 4:10

24^a Acts 12:12, 25; Col. 4:10

24^b Acts 19:29; Col. 4:10

24^c Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10

24^d Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11

24^e Philem. 1

25^a Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23

25^b 2 Tim. 4:22

from the Book of Philemon

Philemon 25

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grace of the Lord. This shows that he trusted in the Lord's grace, being confident that this grace would enable them, as well as himself (1 Cor. 15:10), to accomplish what he wrote to them. No human effort avails for

the accomplishing of a revelation as high as the completing revelation of the apostle Paul—for this the Lord's grace is needed.

^{25²} See note 18² in Gal. 6.

^{25³} Some ancient MSS add, Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT RECOVERY VERSION CONTAINS OVER 15,000 EXTENSIVE FOOTNOTES STRESSING THE REVELATION OF THE TRUTH, THE SPIRITUAL LIGHT, AND THE SUPPLY OF LIFE.

And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26)

Let Us... reveals that a council was held among the Three of the Godhead regarding the creation of man. The decision to create man had been made by the Triune God in eternity past, indicating that the creation of man was for the eternal purpose of the Triune God (Eph. 3:9-11). God's intention in creating man was to carry out His divine economy for the dispensing of Himself into man (1 Tim. 1:4 and note 3, par. 1). This is fully unveiled in the following books of the Bible.

And you shall be to Me a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel. (Exodus 19:6)

As God's people remain in His presence, they become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:9). As priests, God's people live in God's presence, enjoying Him as their portion, even as He enjoys

them as His treasure (v. 5). The mutual enjoyment between God and His people separates His people unto Himself from everything other than Him, making them a holy nation.

The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the 'spirit of man within him. (Zechariah 12:1)

In His creation God made three crucial, equally important items—the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, and be one with God. In His economy God planned to have Christ as the centrality and universality of His move on earth. For His chosen people, who would care for Him as the Creator and as the Redeemer, there was the need for Him to create a receiving organ so that they would have the capacity to receive all that God had planned for Christ to be. Hence, this book charges us to pay full attention to our human

spirit, that we may receive the Christ revealed in this book and may understand all that is revealed therein concerning Him (Eph. 1:17-18a; 3:5).

Your words were found and I ate them, and your word became to me the gladness and joy of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O Jehovah, God of hosts. (Jeremiah 15:16)

According to the entire revelation in the Holy Bible, God's words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them (Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3). God's word is the divine supply as food to nourish us. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being to nourish us that we may be constituted with His element. This is a crucial aspect of God's economy. When we eat God's words, His word becomes our heart's gladness and joy.

But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

To realize and participate in the deep and hidden things God has ordained and prepared for us requires us not only to believe in Him but also to love Him. To fear God, to worship

God, and to believe in God (that is, to receive God) are all inadequate; to love Him is the indispensable requirement. To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life. In this way we have the closest and most intimate fellowship with God, and we are able to enter into His heart and apprehend all its secrets (Psa. 73:25; 25:14). Thus, we not only realize but also experience, enjoy, and fully participate in these deep and hidden things of God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God. The peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer, as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you;

for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare.... (John 14:2-3)

The Lord's intention in this chapter was to bring man into God for the building of His dwelling place. But between man and God there were many obstacles, such as sin, sins, death, the world, the flesh, the self, the old man, and Satan. For the Lord to bring man into God, He had to solve all these problems. Therefore, He had to go to the cross to accomplish redemption that He might open the way and make a standing for man, that man might enter into God. This standing in God, being enlarged, becomes the standing in the Body of Christ. Anyone who does not have a standing, a place, in God does not have a place in the Body of Christ, which is God's dwelling place. Hence, the Lord's going in order to accomplish redemption was to prepare a place in His Body for the disciples.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

The first Spirit mentioned here is the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, and the second spirit is the human spirit, the regenerated spirit of man. Regeneration is accomplished in the human spirit by the Holy

Spirit of God with God's life, the uncreated eternal life. Thus, to be regenerated is to have the divine, eternal life (in addition to the human, natural life) as the new source and new element of a new person.

And He told them this parable, saying, Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? (Luke 15:3-4)

In answering the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes, who condemned Him for eating with sinners, the Savior spoke three parables, unveiling and depicting how the Divine Trinity works to bring sinners back, through the Son by the Spirit, to the Father. The Son came in His humanity as the Shepherd to find the sinner as a lost sheep and bring him back home (vv. 4-7). The Spirit seeks the sinner as a woman carefully seeks a lost coin until she finds it (vv. 8-10). And the Father receives the repenting and returned sinner as the "certain man" here receives his prodigal son (vv. 11-32). The entire Divine Trinity treasures the sinner and participates in bringing him back to God.

19 But I saw none of the other apostles ¹except ^aJames, the brother of the Lord.

20 Now concerning the things which I am writing to you, behold, before God, I am ^anot lying.

21 Then I went into the regions of ^{1a}Syria and ^bCilicia.

22 Yet I was still ¹unknown by face to the ^achurches of Judea, which are ^bin Christ.

23 But they ¹only heard *this*: He who was formerly ^apersecuting us is now announcing as the gospel the ^{2b}faith which formerly he ^cravaged.

24 And they ^aglorified God because of me.

CHAPTER 2

1 Then ¹after a period of fourteen years I ^awent up again to Jerusalem with ^bBarnabas, taking ^cTitus with *me* also.

2 And I went up according to ^{1a}revelation, and I laid before them the gospel which I proclaim among the ^bGentiles, but privately to those who were of ^crepute, ^dlest perhaps I should be ^erunning, or had run, in vain.

19¹ This indicates that James, the brother of the Lord, and Cephas (v. 18), who was Peter, were at that time the leading ones among the apostles.

21¹ Arabia (v. 17), Syria, and Cilicia were all regions of the Gentile world. By mentioning his journeys to all these places, Paul testified that the revelation he received concerning the gospel was not from any men, that is, from any Christians, who at that time were mainly in Judea (v. 22).

22¹ Paul said this to strengthen the point that he did not receive the gospel from any who were believers in Christ before him.

23¹ The churches, which included all the believers in Christ in Judea, only heard the news of Paul's conversion and glorified God because of him. They had nothing to do with his receiving the revelation concerning the gospel.

23² The faith here and in all the verses of reference 23^b implies our believing in Christ, taking His person and His redemptive work as the object of our faith. The faith, replacing the law, by which God dealt with people in the Old Testament, became the principle by which God deals with people in the New Testament. This faith characterizes the believers in Christ and distinguishes them from the keepers of law. This is the main emphasis of this book. The law of the Old Testament stresses letters and ordinances, whereas the faith of the New Testament emphasizes the Spirit and life.

1¹ As recorded in Acts 15, this was after a number of churches had been raised up in the Gentile world through Paul's ministry (see Acts 13—14). This indicates that Paul's preaching of the gospel to raise up the Gentile churches had nothing to do

23^a Gal. 1:13 24^a Matt. 9:8; Acts 21:19-20 1^a Acts 15:2
1^b Gal. 2:9, 13; Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22, 24-26, 30; 12:25; 13:1, 7; 14:20; 15:12, 22;
1 Cor. 9:6 1^c 2 Cor. 2:13; Titus 1:4 2^a Gal. 1:12 2^b Acts 15:12 2^c Gal. 2:6, 9
2^d Gal. 4:11; 1 Thes. 3:5 2^e Phil. 2:16; 1 Cor. 9:24, 26; Heb. 12:1; Gal. 5:7

19^a Gal. 2:9, 12; Matt. 13:55; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; James 1:1
20^a Rom. 9:1; 1 Tim. 2:7
21^a Acts 15:23, 41
21^b Acts 6:9; 21:39; 22:3; 23:34; 27:5
22^a 1 Thes. 2:14; Acts 9:31
22^b 1 Cor. 1:2
23^a Gal. 1:13
23^b Gal. 3:2, 5, 7, 9, 23, 25; 6:10; Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; Rom. 16:26; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 4:13; 1 Tim. 1:19b; 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10, 12, 21; 2 Tim. 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:13; Jude 3, 20; Rev. 14:12

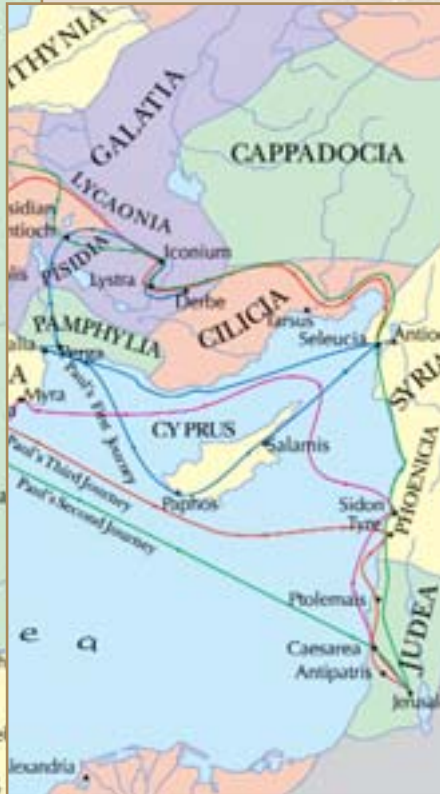
For example, cross reference *b* on the word *faith* in Galatians 1:23 links this verse with other New Testament verses that relate to faith in the objective sense, that is, to the faith as the contents of the complete gospel according to the New Testament revelation.

Here is the list of the verses that are referred to in cross reference 23b in Galatians 1:

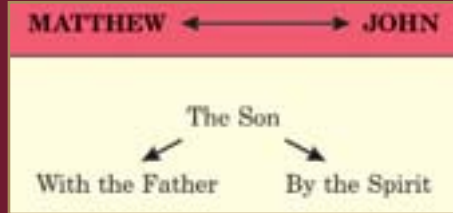
- Gal. 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
- Gal. 3:5 He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit and does works of power among you, *does He do it* out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
- Gal. 3:7 Know then that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham.
- Gal. 3:9 So then they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.
- Gal. 3:23 But before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was to be revealed.
- Gal. 3:25 But since faith has come, we are no longer under a child-conductor.
- Gal. 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
- Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.
- Acts 13:8 But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith and *saying* that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- Rom. 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith.
- 1 Cor. 16:13 Watch, stand firm in the faith, be full-grown men, be strong.
- Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
- 1 Tim. 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, *concerning* which some, thrusting *these* away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith.
- 1 Tim. 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
- 1 Tim. 3:13 For those who have ministered well obtain for themselves a good standing and much boldness in faith, which is in Christ Jesus.
- 1 Tim. 4:1 But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons.
- 1 Tim. 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
- 1 Tim. 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of *his* household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
- 1 Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, *because of* which some, aspiring after *money*, have been led away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains.
- 1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.
- 1 Tim. 6:21 *Because of* which some, professing *this*, have misaimed regarding the faith. Grace be with you.
- 2 Tim. 3:8 And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also oppose the truth; men corrupted in mind, disapproved concerning the faith.
- 2 Tim. 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.
- Titus 1:13 This testimony is true; for which cause reprove them severely that they may be healthy in the faith.
- Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you *and* exhort *you* to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.
- Rev. 14:12 Here is the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

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