

traveling companions of the Apostle Paul somewhere along the way in these chapters. All of these men then also were entrusted with the doctrines given unto Paul to preach. All of these men also helped spread Paul's gospel, thus they all were able to lead those they came in contact with *...the way of God more perfectly*. Some of these very same men also became the Church Apostles of the current church age we are still living in. All of these men were in some fashion or another an aid unto the Apostle Paul. Paul himself uses such terms as: "fellowlabourer, helper, fellowhelper, fellowworkers, workfellow, labourer together with, and companions in labour" to describe how they aided him in spreading the gospel. All were thankful that Paul had expounded unto them *...the way of God more perfectly*.

You may be thinking how was John Mark able to help spread Paul's gospel? It sure doesn't look like that from reading ACTS 13 and ACTS 15. In ACTS 13 we find John Mark leaving Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, and at the end of ACTS 15 we find Paul and Barnabas splitting up because of John Mark. But as time went on, Barnabas patiently taught John Mark Paul's gospel. Thus years later we find that an aged Barnabas has encouraged a much younger John Mark to join up again with the Apostle Paul, who writes unto Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 4:11 *...Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry*. There is only one way John Mark could have been profitable unto Paul and his ministry, and that was because his uncle Barnabas was able to teach him Paul's gospel, and expound unto him *...the way of God more perfectly*. {For more on John Mark review pages 95-97 of these notes}.

Ephesus

We now come to the 19th chapter of ACTS. The events of ACTS 19 take place in Ephesus. According to ACTS 20:31 the Apostle Paul spent three years in Ephesus. This will be the longest time he spent in any one place since being saved. What we find in scripture because of this long stay is that the Apostle Paul becomes the one who establishes the church at Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla are two of his biggest helpers in this regard also. Again Paul acknowledges this fact in ROMANS 16:3-5, when he writes concerning them at Ephesus, stating: *Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house.*

We have a lot of information in scripture surrounding Ephesus. The first time Ephesus is mentioned in scripture is in ACTS 18, verses 19, 21 and 24, where Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla while he finishes his second missionary journey. At this point in time in history Ephesus was in the middle of a 200 year period of prominence as the commercial and banking center of what was known as Asia in Paul's day. ACTS 19:10 tells us that because of Paul spending so much time there at Ephesus, *...that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*. In ACTS 19:17-20 we read some more of what took place at Ephesus when Paul was preaching there: *...and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.* So mightily grew the word of God at Ephesus and the surrounding country that it greatly impacted the business of the idol makers. The idol makers at Ephesus made silver shrines unto the Greek mythological goddess Diana, whom many from Ephesus had worshipped before the Apostle Paul had come along. The Apostle Paul and his preaching turned so many away from idol worship there at Ephesus that ACTS 19:23-41 records of a great uproar at Ephesus against the Apostle Paul and his doctrine. After this great uproar ACTS 20 tells us that Paul then left Ephesus and visited Macedonia and Corinth, and then after a while Paul set off for Jerusalem. On his way to Jerusalem he passed close enough to Ephesus that he called the Ephesian elders to come see him one last time. ACTS 20:17-38 records Paul's last words spoken unto the elders at Ephesus, which we will study further at a later time. However in ACTS 20:18-21, 27, and 31-36 we get a snap shot picture from the Apostle Paul himself on what went on while he spent

these next three years in Ephesus. ACTS 20:18 *...Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ...27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. ...31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.*

One thing we know about the Apostle Paul is that he had a tremendous amount of the love of God in his heart toward all the Saints. Thus he writes encouraging letters to those different churches he has founded throughout his journeys. And these letters were to be shared, as he noted in his letter to the COLOSSIANS, where he wrote in COLOSSIANS 4:16 *And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.* Thus it is no surprise to later find the Apostle Paul writing an epistle unto these very same Ephesian Saints whom he was about to establish here in ACTS 19. Brother Hill called the book of EPHESIANS the high water mark of Paul's epistles. (From looking at his old Bible, one can see that Brother Hill spent more time in EPHESIANS than any other book in the Bible). Many of Paul's deeper doctrines are found in his letter to the EPHESIANS. Some highlight statements from EPHESIANS concern our place in the heavenlies. EPHESIANS 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* EPHESIANS 2:6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Associated with the thought of being made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus is the thought of our inheritance that we have in Christ Jesus, a point that Paul emphasized unto the Ephesian Saints. First of all Paul told the Ephesian elders this in ACTS 20:32 above: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Paul then wrote to the EPHESIANS of their inheritance in the following verses from EPHESIANS. EPHESIANS 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:...* . . . 14 *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. ...1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,...* .

In ACTS 20:32 above Paul told the Ephesian elders how to be built up by the word of God's grace. Paul reemphasizes this fact in EPHESIANS 2:20 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* In the book of EPHESIANS we read about the ages that are to come: EPHESIANS 2:7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

In the book of EPHESIANS we find mention of mysteries, which in ages past was not made known. EPHESIANS 1:9 *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:...* . . . EPHESIANS 3:3 *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be*

fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ... . In EPHESIANS 5 we have explained for us the great mystery, the Bride of Christ, which is summarized in EPHESIANS 5:32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* In EPHESIANS 6 Paul requests prayer for himself in making known these mysteries, stating in verse 19: *And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.*

In EPHESIANS 6:11-18 the Apostle Paul expounds on the warfare of the believer. EPHESIANS 6:11 *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

Thus in the letter to the EPHESIANS we get a glimpse into the doctrines Paul was personally able to teach here at Ephesus in these next three years of his life. Some of his deepest truths were taught to these precious Saints of Ephesus.

One of the meanings of Ephesus is "full purposed," and certainly these at Ephesus were full purposed having been fully grounded in Paul's gospel. In other words those at Ephesus were equipped to grow up into Christ in all things. The provision for them to be in the Bride of Christ was (in Brother Copley's words) "complete and adequate." The fact that the Apostle Paul founded this church of Ephesus doesn't automatically qualify them to be in the Bride of Christ, but it certainly was to their advantage to have been taught and learned Paul's gospel. And as time went on several others besides the Apostle Paul were sent by the Lord to help further establish these Ephesian Saints. We have recorded for us in the book of EPHESIANS the name of one man, Tychicus (TIK ih kihs), whose name means "fortunate" or "fateful." The Apostle Paul had this to say about Tychicus. EPHESIANS 6:21 *But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.* COLOSSIANS 4:7 state from Paul that Tychicus is *...a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord.* Tychicus was one of several besides the Apostle Paul who ministered unto the Ephesian Saints. 2 TIMOTHY 4:12 *And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.*

2 TIMOTHY 1:16-18 indicates that Onesiphorus was another Saint that ministered unto the Ephesians. 2 TIMOTHY 1:16 *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.* In 2 TIMOTHY 4:19 Onesiphorus ("bringing profit") is mentioned with Priscilla and Aquila, whom we mentioned earlier as having a church in their house at Ephesus as noted in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:19 and ROMANS 16:3-5.

Brother Copley notes in the back of his EPHESIAN study book that ROMANS 16:1-20 properly belongs with the Ephesian letter. This really makes sense, especially considering that the Apostle Paul spent so much time there (three years at Ephesus). Certainly he made many friends there in addition to the enemies mentioned in scripture from that region. Why would he not acknowledge these people in scripture? It seems that he did, however the translators got that part of scripture tied in with ROMANS 16:1-20. ROMANS 16:1-20 lists 27 people, acquaintances of Paul from Ephesus. 27 was the

number having to do with the PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. Eight of these 27 are women. One of the meanings of the number eight is THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. Again the doctrine of THE BRIDE OF CHRIST is really expounded for us in EPHESIANS 5:21-33. Of the 27 listed in ROMANS 16:1-20, 19 were men. 19 is the number of FAITH. The Apostle Paul also wrote about the faith of those at Ephesus in EPHESIANS 1:15 & 16, which reads: *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.* But the main point that we need to see here is that these Saints mentioned in this portion of our study were aids, and helpers, and teachers, and fellow labourers, and ministers, and even fellow Apostles (such as Timothy, Erastus, and Apollos) were at one time or another at Ephesus preaching and teaching, who along with the Apostle Paul were sent from the Lord to help establish the church at Ephesus!

What we have really noted here in our introduction about Ephesus is the fact that the church of Ephesus that was founded by the Apostle Paul, and established by the Apostle Paul, and grounded by Paul, and by other followers of the Apostle Paul. No other church founded by the Apostle Paul had so much help in learning Paul's doctrines.

Let me quote what Brother Copley said about Ephesus in his REVELATION study book. "Ephesus means, "city of the moon." She represents the Saints who are seated in the heavenlies in Christ; hence, all her members should have been the highest type of believers. Be it remembered that our beloved Brother Paul established this assembly. He visited it several times. He spent over three years there teaching them and building them up in the faith. It was there that "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul," {ACTS 19:11}, delivering the sick and demon-possessed by means of handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched his flesh, {ACTS 19:12}. There, "*mightily grew the word of God and prevailed,*" {ACTS 19:20}, which is typical of the final triumph of Paul's message in these closing days. It was to the elders of the Ephesian assembly that Paul said, "*I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ...I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*" {ACTS 20:20, 21, and 27}.

It is also a solemn fact that to the Ephesian Assembly, the same Apostle wrote the deepest doctrinal and practical truths regarding believers of this age. A thorough knowledge of that letter (EPHESIANS) will aid greatly in understanding the book of REVELATION. Observe their spiritual status when he wrote. Paul says, "*I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*" {EPHESIANS 1:15}. Faith in Jesus produces love for the Saints. Faith in all the counsel of God, which those Saints had received, must awaken in them a love for other Saints to learn the same wondrous truths. For this praise-worthy congregation Paul offers two very essential prayers. The first one is three fold, EPHESIANS 1:17-19; the second one is seven-fold, EPHESIANS 3:16-19. It will pay the reader to study those petitions." (End of quoting from Brother Copley).

Let me insert here for ease of further study those two portions of scripture just referenced by Brother Copley.

EPHESIANS 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

EPHESIANS 3:16 *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

As we can see by studying these two portions of scripture those at Ephesus were equipped to grow up into Christ in all things. Again, one of the meanings of Ephesus is "full purposed," and certainly these at Ephesus were full purposed having been fully

grounded in Paul's gospel. Thus some thirty years later we find Ephesus heading up the list of seven churches found mentioned in REVELATION 2 and 3.

We read the following account starting in REVELATION 2:1 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* If we knew nothing else about the church at Ephesus than this, we would think that Ephesus was the ultimate church; that it had everything going for it. It was founded by the Apostle Paul, established by the Apostle Paul, and grounded Paul, and by the disciples of the Apostle Paul, as noted above, and after thirty some years still had mentioned these nine high quality things about it. (Patience is mentioned twice in the ten items underlines above). Nine is the number of DIVINE COMPLETENESS or FINALITY. It appears to be a divinely complete church, but Jesus Christ the Righteous heart examiner finds one fault with Ephesus after these thirty some years, and that fault is noted in REVELATION 2:4. REVELATION 2:4 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* The American Standard version of this verse reads: "But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." That "first love" is that preeminent love, that first in value love, that agape love that is found in ROMANS 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Examining the word "first" here in REVELATION 2:4 we find that it means: first in rank, chief, principal, or preeminent. This word "first" is number 4413 in the Greek Strong's Concordance. It is the same word used in 1 JOHN 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.* How much did Jesus "first" love us? There are several answers to this question. Jesus "first" loved us means since before the beginning of time, in the eternity's past, He "first" loved us. Jesus "first" loved us means above all things He "first" loved us. Jesus "first" loved us means He created all things with His love for us "first" on His mind. Jesus "first" loved us means we are preeminent in His heart. The point we are noting here is that at one time before REVELATION 2:4 was spoken by Jesus, these very same Ephesian Saints had in their hearts Jesus as their "first" preeminent love too.

What then precipitated this statement of Jesus in REVELATION 2:4: *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.... ?* You see in order for them to leave their first love, they must have had at one time Jesus as their first preeminent love. From that day on the road to Damascus the Apostle Paul had Jesus as his preeminent love. Paul asked Jesus in ACTS 9:6 "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And Paul followed the instructions of Jesus from that day forward, each and every day looking forward to Jesus soon coming. Jesus was Paul's first preeminent love. In other words Jesus was first in Paul's life; first in everything. And, of course, this love grew on a daily basis. When Paul became many times a prisoner for his preaching the gospel of Christ, who did he give the credit too? Always Paul gave credit first to Jesus because Jesus was first in his life. In PHILEMON 1 & 9 Paul calls himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and in his letter to those at Ephesus Paul calls himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles in EPHESIANS 3:1, and the prisoner of the Lord in EPHESIANS 4:1. We see in this, that, in everything in Paul's life, Jesus was first. No wonder then that he wrote the Corinthians to be followers of Paul as he was of Jesus Christ, (see 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1) for Paul put Jesus first in everything. Even in Paul's day among his own acquaintances there were those who weren't willing to follow Jesus to the point where Jesus was first place in their life in everything. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 1:15 *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me... .* If they had turned away from Paul, we know that they had before this turned away from Jesus being their first love. That is, Jesus was no longer first in their lives; Jesus was not their first love. Paul wrote to the Galatians in GALATIANS 5:7 *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?* The answer to this question is that there were other people who persuaded those at Galatia to put something other than Jesus first in their life. Demas was a fellowlabourer with the Apostle Paul PHILEMON 1:24 tells us.

We know that in order for Demas to be a fellowlabourer with Paul, Demas would of had to have put Jesus first in his life. However later in life Paul wrote unto Timothy this concerning Demas in 2 TIMOTHY 4:10: *...Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...* Demas had traded his preeminent love for Jesus by putting a love for this present world first. It is to those of a heart attitude like Demas that Jesus wrote in REVELATION 2:4 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* Again at one time Demas had shown his first love for Jesus in his ministering with the Apostle Paul.

Recently I talked to a man in Houston who told me that every day when he wakes up he asks God to help him have that wonderful feeling of Jesus being so close in his life. As we talked I realized that Jesus was the preeminent love in his life; the first love whom the Ephesians had left. May we all learn from the church at Ephesus and keep Jesus first in our lives. May He be our preeminent love. Jesus will be the first love of all full overcomers.

Paul at Ephesus

Having now a complete overview of what took place in Ephesus, let's go back and see how this assembly was established.

Recall from ACTS 18 that Paul had already briefly visited Ephesus when accompanying Aquila and Priscilla on their move to Ephesus. ACTS 18:19 indicates that Paul was in Ephesus long enough to attend at least one Sabbath's day service, where we are told he reasoned with the Jews. Of course we know this was Paul's custom everywhere he went. However these Jews of Ephesus were a little more receptive to hearing what the Apostle Paul had to say, thus in ACTS 18:20 we find that *...they desired him to tarry longer time with them.* We haven't read of the Apostle Paul getting this kind of reception anywhere else he has traveled to since leaving his home church in Antioch, Syria. The Apostle Paul wasn't able to stay longer with them at this time so Paul makes them a promise in ACTS 18:21 stating: *...I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.* Several months pass, and we find here in ACTS 19 that the Apostle Paul does return to Ephesus.

ACTS 19:1 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.*

What an important portion of scripture these first seven verses of ACTS 19 have become in understanding some fundamental New Testament truths. Yet the doctrines found here in are often twisted, or at least misunderstood by an innumerable multitude! Let's make sure we understand what is being said here.

As we go through these seven verses we find a mini New Testament. A snap shot (if you will) of Paul's gospel, and a snap shot of New Testament truths. Hopefully this will be evident as we go through this portion of scripture.

The Doctrine of Eternal Security

In verse 1 we find the Apostle Paul finding certain unnamed disciples upon his arrival at Ephesus. "Ephesus" is found seventeen times in scripture, and seventeen is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. Simply put, all full overcomers have VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, and those of "Ephesus" lead the way in this regard. This is even true in these first unnamed disciples that Paul found first here at Ephesus. They could have been well set in their ways, and not able to take instruction,