

Questions or comments are welcomed.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

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“But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov 4:18)

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself “ Ephesians 1:9 (KJV)

Study 13, Chapter 5

As we continue our study of the book of Ephesians we now come to chapter three. We continue our study with an emphasis on what Paul calls “the mystery of His will”, which is the gathering all things together in one in the Messiah, all things in heaven and earth.

As we should have seen, this begins with the individual being reconciled to, or brought into oneness with, Yahweh. Chapter 2 began by declaring how, though we were “dead in sins and trespasses” as “children of wrath”, Yahweh has saved us “by grace through faith” that we might become, “His workmanship, created in Messiah Yahweh unto good works, which Yahweh has before ordained that we should walk in them.” Thus, the first step of bringing all things together in one in Messiah was, and is, our being brought back into harmony with (or reconciled to) Yahweh through our coming to faith in Yahshua the Messiah.

That chapter goes on to show that this bringing of all together in one in Messiah, continues with the two major groups of humanity becoming one in Him. Those that were near to Yahweh – the Jews, or “the circumcision” – and those that were afar off – the Gentiles, or “the uncircumcision” – become one new man when they come into the Messiah. This was accomplished, as was our individual salvation from sin and its penalty, by our all dying with Messiah and, then, rising again with Him so as to all become a new creation in the Messiah. This is what Paul was speaking of when he said, “For in the Messiah Yahshua neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them, and mercy, even upon the Israel of Yahweh.” (Gal 6:15-16) Since the law has jurisdiction over a man only as long as he lives, and since we all died in Messiah, we all became free from its rule over us through the Messiah’s death. Thus, in that way “the enmity” [or, that which separates] – called “the law of commandments in ordinances” was “abolished in His flesh”.

Of course His death does not do away with the value and validity of “the law of commandments in ordinances” (the law, of Moses). But it does lift us out from under its

rule over us so that in our new life relationship in Messiah it no longer separates the Jew from the Gentile. By the new life in the Holy Spirit we still do what the law teaches in all its moral commandments. But neither Jew nor Gentile is under it as a total “handwriting of ordinances” in this new life relationship as new creatures in the Messiah. That is to say, in this new creation life in the Messiah, the law has no rule over us so as to separate us from one another into two distinct groups that have different standing before Yahweh. Whether we are born under the written law, as Jews, or are born not under it, as Gentiles, we all stand before Yahweh as those who have died (in Yahshua the Messiah) and risen unto a new life (in Yahshua the Messiah) so that we are all on the same footing in this relationship to Yahweh in the Messiah.

Thus, that which at one time served to separate the Jew and Gentile from one another as being two separate groups – one near to Yahweh and one afar off from Him - no longer exists for us as respects our relationship to Yahweh in the Messiah. We all now are together with one new identity called “the Congregation of Yahshua the Messiah”, the “body of the Messiah”, “the Israel of Yahweh”, etc.

In the natural we still have our distinctions, but the new creation, the one new man, rises above those distinctions. It is the same thing as respects male and female, slave or free. In the natural those distinctions still exist and certain things of conduct must be observed differently by the male and the female. But in the realm of our acceptance before Yahweh there is no distinction between male and female. We are all “accepted in the beloved”. We are all saved by grace through faith.

Thus this working out of the “mystery of His will” begins with and is founded on the work of Yahshua the Messiah in His dying for our sins and rising again the third day. In other words, it is founded on the “gospel”. It begins with the sinner being reconciled to Yahweh through accepting the death of Yahshua as his own death (to sin, to self, to this world, and to the entire kingdom of darkness). Doing this by believing the gospel, and, therefore, being buried with Messiah by immersion in His name for the remission of sins, results in the circumcised ones (the “Jews”) and the uncircumcised ones (the “Gentiles”) thereby, becoming reconciled to each other by their becoming that one new man in Messiah. This Jew and Gentile becoming one new man in the Messiah the “cause” or “reason” that the apostle Paul is referring to in chapter 3, verse 1 when he says, “For this cause...”. So let us now begin considering what he said in that chapter.

Verse 1 “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Yahshua Messiah for you Gentiles”. Paul gets this far and, then, starts a long parenthesis. He adds many important side thoughts to what he originally was starting to say – a form of writing characteristic of his writings. That parenthesis is from verse 2 through verse 13. Then, in verse 14, he picks up what he originally was saying by repeating again, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Master Yahshua the Messiah.... that He would...” etc. So before we get to that outstanding Holy Spirit inspired prayer, let us consider what all he said in the parenthesis.

Verses 2-5 “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote before in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 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.”

He said he was, “the prisoner of Yahshua Messiah for you Gentiles”– that is, he was in prison as a result of his fulfilling Yahshua’s commission for him to preach the gospel primarily to the Gentiles. The apostle, then, picks up on this thought, of it being “for you Gentiles” that he was “a prisoner of Yahshua the Messiah”, by saying, “If you have heard of the dispensation’ [“stewardship”] of the grace of Yahweh that was given me toward you.” That “dispensation” – the dispensing of the grace of Yahweh toward him - involved his getting special revelation of “the mystery”.

Thus he speaks of his “knowledge in the mystery of Messiah” as he next calls it here. His speaking of this “mystery” shows that he is continuing with the theme that he mentioned early on (in chapter 1, verses 9 & 10), which is there referred to as “the mystery of His [Yahweh’s] will”, which is “that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things IN THE MESSIAH....”. Thus, because “the mystery of His will” is all to be accomplished in and through the Messiah, he here refers to it as “the mystery of Messiah”.

This gathering of all things together into one in the Messiah centers around what he had been speaking of (in the previous chapter), which is the formation of this one new man in Messiah. It is only “in Him” that the separation of mankind into Jew and Gentile ceases. This one new man is the Congregation, the body of Messiah. It, as has been seen is due to our all now being “in Him”, a thought repeated at various parts of this letter to the Ephesians. Our position is now “in Him”. It is “in Messiah”. We “are all one in the Messiah Yahshua” (Gal 3:28).

This “mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to His holy ones”, this “mystery among the Gentiles...is Messiah in you the hope of glory” as we read in Col 1:27. Because He lives in us now, as we give Him the control of our lives, when He comes again, He will bring us into the glory of Yahweh in which He now dwells. Then, we - the Congregation, body and bride of Messiah - will rule and reign with Him bringing all things together in one, all things in heaven and earth. We, as the Sons of Yahweh will manifest His glory and bring to completion the accomplishment of that which we are taught to pray for in praying, “Thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

Paul says this mystery “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”. Then, in the following verse, he again summarizes what this mystery is.

Verses 6 Paul summarizes that mystery as being, “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Messiah by the

gospel.” So here again he emphasizes the importance of the body of Messiah – His Congregation.

Those professed believers who take an independent, Lone Ranger attitude and think they do not need to part of, or committed to, any local congregation are, therefore, totally off the track as respects the will of Yahweh, which is the gathering of all things together in one in Messiah. This one body of Messiah, the Congregation, is the very thing Yahshua was praying for before He went back to the Father when He prayed “that they all may be one...” and, “that they may be made perfect in one” (as recorded in John 17: 21,23). I realize that it is true that the body of Messiah, the Congregation of Messiah, is made up of every true follower of His scattered throughout the earth. But to claim to be part of that universal Congregation made up of every true believer while refusing to be part of any local congregation is to fall out of line with the Father’s will and purpose.

Any who are true followers of the Messiah are in union with all other true disciples of His, as well as with “the spirits of just men made perfect” that are mentioned in Hebrews 12:23. And we all together are to be His instruments for bringing His will to pass. The bringing of all things in heaven and on earth together in one in Messiah starts with us. Therefore, it is against His will and purpose for us to willingly separate ourselves from one another now and to refuse to not come under any delegated authority.

I realize that there are times and situations that do prohibit some from being part of any true local congregation. Sometimes one cannot find a congregation of true believers close enough to meet with. However, whenever possible, even if it means considerable sacrifice such as traveling quite a distance, or possibly even moving, we all need to make every reasonable effort to become committed to some local congregation and come under its leadership. We need to learn how to get along with and show love and tolerance to other followers of the Lamb now. We need to be connected so that we can encourage and serve others as well as be encouraged by them. To develop true tested character in having our willingness to walk in love, in service to, and in harmony with other members of the body of Messiah tested and proven is hardly possible if we stay by ourselves and avoid exposing ourselves to the differences others may have from us.

Learning to live together and get along together is essential to spiritual growth. We may think we are quite spiritual and feel quite good when we do not have to put up with others. But the real test of Messiah like character comes when we do have to submit ourselves to others. We, as Yahshua’s Congregation, the one new man in Messiah, are His primary work in the earth today. His Congregation is very precious to Him, and it should be so to us as well. Like Paul did, so we also need to suffer for the sake of the Congregation and not seek to avoid having to put up with others.

In Hebrews 10:24-25 we read, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” This is not given as a suggestion. It is a command of Yahweh by the

Holy Spirit. It is even followed by a serious warning of what might happen if we do not heed this command. (See verses 26-27.) The point is this: if we are to please Yahweh and work toward that togetherness He desires for His people, we need one another and need to learn how to operate together as a body.

True humility, with an attitude of servitude, can only be built in us and proven to exist in us as we learn to dwell together. Even before the birth of this one new man - the body of Messiah, His Congregation - Yahweh tells us in Psalm 133 that it is where “brethren dwell together in unity” that “Yahweh commanded the blessing, even life for evermore”. So any that believe, and even teach others, that there is no need for us to meet together with others on the Sabbath and other times, but that we can just be with our own immediate family, are very far off from the way Yahweh has ordained for His people.

Even the statement of Yahshua that “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” is very much misunderstood and misused by some. Many seem to think that if they don’t like the way things are going in the local congregation, or if they come to disagree with some doctrine (aside from the basic essentials) they can just go out and start their own congregation. They think that all they need to do is to get another person or so to meet with them and that they, thereby, fulfill the requirement whereby Yahshua promises to be in their midst.

However, they need to look at that statement more carefully. Yahshua did not say, “Where two or three gather together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” He said, “are gathered together”. This is not active voice, but passive voice. That means they have been gathered by someone authorized to “gather” them, not just that they decide to gather themselves. It is only when we are gathered together by Holy Spirit ordained authority that we can truly lay claim to His promise to be in our midst.

It is only, then, when He gathers us through His delegated authority that we actually “are gathered together in” His “name”. He is the one who has the authority. And He has chosen to operate through those whom He calls as apostles and those whom they in turn appoint as we read of in the book of Titus and other scriptures. There are men who take it upon themselves to usurp authority, or to make themselves authorities as those who “set apart themselves” (Jude 19) unto positions of leadership instead of being set apart of Yahshua. Such are “those who say they are apostles and are not”, as we read about in Rev 2:2. Each one must be sure he is called of Yahweh and does not just take it on himself to become a leader. “A man’s gift will make room for him”(Prov 18:16), but the place of leadership in the Congregation is a calling and appointment of the head of the Congregation, Yahshua the Messiah as He operates now through and as the Holy Spirit. Only true apostles and those appointed by them have the authority to gather the new covenant believers together as a local congregation.

Recognizing and submitting to authority delegated by Yahweh is an important part of our spiritual growth and advancement. So this is an important part of being gathered together in His name. I know problems have existed with some in this regard,

due to some being in a position of authority that should never have been put into such, or some who have misused their authority in a Nicolaitan spirit, instead of being humble servants of the people.

In the “Old Testament” king Saul, who was indeed called and anointed of Yahweh, is an example of one who misused authority. Yet David, who himself was also called and anointed of Yahweh, showed true humility by not acting brashly against Saul. So the existence of wrong leadership is no excuse for not seeking out a true congregation with true Yahweh ordained leadership. Yahshua did not create a system of a lot of disconnected, independent, self-reliant sheep that were to be not part of some fold that had under shepherds to lead them. As much as is possible for them, all sheep should be part of some visible fold, with shepherds to lead them. This is an expression of true humility and is the order that the Chief Shepherd has ordained.

When He left this earth, He left His flock with leadership who were responsible for their souls and to whom they were to look for guidance. They in turn ordained leadership in each local congregation as those congregations were formed.

However, the spirit of antichrist, wherein one man takes the place of the chief shepherd came in. This was coupled with the spirit of Babylon, wherein confusion of man’s ideas and systems, including men’s own traditions and elements of pagan worship, took the place of the word of Yahweh. These spirits corrupted the original order ordained by Yahweh. This eventually led to denominationalism, which is nothing but organized division wherein the flock is divided into various competing folds instead of each fold in each city being one and being under their local leadership as appointed by, and responsible, to the leadership of the apostles.

We all need to pray for and work toward the re-appearance of this true, Yah ordained order. In the mean time each of one individually should seek to find other true believers who are working under a leadership that has a history of proven, Yah-like character and is shown to be truly devoted to the good of the flock. When, through prayer and determined searching you find such a congregation, you need to join with them and submit yourself to them to walking humbling with them under the delegated authority operating there. In that way and setting you should seek to further the work of Yahweh in the promotion of “the mystery of His will”.

This oneness of believers, as one new man dwelling together in true love and harmony in Messiah, with the present condition of things being what they are now, seems like an impossibility. It seems like there is no way it can come to pass that there will ever again be a Congregation like the original Congregation who were “of one heart, and of one soul” (Acts 4:32). But with Yahweh all things are possible, and Yahshua is coming soon for a bride who “has made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7). It will be a bride that He will present to Himself as “a glorious Congregation, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...” (Eph. 5:27). Therefore, as we continue to pray for it and work toward the fulfillment of this vision – of a perfect Congregation - Yahweh will bring such a mighty

move of His Holy Spirit as will bring to pass that perfect Congregation that dwells together in unity and truth. May that latter rain outpouring come soon!

This vision – of a people who are totally one - is what Paul is speaking of in regards to the Jew and Gentile being now one new man in Messiah. So he continues on with this subject of “the Gentiles” becoming “fellow heirs, and of the same body” as we read the following verses.

Verse 7-9 He continues by saying, “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. 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 Messiah; And to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in Yahweh, who created all things by Yahshua Messiah.”

In his previous statement he said that the Gentiles should come into this oneness with Israel (“the Jews”) “by the gospel”. That is, they come into it by the fact that Messiah took our place and died for of all of us, not just the Jews, and, therefore, when He died for our sins and rose again (which is the good news, or “gospel”) we all became new men in Him. And because we have all been joined to Him we are this “one new man”. So in verse 7 when he said, “Whereof I was made a minister”, he meant he was made a minister of the gospel.

In verses 8-9 he declares that this grace, or gift, of being a minister of the gospel, was given to him even though he considers himself “less than the least of all the saints”. He declares that this gift of Yahweh’s grace was given to him that he should do the two things he mentions here.

One thing is it was given to him for was “to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Messiah”. This brings to mind Yahshua’s words when spoken to Paul sending him to go unto the Gentiles: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan unto Yahweh, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are set apart by faith that is in me.” (Acts 26:15-18) This would be the first inkling Paul got of coming to know that the Gentiles would also have “an inheritance” among Yahweh’s people.

The other thing for which this grace was given to Paul, as he says, was “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in Yahweh, who created all things by Yahshua Messiah.” Thus we see that Paul is still talking about this mystery of Yahweh’s will – that in Messiah all things in heaven and on earth would be gathered together in one. Satan is the divider and destroyer of what is good, whereas, Yahweh is the one who brings unity and harmony in and by that which is good. Satan brings strife and division, whereas Yahweh brings peace and harmony.

Yes, I know Yahweh separates the good from the bad. But ultimately His purpose is a universe that is in perfect peace, harmony and the greatest possible blessing through

Yahshua the Messiah and the work that He accomplished in His earthly life with His ultimate victory on Calvary's tree. So Paul is pointing out that a major part of His ministry was "to make all men see what is the fellowship" – meaning the "joint partakership" or "partnership" – "of the mystery" (the mystery of Yahweh's will). Then, as we continue to read on he tells the intent or purpose of his efforts to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery".

Verses 10-13 As Paul says, he labors to do this, "In order that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be know by the Congregation the manifold wisdom of Yahweh. According to the eternal purpose that he purposed in Messiah Yahshua our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." He says, "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."

Thus, we see that getting "all men to see what is the joint partnership of the mystery" – to see that Jew and Gentile are now one new man, united as the body of Messiah – is for the purpose of showing Yahweh's great wisdom to the powers in the heavenlies – to the powers of darkness as well as the powers of light. So once again we see that this wisdom of Yahweh is to "be known by the Congregation". The Congregation is to be manifesting Yahweh's wisdom not just in eternity, but as this passage says, "now". The true "Congregation" or "Assembly" of Yahweh – that corporate body that is made all one in Messiah as His body – also called the Sons of Yahweh – are even now to be glorifying Him as a manifestation of His great wisdom as the first step and primary instrument in bringing "all things in heaven and earth together in one", that is, into perfect harmony. As Peter puts it, "that ye should show forth the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Pet 2:9) I cannot emphasize enough, as does this great servant of Yah, the apostle Paul, that it is the corporate body, the Congregation, not just the individual believer functioning totally on his own, that in Messiah will be used of Yahweh to accomplish "the mystery of His will".

So, Paul says, this is all, "According to the eternal purpose that He [Yahweh] purposed in Messiah Yahshua our Master." He goes on to say that it is "In" Him that we have boldness and access [access to the Father, Yahweh] with confidence through the faith of Him". As we read in those well known words of John 14:6, "Yahshua said... 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes unto the Father, but by me.'" By Him, as we believe in Him, "we have boldness and access with confidence".

Because of the importance of his mission of getting them to see this mystery and all that it involves, and because of the fact that we have such boldness and access by faith of Messiah, Paul says, he desires that they "faint not", that they do not despair or become discouraged due to the trials that he suffered for them – i.e., for the Congregation. He suffered much to preach the gospel and to bring the truth about Yahweh's will and purpose, including the imprisonment his was currently experiencing.

This ends the parenthesis. So as we read in the next verse we see that Paul now picks back up where he left off before starting this large and marvelous parenthesis.

Verses 14-15 “For this cause”, he says again, thereby repeating the words he started this section of his letter with before the parenthesis. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Master Yahshua Messiah, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” By the whole family he refers to the living saints and to those who have left their earthly tabernacles and gone on before, and possibly also to the broader family of all holy creatures including angels, Cherubim, Seraphim, etc. Though these others may also be considered to be part of His overall family and sons in the sense being His (obedient) creatures. Yahweh’s family, the Sons of Yah for whom all creation is awaiting their manifestation, are particularly those who are born again as new creatures in Messiah Yahshua, His only begotten Son. They are Yahshua’s congregation, which the centerpiece and primary focus of all Yahweh’s wonderful works.

Verses 16-19 Here we read what Paul no doubt earnestly prayed for many times, which is, “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Messiah may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Messiah, which passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

It is the Spirit that strengthens the inner man is, causing Messiah to be dwelling in our hearts by faith. Paul prays for the Ephesians that they may have such a strong presence of Messiah in their hearts by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that they may come to a knowledge of that love which actually passes (intellectual) knowledge. That love is the love of Messiah. The knowledge of that love includes both His death for our sins (with the subsequent resurrection) and all that Yahweh planned in the mystery of His will to bring to pass by that death which brought about the beginning of Yahweh’s new creation.

But it is not that the Ephesians alone might have this all-surpassing knowledge of the love of Messiah, but they might “be able to comprehend” it “with all saints”. It is the whole body of Messiah that he wants to come to this knowledge of all that is included in Messiah’s incomprehensible love, which revelation knowledge only the Spirit can give.

Paul is really expressing the Savior’s own desire for His people when he says he wants us all to come to this inner revelation or knowledge of Messiah’s love “in order that” we all might “be filled with all the fullness of Yahweh.”

What a tall order! What a seemingly unattainable thing – that lowly human beings, or any creatures for that matter, “might be filled with all the fullness of Yahweh.” One might think, “Paul you’re asking too much”. But he wasn’t asking too much. He was asking for exactly that which Yahweh wills, for exactly what Yah planned for from

before the foundation of the world. Thus we read his words of confidence that this prayer will yet be answered in these concluding verses.

Verses 20-21 “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Messiah Yahshua throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

Yahweh is able to do it by “the power that works in us” – the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit – even the same power that raised Yahshua from the dead. Since He is able, and since this is His will, plan and purpose, He will indeed do it. He will give us the revelation that will cause us to comprehend all that is included in the knowledge of the love of Messiah that passes knowledge “in order that” we “might be filled with all the fullness of Yahweh”. How wonderful to know and important to press on toward.

Once again Paul emphasizes that it is the corporate body of Messiah, the Congregation, that will bring Him glory [praise, admiration, and manifestation of His great wisdom] “throughout all ages.” This will be [not as the King James erroneously translates it as “world without end”, but] “into the ages of ages” – which is to say, “forever and ever”.

What a tremendous calling the true Congregation, Assembly, or body of Yahshua the Messiah has. As Yahweh seeks to bring to pass the accomplishment of His will - a universe that is made one in perfect harmony with the character of His only begotten Son, Yahshua the Messiah - He does so through this corporate people called “the Ekklesia” in the Greek, “the Kehila” in the Hebrew, and “the Congregation” or “Assembly” in English. It shall surely be done, for by the will and power of Yahweh even “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against” His Congregation. How greatly we should rejoice if we are part of that corporate body of Messiah. And how we should seek to fall totally in line with His will by striving to become that united people who laboring together in love manifest the love and unity that will cause all men to know that we are His disciples. We will see how this is to be carried out as we continue our study with the next chapters.