

Epistles of Apostle Paul

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Foreword

Of all the New Testament holy authors, Apostle Paul - having written some 14 Epistles - stands out as being the most prolific in expounding instructions on Christian living. Because of the significance of their contents, they are rightfully regarded as the "second Gospel," attracting attention from both thinkers-philosophers and the ordinary faithful. The Apostles themselves did not ignore the works of their "beloved brother," who was last to convert to Christ, yet equal to them in spirit and sanctified gifts (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Presenting themselves as an important and necessary appendix to the teachings of the Gospel, the Epistles of the Apostle Paul should be the subject of an attentive and earnest study of every person that seeks a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. These Epistles are outstanding in their remarkably elevated religious thoughts, reflecting the Apostle Paul's extensive knowledge and scholarship of the Old Testament, which were equal to his profound understanding of Christ's New Testament teachings. In trying to express his deep thoughts and not finding the necessary words in the contemporary Greek lexicon to do this, Apostle Paul was compelled to create his own expressions by blending existing words to give them a new meaning. Later, these new words were widely used by Christian writers in their literary works.

Correlation between Apostle

Paul's teachings and his life

The Epistles of Apostle Paul are the fruits of his Apostolic endeavors to uncover the teachings of Christ. They are remarkable because the Apostle does not do this in an abstract manner, but rather through a close link with the development of the churches established by him, and through his personal Apostolic labors and personal sufferings.

Because the teachings outlined in his Epistles are closely interwoven with his personality, an understanding of his life and character would assist in comprehending them. That is why we shall now acquaint the reader with those aspects of Apostle Paul's life - which he himself pointed out - which served as his source in determining questions relating to the Christian teachings on faith and morality. " For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:9-10). This is how this great "Apostle of tongues" characterized himself and who was recorded in the annals of the history of the Christian Church as the "heathen's Apostle."

Endowed from birth with abounding mental capabilities, he was brought up and educated along strict Pharisee principles and by his own words, was more advanced than many of his contemporaries and in his youth, was exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers (Gal. 1:14). Consequently, when God selected him in his mother's womb and called him to Apostolic ministry, he devoted all the energy and towering strength of his great spirit toward preaching in the name of Christ among the heathens. This action forced him to suffer much sorrow from his fellow countrymen that were blinded with disbelief in their animosity toward Christ.

In studying the life and works of Saint Paul through the Book of Apostolic Acts, it is truly impossible not to be astonished at the extraordinary, inexhaustible energy of this great "Apostle of tongues." It is difficult to imagine how a person lacking in health and physical strength (Gal. 4:13-14), could sustain so many extraordinary hardships and dangers as Apostle Paul had to endure, for the glory of Christ. What is especially remarkable is the fact that as these difficulties and dangers grew, instead of his impassioned zeal and energy weakening, they increased and became stronger.

Compelled to remember his labors in order to enlighten the Corinthians, the Apostle writes: "Are they ministers of Christ? - I speak as a fool - I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness..." (2 Cor. 11:23-27).

In comparing himself to the other Apostles, his humility prompts him to call himself as the "least" among them, even though he would have been fully justified in declaring: "But I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

Indeed, without God's grace no ordinary human being could undertake such tasks and accomplish so many deeds. As much as Apostle Paul presented himself before kings as strong, forthright and unshakeable in his beliefs, so was he decisive and sincere in his

relations with his fellow-brother Apostles. Once, in the city of Antioch - capital of the heathens in Asia Minor - he did not hesitate to accuse Apostle Peter of hypocrisy when that Apostle's motive for censure was flawed (Gal. 2:11-14). This fact is also important in that it clearly denounces the false assertion of the Roman Catholics that Apostle Peter was designated by Christ as the "prince above all other Apostles" and as the substitute for Christ Himself (hence the Roman Popes appropriated the title "vicar of the Son of God"). Being the last to become an Apostle and having formerly persecuted the Christian Church, would Apostle Paul dare to accuse the "substitute" of the Lord Jesus Christ? This is absolutely unlikely. Apostle Paul accused Apostle Peter as an equal, as a brother.

Life and works of Apostle Paul

Saint Paul, carrying at first his Hebrew name Saul, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin and was born in the Cilician town of Tarsus (in Asia Minor), which was then renowned for its Greek academy and for the scholarship of its citizens. Because he was a native of this city and descended from Jews freed from Roman slavery, Paul had the rights of a Roman citizen. Paul received his initial education in Tarsus, and probably became familiar with the pagan culture, since his acquaintance with gentile writers is clearly shown in his speeches and writings (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12). He received his final education in Jerusalem from the famous teacher Gamaliel in the acclaimed rabbinical school. Gamaliel was considered an expert on the law and despite belonging to the party of Pharisees, was a freethinking person (Acts 5:34) and an admirer of Greek wisdom. Here, according to the accepted custom of the Jews, young Saul learned the art of tent-making, which later provided him with the means to live from his own labors (Acts 18:3; 2 Cor. 11:8; 2 Thes. 3:8.).

Evidently young Saul was preparing for a rabbinical career, since directly after finishing his education and training he emerged as a strong zealot of pharisaic traditions and persecutor of the Christian faith. Perhaps by the appointment of the Sanhedrin, he was a witness to the death of the first martyr Stephan (Acts 7:58, 8:1) and then received official authority to persecute the Christians beyond the borders of Palestine in Damascus (Acts 9:1-2.).

The Lord, seeing in him a "chosen vessel," called him to Apostolic service by miraculous means on the road to Damascus. During his journey, a bright light enveloped Saul, from which he fell to the ground blind. A voice resounded from the light, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul asked, "Who are you?" Jesus answered, "I am Jesus, Who you are persecuting." The Lord commanded Saul to go to Damascus, where he would be instructed on what to do further. Saul's companions heard the voice of Christ, but they did not see the light. After being led by the arm to Damascus, Paul was taught the faith and

on the third day was baptized by Ananias. The moment Saul was submerged in the baptismal water, he regained his sight. From that point on, he became a zealous preacher of the teachings he had formerly persecuted. He went to Arabia for a short period and then returned to Damascus to preach about Christ.

In 38AD, angered by his conversion to Christ, the vehemence of the Jews forced him to flee to Jerusalem (Acts 9:23), where he joined the community of believers and was introduced to the Apostles. Because of an attempt on his life by the Hellenists, he left for his native Tarsus. From there, around 43 AD, he was called by Barnabas to preach in Antioch, followed by a journey together to Jerusalem, bringing aid to the needy (Acts 11:30.).

Soon after his return from Jerusalem, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, Saul and Barnabas left on their first missionary journey, lasting from 45 to 51 AD. The Apostles traveled throughout the entire island of Cyprus, and by the time Saul converted the proconsul Sergius Paulus, he was already known as Paul. During the time of Paul and Barnabas's missionary journey, Christian communities were founded in the Asia Minor cities of Pisidian, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. In 51 AD, Saint Paul took part in the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem where he heatedly opposed the necessity for gentile Christians to follow the traditions of Mosaic law.

Returning to Antioch, Saint Paul in the company of Silas undertook his second missionary journey. At first he visited the churches that he had founded earlier in Asia Minor, and then crossed over to Macedonia, where he founded congregations in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. In Lystra, Saint Paul gained his favorite pupil Timothy, and from Troas he continued the journey with the recently joined Apostle Luke. From Macedonia Saint Paul crossed over into Greece, where he preached in Athens and Corinth, remaining in the latter city for one and a half years. His 2 Epistles to the Thessalonians was sent from here. The second journey lasted from 51 to 54 AD. In 55 AD Saint Paul left for Jerusalem, visiting Ephesus and Caesaria on the way and from Jerusalem, went to Antioch (Acts 17 and 18.).

After a short stay in Antioch Saint Paul undertook his third missionary journey (56-58 AD), at first visiting, according to his custom, churches that were founded earlier in Asia Minor, and then stopping at Ephesus, where he preached daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus. He wrote his letter to the Galatians (because of the insurgence of a faction of Judaists there) and his first letter to the Corinthians (because of the upsurge of agitators and also to respond to a letter to him from the Corinthians). A local riot, stirred up against Paul by a master silversmith named Demetrius, forced the Apostle to abandon Ephesus and leave for Macedonia (Acts 19). On the way he received news from Titus about the state of the Corinthian church and about the favorable reaction to his Epistle. Consequently, he sent a second Epistle to the Corinthians from Macedonia with Titus. Shortly after, he came to Corinth himself where he wrote a letter to the Romans, intending to later leave for Rome and further west, after going to Jerusalem.

Bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders in Miletus, he arrived in Jerusalem. Because of a riot that sprung up against him, Paul was taken under guard by the Roman authorities and ended up in prison, at first under Proconsul Felix and then under his successor, Proconsul Festus. This happened in 59 AD. In 61 AD Paul, as a Roman citizen, was granted his request to be sent to Rome to the court of Caesar. Enduring a shipwreck in Malta, the Apostle arrived in Rome only in the summer of 62 AD. Because the Roman authorities held Paul in such a high esteem, he was able to preach freely. Thus end the details of his life in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 27 and 28). In Rome Saint Paul wrote his letters to the Philippians (with gratitude for the financial aid sent to him with Epaphroditus), to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and to Philemon, a citizen of Colossus (concerning his slave Onesimus, who had run away). All three of these Epistles were written in 63 AD and were sent with Tychicus. Here too, the Epistle to the Palestinian Hebrews was written in 64 AD.

The further fate of Apostle Paul is not known with any certainty. Some think that he stayed in Rome and by the orders of Nero died a martyr's death in 64 AD. But there is evidence that suggests that after a two year imprisonment, Paul was given his freedom and he took on a fourth missionary journey, which was indicated by his "Pastoral Epistles" to Timothy and Titus. After defending his actions before the Senate and the Emperor, Saint Paul was freed from bondage so he could again travel to the east. Spending a long time on the island of Crete, he left his pupil Titus to ordain elders throughout all the cities (Titus 1:5), which shows that Titus was ordained by Paul to be the bishop of the church in Crete. Later in his letter Paul instructs Titus on how to go about his duties as a bishop. From this letter it is clear that Paul intended to spend that winter of 64 in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12), near his native Tarsus.

During the spring of 65 AD, he visited the rest of the churches in Asia Minor and in Miletus, he left the sick Trophimus. Earlier, the people in Jerusalem rioted against Paul because of Trophimus, bringing about Paul's first imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:20). Whether Saint Paul went through Ephesus is not known. He said that the Ephesian elders would not see his face again (Acts 20:25), although at the time, it appears that he ordained Timothy as bishop of the Ephesian church. Later the Apostle went through Troas, where he left his bishop's mantle (the outer layer of liturgical clothing) and books (probably also liturgical books, 2 Tim. 4:13) with a certain Carpus, and then left for Macedonia. Upon hearing about the strengthening of false teachings in Ephesus, he wrote his first letter to Timothy from there. After spending some time in Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20) and meeting Peter on the way, they continued their journey together through Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10) and Italy. They arrived in Rome where in 66 AD, Peter remained while Paul continued further to the west, probably reaching Spain.

After his return to Rome, he was imprisoned (for the second time), where he remained until his death. There is a tradition that upon his return to Rome, he preached at the very door of the emperor Nero and converted his favorite concubine to Christ. For this he was condemned and even though by God's mercy - in his own words - he was "delivered from the lion's mouth," that is from being devoured by animals in the circus (1 Tim. 4:16-17,), he was yet again in prison. During this second imprisonment he wrote his second letter to

Timothy in Ephesus, inviting him to Rome for a last meeting, sensing death was at hand. Tradition doesn't say whether Timothy managed to find his teacher alive, but it does say that the Apostle did not have to wait long for his martyr's crown. After a nine-month imprisonment he was beheaded as a Roman citizen, not far from Rome. This happened in 67 AD during the 12th year of Nero's reign.

A general observation of Apostle Paul's life shows that it is sharply divided into two halves. Before his conversion to Christ, Saint Paul (then Saul) was a strict Pharisee, fulfiller of the law of Moses and the traditions of his fathers, thinking that he could be justified by the works of the law and his zeal for the faith of his fathers, reaching even fanaticism. After his conversion, he became an Apostle of Christ, totally committed to the task of spreading the gospel, fortunate in his calling, yet recognizing his own impotence for fulfilling this eminent ministry and attributing all of his deeds and merits to the grace of God. All of Paul's life before his conversion was driven by a deep conviction toward deviation and sin, which led him towards condemnation instead of justification, and only the mercy of God saved him from this destructive delinquency. From that moment on, Saint Paul tries to be worthy of God's grace and not turn away from his calling. Therefore there cannot be any talk of personal merit - all of it was God's doing.

All of Saint Paul's teachings revealed in his Epistles, being a full reflection of his life, carry this very fundamental thought: man is justified by faith, independent of deeds of the law (Romans 3:28). However, it cannot be concluded from this that Apostle Paul rejects any significance of good deeds (See for example Gal. 6:4, Eph. 2:10 or 1 Tim 2:10 and others). According to his Epistles, the understanding of "works of the law" does not mean "good deeds" in general, but ritualistic observance of the Mosaic Law. It must be remembered that during the time of his evangelistic work, Paul needed to carry out a bitter struggle against the opposition of the Judaists and Judean Christians.

Upon becoming Christians, many of the Judaists held the view that it too was necessary for Christians to strictly observe all the ceremonial instructions of Mosaic Law. They deluded themselves with conceited notions that Christ came to earth to save the Jews only, and therefore gentiles wanting to be saved, needed to undertake circumcision and observe all of the Jewish rituals. This delusion impeded the spread of Christianity among the gentiles so strongly, that the Apostles were obliged to convene in 51 AD the Jerusalem Council, which removed the requirements of the ceremonial decrees of the law of Moses for Christians. However, even after this Council, many Judean Christians continued to stubbornly hold to their former views and as a consequence, split from the Church by establishing their own heretical society. These heretics opposed Apostle Paul personally and injected disturbances into the life of any church, where Paul was absent. That's why Saint Paul needed to continually underline in his Epistles that Christ was the Savior of all humanity - for Jews just as well as for gentiles - and that a person was not saved by fulfilling the ceremonial deeds of the law, but only through faith in Christ. Unfortunately, Luther and his successors - the Protestants - distorted these thoughts of Apostle Paul, because to them Paul had repudiated the importance of every good deed for salvation. If this were so, then he would not have written in his first Epistle to the Corinthians in the 13th chapter that "if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have

not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2, NIV), because this love would immediately manifest itself in good deeds.

List of Apostle Paul's epistles

On the basis of credible witnesses, the common voice of the Church attributes fourteen Epistles to Apostle Paul's authorship, which appear in the Bible in the following order:

- Epistle to the Romans,
- First Epistle to the Corinthians,
- Second Epistle to the Corinthians,
- Epistle to the Galatians,
- Epistle to the Ephesians,
- Epistle to the Philippians,
- Epistle to the Colossians,
- First Epistle to the Thessalonians,
- Second Epistle to the Thessalonians,
- First Epistle to Timothy,
- Second Epistle to Timothy,
- Epistle to Titus,
- Epistle to Philemon,
- Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Epistles are not in any chronological order, but are arranged according to their significance and magnitude of their circulation, and by the relative importance of the Church and its people to whom they are addressed. The Epistles to the three individuals follow those Epistles to the seven Churches. The Epistle to the Hebrews is last because it was the last to be authenticated. Usually, Apostle Paul's Epistles are separated into two uneven groups: 1) Epistles of a general Christian nature and 2) Pastoral Epistles. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus belong to the second category, because they indicate the basis and rules of good pastorship.

Certain sections of Apostle Paul's Epistles gave rise to thoughts that he had written other Epistles that have not reached us eg. 1 Cor. 5:9, also Col. 4:16. While the correspondence with an unknown philosopher Seneka, brother of pro-consul Gallio (as mentioned in Acts 18:12) was attributed to Paul, this could not be authenticated.

Outline of Apostle

Paul's teachings

The Epistles of Apostle Paul carries great importance in the composition of the New Testament, because it is in them that we find a deep and all-encompassing revelation and elucidation of the mysteries of the Gospel's teachings. Apart from Apostle Paul's individual, especially-loved mysteries of Christ's faith, for example: the meaning of the Old Testament law in relation to the New Testament, the corruption and decay of human nature, the only means of justification before God is through faith in Jesus Christ, it can be said that there is not one point in the whole of Christian dogma that did not have its beginnings and affirmation in his Epistles. The bulk of the Epistles are structured on the one and only plan. They begin with a greeting to the readers and expression of gratitude to God for His providential activity about the place it is addressed to. Further on, the Epistle is usually divided into two parts - religious instructions (doctrinal) and moral directives. In conclusion, the Apostle touches upon private matters, charges persons with commissions, discusses his personal circumstances, expresses his kind wishes and sends greetings of peace and love. His language is lively and bright - reminiscent of the ancient Prophets, and reflects a profound understanding of the Old Testament.

Selected text

from his teachings

Because the opportunity to give a more detailed account of St. Paul's many faceted Christian teachings is constrained by time and space, we will limit ourselves to citing extracts from his Epistles, which are essentially of a moral nature. As we will see in them, the Apostle explains what constitutes a true spiritual life - that what every Christian should strive for. For convenience sake, we bring these excerpts by subject order - in alphabetical sequence - so that the reader may easily refer to them in Apostle Paul's Epistles.

The grace of God and spiritual gifts

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:14-16). "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:4-11). "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying of godliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:11-13).

See also: Rom. 5:2; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; 2 Cor. 3:5; 4:7; 6:1-2; 8:9; Gal. 3:5; Ephes. 4:7-12; Philip. 2:13; Heb. 4:16; 12:15.

About attitudes toward riches: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" (Heb. 13:5). See also: 1 Tim. 6:9-11.

Life is spiritual warfare: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on a breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephes. 6:11-17). See also: 1 Thes. 5:4-8; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Colos. 2:14-15.

Faith and its meaning: "through Whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). "For we walk by faith not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6). "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). See also: Rom. 3:28-30, 14:23; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:16, 3:26; Eph. 6:16; Heb. 11:1.

On resurrection of the dead: 1 Cor. 15:12-57; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Phil. 3:10-11, 3:20-21; Heb. 2:14-15, 4:1-11.

On the Second Coming of Christ: 1 Thes. 5:1-3; 2 Thes. 1:6-10.

On celibacy and marriage: 1 Cor. 7:1-17.

On good deeds: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10). "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephes. 2:10). "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16). See also: Ephes. 6:8; Phil. 2:4; Col. 4:17; 1 Thes. 5:15; Titus 3:14; Heb. 13:1-3.

On gratefulness to God: "Now godliness with contentment IS GREAT GAIN. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:6-10). "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim 6:17-19).

Spiritual renovation and Christian life: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus Christ. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".... "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 3:27-29; 5:16). "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ Who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, unseemliness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian,

Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him"

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things, The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:4-9).

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thes. 5:14-22).

Baptism is death to sin: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Jesus Christ, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1-2). "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:5-10). See also: Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:27-29, 5:16-26, 6:8, 6:15; Ephes. 2:1-6, 2:14-15, 3:16-17, 4:22-5:11, 5:14; Col. 3:1-17, 3:23-24; Phil. 2:14-15, 3:8-15, 3:17, 3:20-21, 4:4-9, 4:11-13; Thes. 5:14-22. About death to sin and baptism, see also Rom. 6:1-7, 8:1-17, 8:32-34; Gal. 2:19-20 and 3:27; Col. 2:11-14; 2 Tim. 2:11-13.

Singularity of the faithful: "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you,

but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:1-5). "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another" (Gal. 5:15). "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). See also Ephes. 4:1-5, 4:13; Phil. 1:27.

Deeds of the law does not justify a person: Rom. 3:19-5:2 and the Epistle to the Galatians.

Life and death: Phil. 1:21-24.

Redemption through Christ and about the Cross: 1 Cor. 1:18-24, 2:2; Gal. 6:14; Phi. 3:18-19; Rom. 5_10; Col. 1;20_23; Heb. 5:1-9; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 3:13-14; Ephes. 1:7, 2:16; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:11-28, 10:5, 10:14-22.

Qualifications and responsibilities of the God's servants: Bishops (1 Tim.3:1-7), Priest (Titus 1:5-9) and Deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

Meekness and forgiveness: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:18-21). "Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). See also: Gal. 6:1; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:25.

Love towards God: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter' (Psalm 43:23). Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor Angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

Love toward your neighbor: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek

its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails, but whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away" (1 Cor. 13:1-8). "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 9Gal. 5:14). See also 1 Thes. 4:9; 1 Tim. 1:5-6.

Prayer: "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2) See also: Rom. 8:26-27; Ephes. 5:19-20, 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; Heb. 13:15.

God's wisdom in man's salvation: 1 Cor. 2:4-16, 3:18-21; Ephes. 1:17-19, 3:18-19, 5:15-17; Col. 1:9, 2:3, 3:16.

Manhood: "And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God" (Phil. 1:28). See also: 1 Cor. 16:13.

On worthlessness of those who live idle lives: Heb. 6:4-8, 10:26-31.

Reward for good deeds: Romans 2:6-17.

Justification by faith and grace: Gal. 2:16-21, 3:18-26; Titus 3:4-7.

Responsibility: Romans 2:6-17.

Christ and His two natures: Col. 1:15-20, 2:9; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-4; Heb. 2:7-11.

Last days and antichrist: 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Ordeals, Lent and the deadening of sinful flesh: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2). "Do you know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:24-27). "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24).

Holy Gospel Divinely inspired: 2 Tim. 3:15-16; Heb. 4; 12.

Knowing God: Rom. 1:19-32.

Help for the needy: "But this I say: he who sows sparingly (donates sparingly) will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: 'He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever' (Psalm 111:9). Now may he who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the Saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God" (2 Cor. 9:6-12). See also: 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:11-15.

Examples of faith of past righteous fathers: Heb. 11:1 - 12:3.

On happiness: "For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22). "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil. 3:1, 4:4; 1 Thes. 5:16).

Christian freedom: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.....For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:1, 5:13). "But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak" (1 Cor. 8:9-13). See also Rom. 14:13.

Piety: "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people' (Lev. 26:12). Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you (Isa. 52:11) I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Mighty' (Jer. 3:19, Hos. 52:11). Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6:16 - 7:1). "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thes. 4:3-4). See also: 1 Cor. 6:15-20; 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1; Ephes. 1:4; Col. 1:22-23; 1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 10:10, 10:14, 12:14-15.

Family and about the responsibilities of its members: Ephes. 5:22-23, 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 2:9-15.

Tribulations and temptations: "Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance character; and character, hope" (Rom. 5:2-4). "For consider Him Who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and

discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives' (Proverbs 3:11-12). If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed" (Heb. 12:3-13). See also: Rom. 5:2-4; 2 Cor. 4:8-18, 1:3-6, 7:10, 12:10; 1Thes. 3:3-4; 2 Thes. 1:6-7; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 2:18, 4:15, 12:3-13.

Humility: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). See also: Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Col. 3:12.

Condescension and help one another: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2).

Conscience: "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck" (1 Tim. 1:18-19). See also: Heb. 9:14, 10:22.

Do not litigate or altercate: 1 Cor. 6:1-7.

Christians - sons of God: Gal. 4:7; Ephes. 2:18.

Patience: "But as for you brethren, do not grow weary in doing good" (2 Thes. 3:13). "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Tim. 6:11). "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36, 12:1; Rom. 5:3).

Industriousness: "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thes. 3:8-12). See also: 1 Thes. 4:10-12; 1 Tim. 5:8).

Significance of Apostle Paul's epistles

Consequently, Apostle Paul's Epistles emerge as a profound source of spiritual wisdom and inspiration. It would appear that there is not one religious truth that has not been illuminated and elucidated by his works. Moreover, these truths are presented not as some abstract, theological perception, but as a reality of faith that stimulates a person toward righteous living. Responding to the actual problems that confronted the early Christians of the first century, Apostle Paul's Epistles serve as valuable additions to the New Testament. They explain in practical terms how to master the unavoidable ordeals in life, how to realize high Christian ideals, and what constitutes the essence of Christian endeavor. They describe in a living voice, the way of life and endeavors of the first Christians, the establishment of Christian communities, gives the characteristics of the purpose of Christ's Church in Apostolic times.

Apostle Paul's Epistles are equally valuable in their autobiographical notations. They show how in his own personal life, the Apostle applied these high Christian principles that he preached. As a consequence, this assisted him in his missionary work from which he drew his spiritual strength. The first element of success in Apostle Paul's missionary activity was his capability to concentrate his enormous talents, his spiritual and physical powers toward one goal - serving Christ. The second element was his total commitment to Christ's directive grace, which inspirited him and gave him strength to overcome all outward obstacles and personal weaknesses. God's grace helped him to convert a significant part of the Roman Empire to Christ.

Through the prayers of Apostle Paul, may Christ enlighten and be merciful to us!