

# The Spirit of Truth

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No one can nor ever will know or understand the essence of life through the physical or natural medium of relating in a sphere outside of God. This is not possible because life itself can only be defined through the law (principle) of the spirit. Thus reality can only be expressed through the sheer superiority of God via the Holy Spirit. The true testimony of life can only be documented by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.

In essence life can only be known through the median of the spirit or the mind. It is this composition i.e., the trichotomous makeup (spirit) that distinguishes mankind from every other living species. God has duplicated this attribute of Himself, i.e., a spirit or mind into the constitution of man as a mirror or reflection of God, the very essence of life. But there is a limitation of the function of man's spirit or mind as a conduit for the conveyances of communication with God the creator of the universe. This is especially true for fallen man in his depraved state and separated position from God, which is identifiuous as death or the very opposite of life. This state of spiritual death (separation from God) renders man with a measured capacity to communicate with his kind, but absolutely no ability to fellowship with the essence of life itself i.e., God (1 Cor 2:11).

Man's realization of life can be formulated only through God's input of the Holy Spirit, which causes an awakening from his separated state of death into a resurrected position of "alive in Christ" (Eph 2:5). The apostle Paul speaks of this "alive" position as being "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus". As one surveys this verse of scripture (Romans 8:2), note that it literally states that the (Holy) Spirit belongs (genitive of possession) to the life that is in Christ. At this point it is absolutely necessary to understand the essence of the "oneness" of the Godhead as distinguished from the triuneness of the functions that are identifiable by the operations thereof. God indeed is manifested in the three-fold operations of his expressions namely, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Any attempt to either separate the essence into distinct personalities or amalgamate (blend) the functions into a single operation, immediately leads to confusion in understanding God's presence. To simply state it, God in essence is one functioning in the sphere of three operations.

As one is established in the knowledge of the Godhead, one is able to grasp the correct concept of the following; (1) the nature of God, (2) the attributes of God, (3) the universe's relation to God and (4) the individual's relation to God. Enlightened minds are also privy to ascertain the intent of the eternal Father, the purpose defined Son and the directly commissioned Holy Spirit; all harmoniously implementing the will, plan, and purpose of the source of life, the Godhead. In this discourse, the focus is concentrated on the communicative operation of the Godhead that is assigned to the Holy Spirit; who is inextricably tied to divine eternal life that is resident in Christ (John 6:57; 1 John 5:11-12). It is through the medium of the spirit that God communicates faith to the living spirits of His elect.

One's desire to learn more or know about God is documented evidence that God has chosen such according to His purpose. In actuality, the desire to know and love for God is proof of one's calling and election and that the true spirit of God lives in one's heart. It is through this process that God's people come to know the eternal goodness of God toward His elect. When this is understood it automatically leads one through the communication of God's spirit to the recipient's spirit, to live a new, deeper and richer life. From a thorough understanding of foreknowledge and forordination, one is convinced that whatever is occurring, it is indeed designed as good coming down from the Father of light; thus there

is no need to change or shift because God is steady and unmoved in His affection for those whom He has reconciled. As we come to know God through His word, it impacts and influences our personal experiences to the end that regardless of our physical circumstances, we always view Him as beautiful, loving, merciful, personal and positive.

This is all communicated in the realm of what is defined as "the spirit that belongs to truth". The Spirit of Truth is, in essence that function of the Godhead that conveys His intentions of plan, purpose and will to the spirits of men who He has made alive; thus In essence the gift of faith. This gift of faith is the great source from which the elect of God learn via the Holy Spirit, who is the greatest of teachers. The process for the conveyance of truth works in the souls of men in accordance with their assigned love for truth and thus their capacity to grasp and comprehend spiritual realities. The Spirit of Truth is manifested to all of God's people to become increasingly aware of the truth of the Father's will for designated ones (us) as expressed through His love enabled mercy by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's major function is to guide living spirits into all truth as He is charged with expanding the elect's knowledge in the direction of endless progress toward God's purpose. The spirit of Truth directs godly contact and draws children of light to the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:3). As God's people are led to greater truth, we are endowed with a realistic sense of joy, peace, serenity, confidence, insight and power in the Holy Ghost (Rom 14:17; 15:13).

The course of everlasting life is structured by the assignment of divine orders arranged to advance to the end of God's purpose for each individual as has been ordained. As one is equipped with the knowledge of God's eternal decrees, one will not be troubled with doubts of failure or by perplexing confusion as a result of events as they unfold contrary to ones earthly expectations. If one has the proper view of eternity, one will not falter in the midst of adverse circumstances or question ones status or standing in the moments of dark hours. Spiritual knowledge will deter one from standing disillusioned at the crossroads of the forward struggles of life, because the Spirit of Truth testifies that regardless of how things may seem to be flowing; yes, indeed this is God's designed way for your life.

A vivid illustration of the function of the Spirit of Truth is exemplified in the exegesis of Romans 8:16-18. Verse 16 from the KJV reads "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Now from the Greek text, The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God". Before entering into the scope of thought conveyance, we note that the neuter gender of the Greek word *pnevmah* translated "spirit", should be assigned the masculine gender as we assign it the designation the "Holy Spirit" or "Spirit of Truth"; thus we render the Greek phrase *ahf to to pnevmah* to correctly read "the Spirit Himself". The fact that the Greek word *tehnah* is also in the neuter but yet is translated in the masculine gender in English, confirms our preference. Now as we consider the function of the Spirit in this verse, we note the Greek phrase *seem mah• tee• ree to pnevmah• tee ee• mon* rendered "bears witness with our spirit"; as we ask the question, what makes it possible that the Spirit of God (Truth) actually communicates with "our" (the elect's) spirit? To answer this question, one must focus on the trichotomous makeup of mankind, i.e., body, soul and spirit. Here we note that the body serves as the part of man with which he is equipped to identify with the physical or natural sphere. The soul is the effectuation or center of man's emotions. But the spirit is the vehicle by which conscientiousness or the conveyance of communications is provided. It is this (the Spirit) attribute alone that above all else distinguishes mankind above other living creatures. Yet the spirit is the part of man that is dead and inactive to all except the physical world around him. It is only those who have been redeemed or spiritually resurrected and reconciled that are capacitated to receive communications from the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is the median, which conveys knowledge in the spiritual sphere in the essence of truth. God's fellowship with mankind can only exist, as he is able to spiritually communicate with Him. No one knows the inner thoughts (mind) of a man except the individual's spirit within him. But even then natural man's ability to communicate is limited to the physical sphere or his environmental surroundings. 1 Cor. 2:11 states from the KJV, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Now

from the Greek Text, "For who of man knows the things of the man except the spirit of the man in him? Likewise also the things of God no one has known except the Spirit of God." This verse opens with both a coordinating conjunction "for" (*gahr*) and an interrogative pronoun (*tees*) translated "who". Here Paul raises the question as we denote the Greek phrases *tees gahr ee• then ahnth• ro• pon tah too ahnth• ro• poo*, rendered, "For who of men knows the things (thoughts) of the man"? Note how Paul uses the relationship between a man's spirit and mind to illustrate the relationship between the Spirit of God and the mind of God. So the phrase is simply making a statement in the form of a question, i.e., who among men knows the thoughts of a given man? The answer is obvious in that only the human spirit in a particular man knows what his inner thoughts or thinking is. Throughout the verse, it can be pointed out that the Greek construction *ee mee* forms what is termed an idiomatic phrase that is translated "except," which denotes the exclusivity of all outside the realm of the scope of the assigned mind and spirit.

It is by God's design that the link of the concomitant mind and spirit of a given entity has the capacity to communicate inner thought conveyances. Here Paul raises a rhetorical question to point out this fact. Likewise, he states that in the same manner, only the Spirit of God (truth) has known and continues to know (perfect tense) the things or thoughts of God. Thus the only way for mankind to receive communication from God is that there must be an interconnecting link of the Spirit of God with the spirit of certain men. This is tersely stated in 1 Cor 2:12 (KJV) "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Now from the Greek Text." And we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is **from God**, that we might know the things freely given to us **by God**." In this verse, note the Greek phrase *ee• mees theh• oo to pnehv• mah to kos• moo ehl• ahv• om• ehn* rendered, "And we have not receives the spirit of the world." Here the "spirit of the world" refers to the mindset of human depravity that is heavily influenced and controlled by Satan, the ruler and authority of the air; the spirit now energizing in the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2). All who are associated with this spirit are unclean demons (Luke 4:33), evil spirits (Acts 19:12) and erring spirits (1 Tim 4: 1; 1 John 4:6). Thus it is impossible for the spirit of Satan to coexist with the Spirit of God (Truth) in a believer. To emphasize this point, we note the strong adversative conjunction *ahl• lah* rendered "but", as Paul expresses the fact that we have received the Spirit (Truth), which is from God. Here the Greek phrase *to ehk too Theh• oo* is translated "who is out of God" or who is from God", denoting that God is the source. It may seem confusing to some, but of a certainty, the spirit that is out of (from) Satan presently dominates this age (2 Cor 4:4) and world (1 John 5:19), from which God's people must be distinguished. The elect are thus separated because we have received the Spirit who came out of God, indeed the very Spirit of God (Truth).

The latter portion of 1 Cor 2:12 succinctly sets forth the reason for which designated ones have received the Spirit who is from God. Here the Greek phrase *een• ah ee• tho• meh tah eep• o too Theh• oo khar• ees• thehn• dah ee• meen* is rendered "that (in order that) we might know the things (thoughts) freely granted (given) to us by God." This grammatical construction infers that the enlightenment of truth, which is conveyed to all believers. The emphasis of this phrase confers the fact that all believers have received the Spirit of God in order that they might know (*ee• nah ee• tho• meh*) the things that have already been given to the elect by God, namely the deep things of God. Thus the workings of the Spirit are the teachings of and the enablement to know the truth that Jesus Christ has revealed via the Apostle Paul, i.e., He gives insight into that which He has revealed. This is tersely illustrated by the contents of 1 Cor 2:13 which reads, (KJV) "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Now from the Greek text, "Which things we also speak not in taught words of human wisdom, but in teachings of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

The pastor or minister of God who desires to be in alignment with the Holy Spirit, preaching and teaching the truth; must come to understand the difference between the physical and natural sphere of those things that are communicated by human wisdom and that which is spiritually unseen and

discerned only through (by) the spirit of God (Truth). In this verse (13), the Apostle Paul speaks to the heart of the issue in identifying both the mode and method of communicating spiritual things. First he states what it is not, i.e., "not in the sphere of taught words of human wisdom. In other words the truth or message of truth was not derived from human wisdom (Gal 1:11-12). Thus the word of truth is not in words that man's wisdom teaches, such as human philosophy or dictates of eloquence. The origin of truth is not derived from the devices of human wisdom nor expressed through words of dazzling and attractive rhetoric as would be employed by those who pride themselves on the wisdom of this world. The knowledge of divine truth is not traceable to intellect and mental capacity. Note the opening Greek phrase of this verse, *ah keh lahl•oom•ehn*, literally translated "which also we speak". Here the Greek verb *lahl•oom•ehn* rendered "we speak", denotes the things of God that are precise and intelligibly expressed to the spiritual mind and thus easily comprehended. Such oration is not exulted by high and florid language, full of tropes and figures, which dazzle more than it enlightens. Such utterances are not robed in obscurity or employed by those who are studious only in the sense that their conveyances entail cabalistic meanings, which have no tendency to enlighten the elect unto salvational matters. Here we note that the emphasis must be on what is spoken, which is traced to the source of the message. Paul identifies the source of the message as he uses the strong adversative conjunction *ahl•lah* rendered "but" followed by the Greek phrase *ehn tee•thahk•tees pnehv•mah•tos*, rendered, "(that) taught by the (Holy) Spirit." Hence the message was (and is) in the sphere of the teachings of the Spirit. In other words, it is the Spirit of God who teaches the truth of His word (1 Thess 2:13). Of a surety, the message of God is received from God en-clothed in language given by God, thus the utterance is in the composition of His Spirit.

It must be clearly understood that the words, which the Holy Spirit imparts to us, are couched in the language and expressions of the revelations of the scriptures. Now some may consider this as a very narrow range of the truth of the Spirit. Here the Apostle Paul is referencing the specified course of instructions by which the deep things of God are revealed to the Body of Christ. In order for one to comprehend this thought progression, one must be committed to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the limited resources of things taught in the Old Testament as well as their corresponding Kingdom message in the New Testament, primarily on the physical plane, versus the composition of the grace message (Mystery Truth) as it is revealed purely on the spiritual plane. Here Paul gives enlightenment of his direct tutor-ship and direction of the Holy Spirit in word and doctrine imparted directly unto him by Jesus Christ. This passage is full proof of his claim of divine inspiration. Paul's assertion is that he and his associates (we) spoke that which the (Holy) Spirit directly taught them i.e., the teachings and subject matter previously unknown, thus the doctrines of revelation. Words are the conveyances of thoughts and if God designed that His truth should be accurately expressed in human language, it follows that there must be divine supervisions over word usage. The role of the Spirit of Truth in this sense is paramount and He must be employed if accuracy is to be expressed. The conveyance of accuracy is the underlying evidence of truth as the intended expression of the will, plan and purpose of God.

This is accomplished as expressed by the final phrase of this verse (13). Literally from the Greek text, *pnehv•maht•eek•ees pnehv•maht•eek•ah seeng•knee•noon•dehs* rendered "comparing spiritual (things) with spiritual." Here the two adjectives rendered "spiritual" are sentence constructions in the dative and accusative cases respectively, which denotes their usages as indirect and direct objects. The Greek verb *seeng•kree•noon•dehs* translated "comparing", gives the inference of combining, compounding and putting together or forming the teachings of the Spirit with other spiritual entities. Here it may also convey the sense of "interpreting" or explaining spiritual (things) to spiritual men). Other renderings of the phrase may yield "combining spiritual things with spiritual words" or "wedding kindred speech to accurate thought"; hence the general sense conveys the thought of "explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons". From this it should become apparent that the Apostle Paul is exclusively referencing the spiritual eternal unseen (2Cor 4:18), as we focus on the Greek adjective *pnehv•maht•eek•ah* in the accusative case, which defines it as the direct object or object of a preposition. In this case it is not denoting "physical or natural" things, but doctrines and subjects that

emanate from the spirit. Here its emphasis is on things "spiritual", in opposition to fleshly or "natural intellectual matters", thus its focus is on the doctrines or subjects revealed under the auspices of the Grace Dispensation. The nature of the "words, message and information" that is intended for the Body of Christ; is manifested by the Greek adjective *pnehv• maht• eek• ees* in the dative case, which defines it as the indirect object or object of a preposition. Here the masculine or neuter gender infers the evidence of some noun that it is understood to modify. As we examine the verse (13), we note two nouns namely *pnehv• maht• os* (spirit) and *loy• ees* (words). Thus it could be construed to state that "spiritual things are explained by words which the Holy Spirit communicates to spiritual minds". Hence, such communications are adapted to the subject- simple pure and elevated thoughts of God. The characteristics of such information are not gross, turgid or distinguished for rhetoric that are designed to address the issues of human wisdom, but spiritual wordings that are such as become the Spirit of God communicating great, sublime, yet simple truths to God's people. This would then denote the process of explaining doctrines that pertain to the Spirit's teaching and influence in words that are taught by the Spirit of Truth and are suited to convey in the most intelligible manner such doctrines to God's elect. Here the idea of the Holy Spirit's present agency is evident as He communicates the doctrine and the mode of stating it. Accordingly, the designation "Word of God" is confined to that spiritually communicated by the Holy Spirit.

Now as we refocus on Romans 8:16 with a clearer understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in testifying or witnessing to the elect's spirit; we note the essence of the message communicated, i.e., "we are the children of God". Here the Greek phrase *otee ehs• mehn tehk• nah Theh• oo* rendered "that we are the children of God" conveys the understanding that we have been placed in son positions and as such have received the missive in that we recognize God as our Father. This is certified by the fact that the Spirit *seem• mah• tee• ree to pnehv• mah• tee ee• mon* rendered "bears witness with our spirit" or the Spirit "adds His testimony" that we are children in the family of God (Romans 9:8; 1 Corinthians 4:14-15; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 5:1).

As we view the contents of Romans 8:17, the KJV reads, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together". Now from the Greek text "And if children, also heirs; heirs indeed of God and joint-heirs of Christ, if indeed we suffer with that also we may be glorified with". An amplified reading conforming to the actual thought conveyance of this verse could be rendered, "And if children, also heirs; heirs on the one hand of God and on the other hand joint-heirs of Christ, since it is so that we suffer with (Him) in order that also we may be (having been) glorified with (Him). In order for one to ascertain Paul's intended cogitation in this verse, one must be totally immune to the influence of synergism and also fully convinced that there are no conditions of human participation or accomplishments associated in the Gospel of Grace. Simply stated, there are no qualifying implications inferred, thus there are no conditions of determination on the part of God's people as to who are the children, heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ. By the same reasoning, there is no requirement of the elect's contribution of suffering as a prerequisite for being glorified together with Christ.

Many have conjectured the wording of this verse (Romans 8:17) to denote the performance of God's children in service and sacrifice to Him as the basis for glorification with Him. This would place the recipients of Grace squarely in the works program. Such doctrinal thinking would be antithetical to our glorification according to Christ's merit alone (see Romans 3:21,4:2,5:2, 6:4,8:18, 9:23, 15:7,17:16:27; 8:21,30; Ephesians 1:6,12,14,17-18, 3:16,21, 5:27; Colossians 1:10-11; 1Thessalonians 1:10; 2:12; 2Thessalonians 1:11-12, 2:14 2Timothy 2:12, 4:18; Galatians 6:14 Galatians 6:14; 1Corinthians 9:16; 2Corinthians 3:18; 9:16; 8:19,23; 19:17; 11:12; 12:12; Titus 2:13-14).

As we survey the opening clause of verse 17, it is apparent that Paul is not vouching that those whom he is addressing are true children of God; as the Greek phrase *ee theh tehk• nah, keh klee•ron• om• ee* rendered "and if children, also heirs", clearly states the assumption "if indeed" they are, then it follows that they are *klee•ron• om• ee mehn Theh• oo*, rendered "heirs of God". Here the Greek noun *klee• ron• om• eh*, denotes a possessor or one who receives an allotment portion, thus

an heir. The grammatical construction of the phrase denoted by the usage of *theh* and *mehn* (on the one hand, then on the other), testifies to the fact that God's children have the privilege of inheriting what He has apportioned for us (Galatians 4:6-7). According to Titus 3:7 we have been made heirs of eternal life. According to Ephesians 1:18, we are informed of "what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints".

In addition to this designation, Paul states that we are *seeng• klee•ron• om• ee theh Khrees• too* rendered, "(also) on the other hand, joint- heir of Christ". Here the genitive of possession certifies that heirship belongs to Christ, thus it should be interpreted to denote that we are fellow heirs of what belongs to Christ. Up to this point, it must be noted grammatically, that there are no verbs in the first phrase of this verse, yet it is clear that the fact of heirship is not based on any condition or performance of those so designated. Thus there are absolutely no implications of any contributions pursuant to the positioning or placing of God's children as heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ.

Here by the same indicia and certainly to be consistent in the context, there can be no authentic supposition that heirship is contingent upon our personal suffering with Christ. Farther stated there can be no plausible speculation that suffering with Christ is a prerequisite to being glorified with Him. Unfortunately there are those who mistakenly interpret this verse to state that we are joint heirs of that which is Christ's if we truly personally suffer with Him that we might be glorified with Him. Now this is certainly not the intended thought conveyance of this verse yet the context does make it clear that we are joint heirs of the glorification that belongs to Christ (Romans 8:30; Philippians 3:19-20; Colossians 1:27; 3:4). The premise that one must understand is that there are no conditions in the Grace doctrine. It is with this comprehension that we view the entitlement to future glory as that which is fitly annexed to sonship. Firmly stated it is the adoption of sons alone that entitles the elect to this glory; thus heirship does not owe itself to the condition of performance but rather to the attribution of sonship. One does not come to glory as a purchaser by any merit or procurement of ones own contribution as an heir, contrariwise it is purely by the act of God's choice in election.

As heirs of God, we are His inheritance as members of the Body of Christ, Jesus is our portion, and thus the vision of glory is in essence the fruition of God. Those who are partakers of the Spirit of Christ are also partakers of His glory. In light of this, it cannot accurately be stated that glorification is spoken of as the reward of present sufferings or as the accomplishment of present sacrifices. It is true that there is honor that will be confirmed at the Judgment Seat of Christ in glory in recognition of the saints' dedication and service to God. Thus while there is a commendation associated with suffering, there is absolutely no basis for rendering our glorification with Christ as a reward but rather a non-meritorious endowment. Those who suffer for His sake do so not in the sense of the condition but as the conclusion associated with the position of sonship.

Unfortunately, the reading of 2Timothy 2:12 is misconstrued to portray the gains of suffering in a positional sense rather than a practical or progressional sense. As we properly exegete 2Timothy 2:12 the (KJV) reads "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:" Now from the Greek text "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we shall deny Him, He also will deny us". Here it is most regrettable that some will focus on this verse in what it may seem to be implying to them without considering the actual contents of the passage. A cursory review of the context shows the intent of Paul's statement if one looks at the antecedent verses' (10-11) similar statements of association. In verse 10, the Greek word *eep• om• eh• o* rendered "endure" and "suffer" (KJV) is derived from *eep• o* prefixed to *mehn• o* and literally means to "remain under, remain constant and undergo something". Here we have documented the historical facts that Paul endured or remained "under all things" (*pahn• dah*), i.e., afflictions, distress, persecutions as they were companions to the ministry. As he so aptly explained, it was for the elect's sake. By design sacrifice is concomitant to service, thus all the workings associated with salvation, including the dispensing of the gospel engenders hardship and suffering on the part of God's servants. Here we observe the opening Greek phrase of verse 10 *thee• ah• too• to* rendered, "for this reason", as it denotes the reason and the

results of the faithful servant's work, i.e., "on account of the elect, that (in order that) they may obtain the salvation in Christ with eternal glory". Grammatically note the genitive of possession inferred by the phrase, "ehn Khrees• to Es• ee• soo meht• ah thox• ees eh•o•nee• oo rendered "in Christ Jesus with eternal glory", thus salvation in Christ automatically is a possession of eternal glory. For this reason, it cannot be unattached from those who receive salvation. Accordingly, endurance in ministering is linked to the process that God is pleased to incorporate with the preaching and teaching of the gospel unto the obtaining of salvation but it is no way tied to the glory that is the possession of salvation.

Here one must be careful to differentiate the positional aspect of glory that is owned and merited in Christ Jesus alone, from the practical or maturational aspects of glory that is associated with those whom God has assigned to be partakers in His glory. What some misread as four conditional statements in verses 11-13 pursuant to recompensing of sacrifice and service, are not assignable as such to the possession of glorification in Christ. A close examination of these so called conditional statements, when taken as a unit; clearly set forth the premise that one's endurance, suffering and sacrifice cannot possibly be the basis for the glorious accomplishments of salvation and eternal glorification. The only sacrifice and suffering that can be assigned to the obtaining or the possession of such magnificent glory is limited to the contribution provided by our Lord Jesus Christ, the acceptable Lamb of God. To illustrate this, we examine the Greek phrase *ee gahr seen• ahp• ehth• ahno• mehn, keh see• zees• o• mehn* rendered "For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him." Verse 11 opens with the statement "faithful or trustworthy saying"; inferring that believers have indeed died and shall live with in Christ as indicated by the indicative mood (fact) and aorist (completion in the past) and future tenses respectively. Even though this is expressed in the active voice, no serious Grace proponent would be inclined to attribute these actions (dying and living in Christ) as accomplishments of men in pursuance of salvation. As we view this in light of the larger context of these writings as well as what the Apostle Paul clearly teaches in his epistles, it is obvious that we as believers died with Jesus Christ through the avenue of our identification with His death and future life in Him, as arranged and provided for in eternity before the creation of the world. The only condition that can be invoked by the subordinating conjunction "if" (ee) is the stipulation that one must be elected by Him to be the benefactor of His suffering and death. The main verb in this verse is *seen• ahp• ehth• ahno• mehn* translated "we died with Him." This verb is derived from *seen and ahp• oth• nees• ko* and literally denotes "die with " or "to die together with", i.e., to be joined in death with another. Paul states this word in 2Corinthians 7:3 as he uses it in terms of the Corinthians dying and living with and in heart or in spirit through identification with His suffering. It is in this sense that all true believers have died and will live with Christ. The usage of the aorist and future tenses in dying and living in Him indicates that these were once and for all predetermined transactions.

The thought conveyance of Romans 6:8 is a duplication of this statement. (From the Greek text) "And if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him". In this verse (Romans 6:8), the Greek verb *ahp ehth• ano• mehn* is sentence structured with the word *seen* separated as a preposition, unlike the compound word rendering *seen• ahp• ehth• ahno• mehn* in the verse before us (2Timothy 2:11), however the translation are exactly the same. We are blessed to recognize that we have died with Christ (by identification), and that it is the foundation for living eternally glorified with Him.

Thus if we are genuine believers, if indeed we have died with Christ, i.e., if we have been spiritually identified with Christ's death, then it follows that we shall live (reign) with Him. Here Paul declares that our identification with Him is tied to His death. It was our sin that bought about His death (2Corinthians 5:21). It is His suffering and death that dealt with and paid the penalty for our sins, not ours. Thus, the basis for our future living and glorification with Him is merited by His death and resurrection and our identification with His accomplishments (Romans 6:2-11). This defines the only qualifying sacrifice that could ever be offered and bartered for glorification. Accordingly, one should use these same indicia or reasonings in exegeting 2Timothy 2:12. Here as we acknowledge the subordinating conjunction ee (if); the focus should rest on the Greek

verbs *eep•om•ehn•o•mehn* and *seem•vahs•eel•ehvs•omehn* translated "endure" or "suffer" and "live (reign) with", respectively. It is in this premise of thought that His death and suffering is the only qualifying agent that procures our salvation, that we must view this context. Hence the thought conveyance is that only Christ's endurance and suffering and our identification with it, can procure our eternal reign with Him. The endurance which Paul is insisting on here has nothing to do with gaining merit through works, but the fact that as believers are identified with His endurance (suffering), they are not only saved and empowered by grace, but also mirror that suffering which has qualified them to reign with Christ. (Romans 16:15,22). Thus, of a surety those who endure for the sake of the gospel are attesting to the fact that they are genuine believers that shall reign with Christ.

It is in this view that the latter phrase of verse 12 can be properly exegeted namely "if we shall deny (Him), He also will deny us." Again, Paul does not make this statement in the conditional aspect of one's action precedent to one's association with God, as it would consign the creator to a role of responding to whatever the creature does. Those whom God will deny will not be determined as a consequence of them denying Him. God's denial of some will come as a result of the fact that they were never chosen and elected and were thus unknown and denied in eternity by Him. Here the Greek phrase *ee ahr•nees•om•eh•thah* rendered, "if we shall deny (Him)", is identified by some Greek scholars based on the subordinating conjunction *ee* (if) as a conditional future, i.e., if in the future the condition is that of denying Him, certain results will follow. Of course, it could never be the case of the believer as the Greek verb translated deny is in the indicative mood, inferring the factuality of the actions of those disclaiming, disowning and renouncing Him. Observe that the middle voice of the verb consigns this designation not to the believer, but to those outside of Christ who do not know Him (1Timothy 1:16; 1John 2:22).

Note the corresponding latter Greek phrase of the verse, *kahk•ee•nos ahr•nees•eh•teh ee•mahs* rendered, "He also will deny us", as it is structured in the verse. The key to understanding the context is invested in the Greek adverb *kahk•ee•nos*. This word is frequently used merely to mark the beginning of a sentence and is rendered "also". *Kahk•ee•nos* is comprised of the conjunction *keh* (but, also, and, even, or and only so) and *ehk•ee•nos*, a demonstrative adjective rendered "that He". Here we observe the nominative case inferring the subject or the controlling word in the context. Thus obviously He will deny those whom He has not foreknown, who in turn do not know Him and therefore will disown and deny Him. This is born out by the middle voice and indicative mood (factual) of the Greek verb *ahr•nees•eh•teh* rendered "deny". Note the accusative case (direct object) of the personal pronoun *ee•mons* translated, "us", obviously referring to God's people. In light of this, Paul's conveyance is that if we are God's people He will not deny us whom He foreknew, thus we cannot deny Him who has caused us to know Him. As stated earlier, the conjunction *ee* (if) serves as a subordinating function that expresses the stipulation of distinguishing the difference between those who are and who are not His. Accordingly, it appears that Paul is not expressing a "conditional future", but a "factual future". The factual thought conveyance is born out by the terse statement of 2Tim 2:13 (KJV), "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." And the Greek text, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He can not deny Himself". Note the similar wordage and sentence structure in this and the antecedent verses. Here we observe the subordinating conjunction *ee* (if) as it is linked to the verb *ahp•ees•too•mehn* rendered "unfaithful". It is likewise as in the preceding verse, in the indicative mood (factual). This verb is in the present tense, denoting the faithlessness and non-steadfastness of even believers who are from time to time plagued with unbelief. Thus regardless of believers' failure to fully exercise their faith that has been gifted to them, it does not deter the purpose and will of the Lord.

This is expressed by the Greek phrase *ehk•ee•nos pees•tos mehn•ee* rendered, "He remains faithful". The verb *mehn•ee* rendered "remains", is in the indicative mood, present tense and active voice, denoting the fact that He (Jesus Christ) remains faithful, trustworthy and reliable. This statement clarifies who alone is faithful, trustworthy and can be counted on to effectuate and preserve



our glorification. Oh what comfort to know that in spite of what even regenerated men may or may not do, He remains faithful'.

Paul closes this context with the motive and basis for the faithfulness of Jesus Christ and thus our security of eternal glorification i.e., *ahr•nees•ahs•theh gahr eh•ahf•ton oo thee•nah•teh* rendered "He cannot deny Himself". An intrinsic part of the Godhead and all it manifests is that He (God) is faithful, trustworthy and fully reliable and His purpose and will is unalterable. This requires God to count on no one other than Himself. The word "cannot" comes from the Greek expression "*oo thee•nah•the*" and literally means that "He is not able to" or "His power cannot resist His will". God's attributes are such that He is faithful, and for Him to deny or disown these characteristics would be to deny the fact that He is God. It is in this light only that one can rest in the factuality of glorification with Him.

As we revert to Romans 8:17, in the knowledge of what has been conveyed, we focus on the last phrase of the verse, *ee•pher seem•pahs•kho•mehn een•ah keh seen•thox•ahs•tho•mehn* rendered, "if indeed we suffer with that also we may be glorified with". Here taking the same consideration into this context that we have gleaned from our exegesis of 2Timothy 2:11-13, we note the subordinating conjunction *ee•pehr*, which we translate "if indeed". Note the Greek verb *seem•pahs•kho•mehn* rendered "we suffer with", is in the indicative mood inferring the factuality of the statement. Thus Paul is referencing the fact that believers do in fact share in the actual suffering that results in our glorification with (in) Christ. As we have previously determined, this is identifying the suffering of Christ and our identification with that which is meritoriously the basis for our glorification with Him. This is certified by the Greek phrase *een•ah keh seen•thox•ahs•tho•mehn* rendered "that (in order that) also we may be glorified with". Here joint-heirship is without a doubt contingent upon our sharing by identification, the suffering that is owned, possessed and endured by Christ. The Greek adverb *keh* (also) signifies that glory that is annexed to sonship. This is further verified by the subjunctive-aorist connotation of the Greek verb *seen•thox•ahs•tho•mehn* (we may be glorified with) as it denotes the future certainty of glorification with Him. Accordingly Romans 8:17 conveys the thought that joint-heirship is contingent on our suffering with Christ, which serves as a prerequisite to being glorified with Him. This is a factual statement, as we understand that there is no merit on the believer's part in accomplishing any of the above. In compliance with the grace doctrine, the complete informed thought is that we are joint-heirs of that which is Christ's if we truly suffer with Him (identify with His suffering) that we might (subjunctive mood, aorist tense) or have been designated to be glorified with Him. Here the context makes it clear that we are joint-heirs of the glorification and suffering which belongs to Christ through identification, imputation and predestination (Romans 8:30; Philipians 3:19-20; Colossians 1:27; 3:4).

The consistency of our exegesis is validated in Romans 8:18 in reading from the KJV, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us". From the Greek text, "For I consider that the sufferings of the present time (are) not worthy (to be compared) with the glory about to be revealed unto us." The opening Greek phrase *Loy•ee•zom•eh gahr ot•ee* rendered "For I reckon (consider) that", documents the conclusional statement that is to follow. The verb *Loy•ee•zom•eh* is a present-indicative conveyed in the middle voice. In light of these inferences i.e., he is expressing a fact that is not a product of his own opinion, we believe that this word is best translated "evaluate". Paul's enlightenment has caused him to make an evaluation that *ook ahx•ee•ah tah pahth•ee•mah•tah too neen keh•roo* rendered, "the sufferings of the present time (are) not worthy". Here we note that the genitive of possession of the Greek noun *keh•roo* (time) and adverb *neen* (now), as it denotes that the sufferings described in this verse are owned by and belongs to "now" or the present time (age). Thus is clearly referencing the personal-physical sufferings that the saints endure associatedly with their call to heirship.

As Paul looked at the sufferings that he was going through for Christ, and as he contemplated the glory that is to be revealed unto all believers, he considered his suffering insignificant in comparison.

Here he evaluated his afflictions and evil treatment as *ook ahx•ee•ah* (unworthy) in comparison to the sufferings of Christ, who has procured the future glory that is eminently awaiting God's elect. Hence Paul is not making light in the fullest extent concerning our present suffering, but he only compares it with the awesome sacrifice provided by our Lord. It is in this vein that he termed it "light" in second Corinthians. Now some have incorrectly exegeted 2Cor 4:17 in the meritorious vein of a sacrifice that procures an eternal weight of glory. Here we view the statement from the (KJV), "For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Now from the Greek text, "For momentarily our light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." This verse actually describes the workings or design and purpose, which God has devised for our suffering and affliction.

It is this vital message of the Spirit that has seemingly been lost on the comprehensive intelligence of most of God's people. So the questions are: (1) **what** is the purpose of our suffering? (2) **why** is suffering concomitant with service to God? (3) **why** does God allow those whom He obviously loved from eternity to experience heartache, pain, and turmoil? and (4) **why not** allow those dear to Him to live free from the conflict of trials and tribulations? As we consider such questions, it should be indelibly impressed in our mindsets that the total forces of creation march both exclusively and expressively to the drumbeat of God's great, glorious and eternal will, plan and purpose. Also the totality of creation entails the universe of universes, including this galaxy and even this small planet, which is the world we live in; thus our earthly existence is only a minute part of the entirety of things. As strange as it may seem to some, there is in the province of God, His definite design that embraces every individual entity of creation. Accordingly, everything that functions do so as components of a gigantic creation, all devised to accommodate the pleasure of His will. As we focus on the thought conveyance of 2Corinthians 4:17, it is very informative as we observe the Greek verb *kaht•ehr•gah•zeh•teh* translated, "is working". Note it is in the present tense and middle voice. Here it should become apparent through a close examination of the context, that God is forever in control of every operational force, whether it is good or evil. From this we perceive that all things are subjected to His purpose.

As sons of God positioned in Christ, facing the divers challenges of this life, our constant attitude should always be, "**Lord not our will but yours**". Before we assess the situation of our lives as either victory or defeat, or success or failure, we must evaluate through the contents of our gospel (Grace Contract) the validity of those things that are evident in our lives. As children of God chosen to eternal salvation, we have been endowed with a perfect guide, the Spirit of Truth. There are certain facts that are constantly expressed to His elect, i.e., God has individual plans for our lives, and the trials and vicissitudes of life experiences are the results of the imperfections of depraved creation. Thus all of His workings of both good and evil have as their ends, the culmination of all things that have been devised to give Him ultimate praise and glory. It is to this end that all actions and occurrences are working, and as those who are risen in Christ, our emotions, aspiration and affections must always be centered on things eternal, heavenly and above (Colossians 3:1-2). As the Apostle Paul surveys the occurrences of his course in life, his focus is not so much on what is happening to him as much as what are the workings or development of his experiences. In other words, his concentration as exemplified by the present tense and indicative mood (factual) of the Greek verb *kaht•ehr•gah•zeh•teh*, which focuses on what God is accomplishing, producing, bringing about or working out.

In essence, Paul's knowledge of the revelation of the Mystery, i.e., the revealed truth of God's eternal workings, positioned him with the unique view of the full spectrum of his existence whereby he could occupy in the period of time yet also dwell in the complete workings of God in the past and the future. Thus his view was always on the total stratum of eternity-past, time and eternity-future. This can best be termed or described as "the eternal now", which can be defined as the current view of time from the vantage point of eternity.

Now as we consider the content or the writings of 2Corinthians, note that the Greek verb *kaht•eh•gah•zeh•teh* is found seven times in this epistle (2Cor 5:5; 7:10-11; 9:11; 12:12). Thus the question is **what** is God working out or producing with our earthly afflictions? Here the answer is found in the Greek phrase *kath ee•pehr•vol•een ees ee•pehr•vol•een*, which is rendered "more and more exceeding". This denouement or description of the outcome is utilized in an attempt to give terminology to the glorious accomplishment of what God is producing, as Paul almost exhausts the Greek language in his crescendo of superlatives. The apostle here labors to accurately portray the glory, as there could not be found a more energetic expression than this. Note the Greek noun *ee•peh•vol•ee* is transliterated "hyperbole" in English literally meaning, "casting or throwing beyond". In 2Cor 4:7, it is rendered, "excess, excellency or eminence" in the expression, "the excellency (KJV) or exceeding greatness (GNT) "of His power". Here we note that the phrase *kath ee•pehr•vol•een* alone means, "exceeding or super eminently" (Rom 7:13; 1Cor 12:31; 2 Cor 1:8; Gal 1:13). Had this phrase been used by itself, it would express an intensity of high degree. But the Spirit of Truth deemed that it was not sufficient to express the weight or sense of the glory that is the inheritance of God's elect. Alone it, *kaht ee•pehr•vol•een*, was not enough for Paul to use as the highest ordinary expression of this superlative to denote the quantitation of such value. Therefore the added phrase *ees ee•pehr•vol•een* is co-joined to enhance the expression. So the results of God's workings are not merely eminent, but it is eminent unto eminence or excess. In other words it is a hyperbole unto hyperbole or one hyperbole heaped upon another, thus as best as can be expressed, it is "exceeding, exceedingly glorious" or glorious in the highest possible degree. This form of expression is the highest superlative, which is yet insufficient, as all human language superlatives fail in expressing that eternal glory, which is reserved for the just.

Here Paul states that the eternal glory, which God is working for His beloved, is infinite and boundless. One may seek to ascertain its quantity by expressing one degree to another or one sublime height to another, but the only quantitative expression that is possible in human terms is infinity or that which is beyond human comprehension. Accordingly, nothing can describe the uttermost height of that glory; nothing in the realm of our human capabilities can express its infinitude. So the underlying question is how does one reconcile our present sufferings or what we are presently experiencing in time, with what God has already worked out in eternity? In other words, as we reconcile the enlightenment of the eternal workings of God, how does it translate to ones daily encounters in this present life? Again, the focus must always be on **what God is accomplishing** in time!

What is taught throughout our gospel is that God has designed our sufferings for His specific purpose. Thus our trials and afflictions are assigned to us according to God's sovereign will for our individual lives. This is dutifully executed in the lives of all believers in varying degrees. In second Corinthians chapter four, the apostle Paul documents an account of his sufferings and the courage and patience that God provides to him through the challenges that he experienced. In verses eight and nine he states from the Greek text, "Being afflicted in every way, but not being distressed, being perplexed but not in despair. Being persecuted, but not being forsaken, being cast down, but not being destroyed." Here Paul focuses on the developmental process of the elect of God according to His (God's) pleasure. Thus afflictions and trials are viewed as God's application of His workings in formulating that which He has already eternally brought to fruition. The impact of this conveyance is expressed by the implication of the verbs in the context of the verses before us. Note the present participles are grammatically tied to the expression *ehk•o•mehn* rendered, "we have" in verse seven.

Thus in these successive verses, observe the ascensive order of the seemingly paradoxical and antithetical-contrasting nature of the adverse situations versus the corresponding stimulus exhibiting an antigen or immunal response. In verse eight, the Greek passive participle *thlee•vom•eh•lee* rendered "being afflicted", describes one who is caused to suffer trouble and hardship as it is followed by its conversion reaction, *oo stehn•okhor•oo•meh•nee*, rendered "not being distressed," which describes one who is caused to function contrary to the negative action imposed upon him. Continuing the litany, the Greek participle *ahp•oroo•meh•nee*, in the middle

voice, is rendered "being perplexed", which describes one who finds himself in an uncertain situation. It is followed by its conversion reaction *ook ehx•ah•poo•meh•nee* rendered, "not being in despair." In verse nine the Greek passive participle *thee•o•kom•eh•nee* rendered, "being persecuted", denotes one who is pursued and harassed, yet his conversion reaction was *ook ehg•kaht•ah•lee•po•meh•nee* rendered, "not being forsaken" or feeling let down, abandoned or deserted. This litany continues, denoting one who is knocked down, hurt badly and abused, yet his conversion reaction was *ook ahp•ol•lee•meh•nee* rendered, "not being destroyed" or killed or not caused to perish. These are apparently the working of the Spirit of Truth who has deposited knowledge for this purpose. This knowledge of God's plan and purpose is that which Paul refers to as "This treasure in earthen vessels." Here as Paul displays his litany of present participles and corresponding humanly uncharacteristic reactions, we note the passivity of the expressions. Note in every case, Paul is not the **cause**, but the **recipient** of the negative actions imposed upon him as well as his positive responses to them. Apparently he understood in verses eight and nine what was happening to him.

In verses ten and eleven, Paul sheds light as to why all these adverse occurrences or situations were happening and what God's purpose and will was in causing them to happen. The conclusive phrases of these two verses, when linked together, give unmistakable illumination to both the intent and the effectuation of the workings of God. In this regard, these verses state: (10) "always carry about in the body the dying of Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be manifested in our body." (11) "For we who live are always being delivered unto death because of Jesus, that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

Here in verse ten we note the Greek adverb *pahn•to•teh* rendered, "always" or "at all times", as the apostle Paul identifies the frequency of his endurances. Thus it should not be strange that our sufferings are constant. The expression "carry about in the body the dying of Jesus" is basically stating that the suffering of His elect serves as an identification of this counterpart of the suffering of Christ. So the key inference is **identification**, which defined God's ultimate purpose for us. The Greek word *nehk•ro•seen* rendered, "dying", refers to the dying of Jesus or according to the genitive of possessions, the dying that belongs to Jesus. In Paul's case, he is making reference to the process he experienced because he belonged to Jesus or because of his fidelity to the gospel of the Mystery of God's will (Phil 1:29; Col 1:24; 4:2-3). In this light, the prospect of daily dying or always (*pahn•to•teh*) or continually suffering is not viewed as negative, but rather as that which exudes a positive purpose. This is illustrated by the latter phrase "that (in order that) also (*keh*) the life of Jesus might be manifest in the (our) body of the believer. Thus it is to be gleaned from this context that endurance or suffering must be evaluated as a part of God's purpose for His elect. In this sense God uses it as the process of our transformation in the manifestation of the life of Christ.

In verse eleven, note again the adverb (*pahn•to•teh*) "always" as we rephrase it's rendering, i.e., "for always we the living are being delivered unto death because of Jesus, in order that also the life of Jesus, may be manifested in the mortal flesh of us". Here observe the phrase *ee•mees ee zon•dehs* rendered, "we who live" or "we who are living" or who are spiritually alive (living in Christ). Thus all who are in this group are continually being *pah•rah•thee•thom•eth•ah*, rendered "delivered", denoting those who are given over or handed over to persecution, harassment and slanderous attacks, which in Paul's case eventually led to his physical death (Acts 20:23; Eph 3:13). So the reason we as believers are being persecuted is *thee•ah Ee•ees•oon* rendered, "because of Jesus" or "on account of Jesus" or "for the sake of Jesus". Hence the information divulged is that believers are delivered unto death or the perils of death for one supreme purpose, i.e., that the life of Jesus may be manifested and displayed in their mortal flesh.

Now the most underlined and difficult question of all in this is raised and that is, who is the author and initiator of our trials and afflictions? While the proceeding verses explain **what** God is doing **in them** and **with them** the question remains as to **who and what is the origin of them?** Here many

will readily respond, "it is Satan, the prince and power of the air, the god of this age." Note, it must be plainly stated that the devil is certainly the prime participator and instigator in the proceedings of the negative and evil forces imposed upon believers, but we must remember that **all** power, even that of Satan is ordained and in subjection in the omnipotency of God. (Rom 13:1). This is distinctly spelled out in Paul's writings and corroborated by the accounts in the book of Job. Note, it was God who brought up the subject of Job (Job 1:8), and God who issued the challenge and finally God who gave permission for Satan's intervention and set the limits and boundaries of Job's afflictions (Job 1:12).

But a clearer understanding is gleaned from the writings of Paul as he tersely states in chapter one of his epistle to the Phillipians. In Phil 1:21, Paul boldly states (from the Greek text) "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain". Here he makes this statement as he faced the possibility of his death. In Phil 1:28 he states, (from the Greek text) "And do not be frightened in anything by the adversaries, which is evident of destruction to them, but of your salvation, and this from God". Here we note the Greek participle *ptee•ro•meh•nee* translated, "frightened", as it is used in this instance only in the Greek New Testament; basically denoting what God's informed people should never be i.e., terrified or scared persons. The conveyance is that regardless of what the circumstances may be, *ehn•mee•theh•nee* rendered, "not in one thing", are we to be terrified by *ton•ahn•dee•kee•mehn•on* rendered, "the adversaries", which are the opposing or hostile forces of evil and ill will toward us.

Thus when we are secured in our thinking and undisturbed by the opposing forces of evil, then this is *ehn•thee•zees* rendered, "evidence" or proof which demonstrates that the workings of the adversarial forces will only accomplish as their end their destruction and perdition or ruin. The phrase *ee•mon•theh•so•teer•ee•ah* translated, "but of your salvation", documents the fact that those undaunted by trials and affliction, in fact display evidence and give testimony to the effectiveness of their salvation. In other words, this phrase clearly demonstrates that one's attitude, demeanor and behavior are significant indicators of one's testimony as to whether their security in salvation is actually understood by them (I Timothy 1:16; II Timothy 4:5). Here Paul ends this verse with the statement *keh•too•to•ah•po•theh•oo* translated, "and this is from God". Here the question may be posed, "what is from God?" From the grammar, we observe that the demonstrative pronoun *too•to* this, is in the neuter gender thus necessitating that it modifies a neuter phrase or noun. So a neuter gender in the extended context, either stated or implied, would give description as to what emanates from God.

Note in Phil 1:29 its reading (from the Greek text) "Because it has been given to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on behalf of Him." Now there some who offer the explanation in the preceding verse (28) that salvation (*so•teer•ee•ahs*) is what "this" (*too•to*) refers to and while without a doubt, it (salvation) indeed is **from God**, one must consider that this noun carries the feminine gender, hence it does not meet the grammatical requirement for being the antecedent of the pronoun. Others may focus on and extend this to the context of verse 27 and offer the neuter gender of the Greek noun *ehv•ahg•yeh•lee•oo* (gospel) as its antecedent. Again, without a doubt, the gospel **is of** as well as **from** God, but its arrangement in the context does not allow a smooth blend in the flow of the context. Thus the key to identifying what is found to be contextually and grammatically in synch; is realized in recognizing that the subordinating conjunction *o•tee* rendered "for" or "because"; is linked to the defining Greek phrase *o•tee•ee•meen•eh•khah•rees•thee* translated, "it has been given" to you. Here it is obvious that "this (which is) from God" and "because it has been given to you" are directly linked. So the answer is found in identifying "what" from God has been given to those whom Paul is addressing. Upon close examination, one must observe that the Greek word *eh•khah•rees•thee* rendered, "has been given" is the verb form of the noun *khah•rees* rendered "grace". In conjunction to this observation, note the neuter gender and nominative case of the definite articles to as they are utilized three times in the verse.

Now as we survey the grammatical structure, it is apparent that there are no accompanying nouns with these definite articles. The rule in this structure is, while there are no neuter nouns with nominative cases stated, they are implied. Here again we focus on the noun form (*khah•rees*) of the

verb *eh • khah • rees • thee* in noting that it is in the aorist tense and passive voice, and may be translated, "it has been graced or it has been freely given unto you, or it has been graciously bestowed upon you, to suffer on behalf of or for the sake of Christ. Thus the nominative case would imply that the subject is grace that has been given as well as faith to believe as Paul states, "not only". This is followed by the Greek phrase *ahl • lah* keh rendered " but also", which infers that in conjunction with this grace; He has given or assigned the suffering for which the believer is enabled to endure.

There are two aspects to this grace: 1). He (God) grants the willingness of His elect to suffer for Christ and 2). He grants them the stamina to suffer for Him. In this sense, God uses suffering as a testimony of His power to effectuate maturation in His selective ones. Note the Greek present infinitive *pahs • kheen* rendered "endure or suffering", as it refers to physical and mental pain and anguish inflicted and impingement of external forces against God's people. Thus the workings are, even as the grace of God matures His beloved, God gives grace to the believer to rejoice while enduring suffering for the sake of Christ. This is demonstrated in Col 1:24 (from the KJV), "who now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church". And from the (Greek text)", Now I rejoice in my suffering on behalf of you and do fill up (or continue to the completeness of) what is needed or absent of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh on (for) His body, which is the assembly (called out ones)". Here the apostle states that he is presently rejoicing as the Greek word *neen* rendered "now", expresses the fact that *tees pahth • ee • mah • seen* rendered "the suffering" or His endurance as well as others, was for the sake of their ministering to God's people. Here we notice how Paul's attitude (his rejoicing) is formed by his interpretation of it in relation to the Body of Christ. Because of his commission, he understood that he was destined to suffer (Acts 9:16), thus he deemed it as having positive value. In this light he counted it as a privilege to function in his role of struggling to fulfill the needs of conveying the mystery that had been revealed unto him regarding the church (Eph 3:1-9). Note Paul's declaration that their efforts, as sacrificial as they may have been to some; were *ees • tehr • ee • mah • tah* rendered, "lacking, absent of fulfillment or incomplete".

The thought conveyance is that the entire spectrum of their struggles that were involved in planting, developing, nurturing, instructing, teaching and overseeing the work of the ministry, was far from being adequate in its full application. Notice how he compares their afflictions with *ton thleep • seh • on too khees • too* translated, "the afflictions of Christ", which depicts the tribulations involved in justifying those who are placed in the Body of Christ. Thus he understood that in spite of the fact that his pressures and circumstances of suffering were on behalf of the church, it is by God's design that his afflictions were only partial contributions to the entire gamut in the establishment and continuation of the ministry. Accordingly, he took pleasure in the knowledge that God had favored him to suffer in this capacity howbeit many others should follow in their assignments. Here as we focus on spiritual growth or maturity, we define it as the ever increasing enablement to know God, as such growth is always motivated by ones desire to be like Him. Spiritual maturity in this sense is a never-ending voyage of development into the nature of God. In essence it is the process of one that has been rescued from the plight of depraved humanity, developing a profound and intimate relationship with the divine Savior. It is a reflection of ones nearness to Him and a measure of the loving care of God for His beloved ones.

As one progresses in this realm, it entails the enhancement of ones ability to view things in recognition of the truth in their meanings and internalize the goodness of God in all occurrences. Through this is demonstrated the gradual elimination of ones selfish agenda as one maximizes ones awareness of the will of God. The eternal view of God's decrees instills a sense of security that is unavailable outside of dwelling in His purpose; as the thrill and comfort of His divine presence becomes increasingly clear to ones consciousness. This in fact is the reality of the spiritual maturity, which results and allows for his devised plan for ones improved receptivity for the divine wisdom of God. This in effect unifies ones personality in alignment with God as it increasingly yields a peace, which passes or defies all human understanding. It must be thoroughly comprehended that God is the source of all understanding and thus all knowledge invariably is tied to deity. The function of the Spirit

of Truth is to mediate between spiritual and physical things as the indispensable medium for communications; hence the spiritual mind invariably seeks to coordinate with that which is spiritual and thus its influences are always dominant over physical things. The Spirit of God that indwells ones mind (spirit) and causes it to depend upon Him for expressions and the spiritual realization of the truth; is that which enhances ones spiritual growth. Accordingly it is what ones mind comprehends rather than what it desires that will ensure development and growth. From the enlightenment of the gospel of the mystery, we are advised that eternity entails non-material, spiritualized, glorified bodies and minds, even though we will obviously retain those earth-memories that possess spiritual meaning and value of those blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Our spiritual and intellectual development will have become complete from the point it was interrupted by our transformation (1Corinthians 13:12; II Corinthians 3:18, 5:7; Phil 3:10-18). Ones earthly intolerance for endurance or suffering can be attributed to unfounded expectations of the depraved creation in which one lives. The sobering fact is that the present residence of existence is neither a friendly nor an accommodating universe. This is so because the present environment is sinful and physical rather than holy and spiritual. Thus the accommodations for serenity and peace or all things working in a harmonious pattern, are reserved for eternity rather than time. It is in the eternal setting that focal energy and absolute existence are primordially (existing from the beginning) and preemptively harmonized as God is established and supportively manifested within Himself, the creator of an everlasting universe. As we view the original creation and then what it evolved into, our focus should rest on its ultimate rather than its current state. Life in the eternal realm is not invested in endless unrest of idleness or selfless unease, but rather of a ceaseless progression in grace, truth and glory. Thus our future station is a permanent existence wherein life is designed and prepared for the children of light to go from glory to glory in the divine estate of spiritual perfection even as God is perfect in all things (Heb 13:21).

This temporary life is obviously designed to prepare His elect for the eternal life to come. In this sense grace and mercy characterize God's attitude of love for His individual designees, whereas the culmination of all things in Him motivates His attitude for the whole. The material universe is the arena wherein all physical activities and beings ascender and work on physical spheres of material reality; consequently, mortal (depraved) man has a spiritual void (deficit). The depraved human mind is a personal-energy system existing estranged from the divine Spirit of God as it functions in a material environment. Such a separate relationship of carnal minds from the Holy Spirit constitutes the universe's potential of conflictual personalities. The covenants of the Old Testament basically teach self-sacrifice while the grace covenant teaches self-amortification and enhanced self-realization as depraved creatures. The covenants of past dispensations were motivated by fear-conscientiousness, whereas the grace dispensation's focus is guided by truth-conviction of the eternal purpose, will and plan of God. All everlasting relationships, though not fully understood by God's people, began in eternity, are made manifest to His elected ones through time, but from the beginning is designated and focused on eternity.

The Word of God teaches that the trials and vicissitudes of life experiences, which are the results of the imperfections of depraved creation, are more than matched by the knowledge given by God to overcome each challenge. There are times when the earth seems cruel and desolate and life inconsequential, when one feels that nothing has security as it invokes an aura of weakened and vulnerable stress towards collapse. Life's vagaries (erratic or unpredictable occurrences) often cause one to feel insecure. This insecurity, in some cases evolves from situations that may be real or even at times imagined. No human is immune to such stress, but the knowledge of God's designed workings provides an inner stability that imparts joy and peace in the midst of all capricious circumstances of life.

Those who solely depend upon the comforts and pleasures of this life are destined to experience bitter disappointment. It is only through ones enduring relationship with God, which of necessary dictates that we ascertain the combination of His love and power, that one realizes the meagerness of humanity. It is from this viewpoint that one is privileged to comprehend the bounty of God's infinite provisions as they overshadow ones illusion of insecurity. In essence, no God knowing mortal can

ever be permanently disillusioned. Confusion arises from immaturity in the face of the multiplicity of human philosophies and the surface influences of logic appearing to justify them. This is more than offset by ongoing spiritual revelations from the Word of God, which are designed to dissipate these transient debilitations.

Doubt is even more sinister than confusion in that "all that (is) not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:33), as it rationalizes the logic of human depraved thinking over God's devised course of trust and commitment. Doubt is the denial of God's presence in one's mind, which contradicts the most concrete entity in the elect's life. Doubt is the abandonment of one's highest value of love, truth, service, hope and faith. Doubt directs one to the nothingness or emptiness of physical dependency toward the void that exists in the absence of the Spirit of Truth directing His beloved toward the radiance of God's love. Thus, doubt is the natural aberration, whereas faith is the spiritual heartbeat of the believer.

Faith is gifted from God, and is received according to His will to all of His chosen ones. It brings the spirits of its recipients into the upward stream of the Spirit of Truth that God aligns in all whom He loves and has caused to believe Him. Through this, one is blessed to know the difference between the nothingness of doubt and the expansiveness of faith, which is one's entrance into the joy and peace of spiritual communion. This provides positive proof of God's presence in one's life as belief in His word is structured to cause one to resist doubt and withstand fear.

Now as we venture back to the theme of the prime thought conveyance, we revert to the outlay of information which was gleaned in 2Corinthians 4:17 as it flows over into 2 Corinthians 4:18. Here we note the reading of this verse, first from the (KJV), "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are not seen are eternal." Now from the Greek text, "we are not looking at the things being seen, but at the things not being seen; for the things being seen are temporal, but the things not being seen are eternal. Here as we observe the sentence structure of this verse, we note the usage of four (4) present participles rendered "being seen" or "being perceived"; plus the fact that two of them are preceded by the negative participles rendered "not being seen or perceived". In addition to this we also focus on the fact that two of the verb participles are in the accusative case in the former part of the verse, while the latter part encompasses two participles in the nominative case. These designees certify their usages as direct objects (accusative) and the verse's subjects (nominative) respectively. With this information in hand, we note that this verse begins with the negative particle and present participle conjoined, i.e., *meeskop•oon•don ee•mon* rendered, "we are not looking", which denotes those who are not prioritizing or dwelling on things which are being seen or the visible things. Note that the Greek participle in each of the four usages of *tah vlehp•om•eh•nah* translated "the things being seen", is in the present tense and passive voice. Thus our informed minds are caused to shift from prioritizing and continuously dwelling on physical things, which God has made visible to all men, in contrast to the invisible things which are spiritually visible to only some (God's elect).

In order to emphasize the contrast between what informed minds should not be prioritizing or dwelling on versus what should be prioritized, the Apostle Paul uses the strong adversative conjunction "*ahl•lah*" translated 'but'. Here he implies that, "but" we should be "looking at" or "dwelling on" the things not seen. Note there are two spheres available to dwell on, namely the visible-physical and the invisible-spiritual. In terms of locations, these two spheres are described in Colossians 3:1-2, as that which is above (spiritual or unseen) and on the earth (physical or seen). God dwells in the above sphere commonly referred to as heaven (Colossians 3:1). The reasoning behind this is founded in the fact that all the physical or seen things of earth are temporary and transitory as all in this category are in a state of rapid or steady decline or slow dissolution. On the other hand, the reasoning for prioritizing the unseen-spiritual things is because they are *eh•o•nee•ah* rendered, "eternal, everlasting or unending". This gives reaffirmation and substance to the contents of 2Corinthians 4:17, namely that "our momentarily (light) afflictions are working for God's elect an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison". Thus in the midst of all difficult physical circumstances, informed spiritual minds are continually focused on the eternal glory of (which belongs to) Christ. The ultimate end of



God's eternal purpose for all believers is glorification together in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:28-30). The ultimate aspiration of the mystery, the gospel of the grace of God is "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col 1:27).

In isolating the terms temporal and eternal, observe that the Greek word *pros•keh•ros* is literally translated, "for a while, not long and un-enduring". Things that are ephemeral, i.e., certain plants that grow, flower and then die within a few days; best demonstrate this expression. The depiction is that which lasts a very short time. Synonyms that give description to this condition are: fleeting, fugacious, fugitive, momentary, passing, short-lived and episodic. The most sober expression of all is evanescent, as it defines things that tend to vanish like vapor and disappear. In strong aversive contrast to this, the Greek word *eh•o•nee•os* is literally translated "eternal" or "everlasting", thus describing that which is without beginning and end or that which always has been and will be, that which will never cease to be or unendingly abiding.

The most miraculous phenomena are those who dwell in the realm of the "everlasting now". Yes, even though God's people are abiding in the created entity of time, they are yet positioned in the essence of eternity in their glorified state. The only ones, who can contemplate this, are those who walk (live) by faith. Outside of this no one can internalize eternity from the human plateau of the depraved state of ones present abode; as the everlasting now is the current view of time from the vantage point of eternity. By faith, God's elect not only discern these unseen things and their great distinction from the physical sphere, but by this also, the prioritized spiritual, which is chiefly regarded as the end of the scope of existence. Now this is not designed to escape present evil or even obtain present worldly good, both of which are temporary and transitory, but it definitely guarantees escape from future evil and entails future good. Thus, hope is invested in the eternal future realm of the unseen, which is more realistic and certain or as Hebrews 11:1 states (from the Greek text), "And faith is the assurance or confidence of that being hoped for, the verification (certainty) of matters being unseen".

The human mind cannot accommodate the conflict of double allegiance. This is corroborated by the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13 wherein it is conveyed that, "No man can serve two lords, for either he will hate and despise one and love and be beholden to the other"; for he cannot have equal affections for both. Thus ones love for the physical and spiritual cannot possible abide equally. When the earthly possession of health and wealth is promoted as maximum blissfulness, it is always at the expense of focusing ones priority on physical rather than spiritual blessings. It is impossible to amalgamate (blend) them or interchangeably refer to them as one and/or the same. Regardless of how some may view it, the obtaining of money and healing of diseases are physical **not** spiritual blessings. Even though it is not predominantly taught, spiritual blessings are confined to the unseen or abstract things of God rather than the seen and materialized.

The confusion that is the result of such misunderstanding causes gross disillusionment among God's people. The basic facts are: (1) God is inherently kind to those who are the objects of His love, grace and mercy and (2) all of evolutionary creation is beset by certain inevitabilities; the greatest is the conclusion of the present-physical to be transformed into the future-spiritual. When these heights of maturity are attained, they are always accomplished through the correct conception of eternity. Thus, physical healing is not tantamount to salvation or deliverance from the essence of sickness. God could of course, heal all human illnesses by just speaking the word, but to do so would violate the physical laws of His ordaining depraved creation to accommodate depraved mankind. In actuality, neither the feeding of the masses on the shores of Galilee nor the healing of those at Capernaum, contributed to the glory that resides in the church, the Body of Christ.

With a distorted conception to the contrary of this, some when viewing perpetual afflictions have questioned God's love for His people. Some even question His sovereignty in such instances, but it must be understood that God's distinct individual plans of detailed progression for His elect, entail sickness as well as other painful circumstances. In this light, the existence of suffering rather proves that God has devised through the consequences of depraved nature, His workings wherein the

tribulation visited upon His beloved brings about the transformation of their maturity into the unseen and eternal realm (Romans 12:1-2). Such a process may appear to be harsh to some but it is more than worth the gain in developing the faithful ones who believe in true spiritual values. This is accomplished in the midst of so much that is humanly conceptualized to be totally contrary to all that is good, beautiful and true.

With the unfolding of progressing science medicinally solving the problems of diseases, one must yet take comfort solely in God's workings in affliction. When all within human understanding has been done to ameliorate (improve) certain situations of life and it may become apparent that it is not in God's providence to alter it; one must then be content to align with His will (Philippians 4:11; 1Timothy 6:8). When ones eternal relationship to God as a member of the Body of Christ is the focus of existence, material considerations are relegated to their proper subordination. This present life inevitably involves suffering, but those who are privileged to comprehend God's greater purposes behind this veil, will experience sustaining inner peace which enables one to rise above any perceived deprivation that might be encountered.

There are certain facts that must be inculcated in the hearts (minds) of God's people and they are: (1) the eternal God is the only refuge, (2) no stock should be invested in the transient and ever changing emotions of joy and sorrow in this world, (3) what most refer to as providential is not, and, (4) the endowment of imperfect beings with the latitude to express their freedom of depravity invariably entails tragedy. When flush with the so-called success of earthy accomplishments, it is natural to bask in the illusion of comfort and imagined security. But it is quite challenging to search for it in the shattered rubble of ones fondest dream or expectation. Usually, discouragement and defeat often follow sad circumstances, insinuating it's no use; the battle is lost anyway, rendering one helpless by the undertow of evil and pain in this imperfect world. In these instances, discouragement has succeeded in perpetrating needless impressions of distress based upon ones lack of understanding of God's workings. Before one uses such perceived failure and defeat then to evaluate the validity of blessings or curses, one must ascertain whether or how the circumstances align in accordance with God's plan. One's will must always conform to the will of God per the example of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 26:39; Luke 22:42).

In most cases, God's people are discouraged when they do not receive the benefit of their own will. In other words, when one does not realize ones desires or needs, disillusionment ensues, as one feels arrayed against the on-moving course of reality itself. However when the Word of God properly informs one, assurance is evident through the knowledge that His (God's) prescribed goals and means for His elect are acceptable occurrences in His sight. Thus one must not conform to anything that would tend to deflect from God's process and reject any human characterization of failure in favor of the occurrences apparently following the dictates of His divine approval. Hence one must aggressively and enthusiastically continue in encouragement despite all indications to the contrary, allowing nothing to be discouraging in ones course. In effect, proper communications of God's love for His elect lessen the impact of the struggles and empowers one to willingly walk in the way of His loving will.

Again, the bottom line is exemplified in understanding that ones everlasting relationship, though not fully understood by the human mind, was conceived in eternity, is made manifest to the elect of God through time, but from the beginning, is designated and focused on eternity! It is in this light that one must dedicate ones life to the ministry of the eternal things. Life has no defined meaning apart from an everlasting relationship with God. The goods and thrills of this vainglory existence are spiritually meaningless; thus failing to satisfy the deepest and truest reality in the believer's spirit (mind). The Word of God is geared to impart the message that the world that is now, is not the world that is to be, thus ones existence now is not the existence to be. Except for the operations of the principles of God's purpose, the fact of material existence must simply be accepted. Our prayers do not change or determine things, but petitions to God must be properly in alignment with His determinant plan. One

must accept God's direction in each and every one of life's problems whether they are perceived as big or small, knowing that He even works tragedies for good.

As one dwells in God and fellowship in the Spirit of Truth, His presence energizes ones deposited faith hour by hour. In this realm one is lifted to a high plateau from which the breadth of life's problems are viewed as momentarily light as compared to the glory of His power and presence. In this, one can ascertain how God has arranged the incidents of ones afflictions with the design of His purpose. This positions each of the elect as an individual part of His all-encompassing plan, wherein all the sons (and daughters) of God are transformed into the advancement of the entire entity of the Body of Christ. From this knowledge one will learn how to suffer through this life's sorrows and disappointments, hastening toward the day when God's beloved will eternally dwell in Christ.

As we move to the conclusion of this discourse, we revert to and refocus on Romans 8:18 and its reading, again from the Greek text, "For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed unto us." Here we note our earlier translation of *loy• ee• zom• eh* translated, "reckon" and "count"; which in light of all the gleanings garnered, we use the rendering, "evaluate" in view of the total exegeted context. Thus we evaluate that the sufferings that we presently endure are not worthy to be compared or considered on an equal basis with the glory that is eminently poised to be revealed unto God's elect. The fact that this verse continues to emphasize the greatness of the glory which is to be revealed unto God's people is additional evidence favoring the view that the phrase "heirs of God" in Romans 8:17 also refers to the glorified state. Glorification together in Christ is the ultimate object of all believers in the present church age (Rom 8:30). Thus the focus and priority is on the glory of which none are *ah• xee• ah* rendered, "worthy" as it indicates that these sufferings are not of equal value and do not have the same weight, hence they are not worthy enough to be compared with the believer's future glory.

As we observe the ending conveyance of this verse, note the Greek phrase *teen mehl• loo• sahn thox• ah ahp• ok• ahl• eeph• theen• eh ees ee• mahs* rendered, "the glory about to be revealed unto us". This statement identifies the time or point when our glory will be manifested. Here the Greek verb *mehl• loo• sahn* rendered, "about" is structured to express what shall or will occur, hence that which is about to happen or on the brink of coming to pass. In effect it portrays that which is imminently coming, i.e., the elect's essential glorified position in the Body of Christ (Phil 3:20-31; Col 3:4). It is so comforting to dwell in the eternal, secured and blissful realm of glory that is reserved and awaiting those who have been enlightened by the **Spirit of Truth!!**