

The Ministry of the Apostle Paul

When you hear of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, what do you normally think? Most often we hear and speak of the missionary journeys of Paul. We read of the marvelous conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus in order that Paul might preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The premise of this chapter and the book is that the primary ministry of Paul was to serve as chief editor of the New Testament. Certainly as we in contemporary times look back on what has happened in the approximately two thousand years since Paul, Jesus, and the other Apostles of Christ, the most pervasive influence of Paul has been from his fourteen letters that became fourteen books of the New Testament. In other words thousands more people had read and become Christians from the reading of his letters than have become Christians because of his missionary journeys. You can almost miss this aspect of the ministry of Christ in the reading of his letters. The one single place that it is obvious is in the reading of Colossians 1:25.

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God...” (Colossians 1:25 KJV)

Notice that: Paul is made a minister in order to fulfill or complete the word of God! That tells me that God had in mind a certain number of books for the Bible and in particular for the New Testament (27), and that the responsibility of the ministry of Paul was to make sure that this number was completed. This Paul did by personally writing 14 out of 27 of those books, and then pass on to John Mark and Dr. Luke manuscripts for the writing of three more books of the New Testament; so that Paul becomes personally responsible for 17 out of 27 of the New Testament books. I

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would say that is a significant aspect of Paul's ministry when you consider to how many countries the Bible has gone over the last two thousand years, into how many homes, and from how many pulpits and Sunday school classes the Bible is taught every Sunday. To belabor this chief editor aspect of the New Testament now as related to John Mark and Dr. Luke is somewhat jumping ahead, but I think it is necessary to immediately establish an internal evidence aspect to this claim. Two scriptural facts can quickly lay this foundation.

1. Paul after becoming a prisoner requested that Timothy bring his books and parchments from Troas.

"The cloak that I left a Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." (II Timothy 4:13)

2. Paul wrote that John Mark was profitable to him for the "ministry", and recall that the most important aspect of the ministry of Paul was in the writing and editing of New Testament books.

"Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." (II Timothy 4:11)

1-1: Other Scriptures to Support Colossians 1:25.

As stated earlier it is possible to overlook this writing and editing aspect of the ministry of Paul until you focus on it as found in Colossians 1:25; however once it has your attention, you can find other scriptures to support the same thesis. **{It should be stated here something that will be emphasized later. That is, the sufferings and preaching and other aspects of the ministry of Paul are closely related and essential to the ministry of writing. In fact those other aspects of the ministry make the writing ministry possible. Also Paul's acceptance in the church as an Apostle was also essential to the ministry of writing, since it was a well known fact that only Prophets and Apostles wrote Scriptures. Something else that we will look at in more detail later.}**

1. Ephesians 3:2,3.

"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 afore in few words..." (Ephesians 3:2,3)

Notice several obvious exegetical points from these two verses: (1) the method of Jesus by which He let Paul know of this great mystery was through "revelation", and everyone knows from the study of the Bible in totality that the method by which Scriptures are written is revelation; (2) when this mystery was revealed to Paul he passed it on in a letter which became a book of the Bible (no doubt this was the book of Colossians); (3) if you read the verse before, Ephesians 1:1 you will notice that Paul relates this ministry of revelation and writing to both being a "prisoner" (sufferings for Christ and the church) and for the fact that it is all

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done for the church; (4) you also see this fact in the "which is given me to you-ward" in the wording of Ephesians 3:2; (5) in Ephesians 3:5 this great mystery is "now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit", once again all Bible students knowing that this is the method of revelations from God--revelation to apostles and prophets through the work of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16,17); (6) the great mystery hidden from the foundation of the earth is that the Gentiles are members of the same body of Christ through the same Gospel, Ephesians 3:6; (7) and this is the reason that Paul is made a "minister", Ephesians 3:7; (8) part of this ministry to the preaching of this mystery and gospel to the Gentiles, Ephesians 3:8; and (9) another aspect is in order that all men on the earth of all time might know this mystery--"and to make all men see what...", Ephesians 3:9. Now what seemed at first to be a little unclear from internal evidence in the Scriptures begins to become obvious!

2. II Timothy 3:16,17.

In a later section of this chapter we will look at Paul's concept of "the word of God" as used in Colossians 1:25 to determine if it had a written Scriptural context as well as the more obvious aspect of preaching, so that since we mentioned above this verse of II Timothy 3:16,17, it behooves us now to put it up front as part of the understanding of the Apostle Paul about inspiration, revelation, and the Scriptures.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16,17)

All written Scripture is given by the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit. If you look at the verse before, II Timothy 3:15, you will notice that Paul is talking about written Scriptures as he relates how Timothy has learned the written and "holy" Scriptures from his childhood. This would also be a good time to look at the Apostle Peter's concept of inspiration and Scriptures, and how in particular that Peter had accepted the writing of Scriptures as an important aspect of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and that furthermore Peter sought to gain this acceptance of writing Scripture among the rest of the church.

(1). II Peter 1:20,21.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1:20,21)

Here the speaking or preaching of Scripture is closely related to the writing of the Old Testament books by the Prophets.

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(2). II Peter 3:15,16.

“...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to be understood, which they are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (II Peter 3:15,16)

You didn't miss that did you: (1) Peter puts the written epistles of the Apostle Paul in the same category with the Scriptures of the Old Testament; (2) in those epistles Paul is “speaking” while he writes; and (3) it is because of the wisdom given to him from God that Paul writes to these churches in epistles that have become accepted as Bible.

3. Romans 15:19.

Where were we when we got carried away with this great doctrine of the inspiration of Scriptures? We were looking at support in other Bible verses for the writing of Scriptures as the most significant aspect of the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

1-2: Where Paul Got His Doctrine.

Paul leaves little doubt in the mind of readers where he learned what He did about the Doctrine of Christ and other teachings. It was from the Risen and Ascended Christ Himself!

1. From out in the Desert of Saudi Arabia.

“But I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ...But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.” (Galatians 1:11-12,15-19)

(1). Much of the doctrine of Christ that Paul wrote of is almost synonymous with the gospel, and above Paul is saying that it came from direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

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(2). Paul didn't get the teachings of Christ from the other Apostles as after his conversion he only saw two of them, Peter and James, and that was 3 years after his conversion, those three years being spent listening to Jesus in Arabia.

(3). Part of my major theory on Paul being the chief editor of the New Testament, continuing his work through Mark and Luke for whom he left written manuscripts on Old Testament quotations, is also that Paul left the gospel testimony manuscripts from Peter and James--written during his first visit back to Jerusalem to Peter and James--respectively becoming the Gospels of Mark and Luke.

2. From Peter and James.

As mentioned above, Paul already knowing that his responsibility was to be Chief Editor of the New Testament, having learned that from Christ on the road to Damascus, from Ananias in Damascus, and from Christ in Saudi Arabia, began to do research on the task by recording the gospel testimonies of Peter and James on parchments.

3. From reading back through the Old Testament during the 7 "silent years" at Tarsus, recording on manuscripts all the quotes that would become part of the 14 letters that he wrote, plus Acts, Mark, and Luke.

Quite often the seven years or so of Acts 9:30 are called the silent years. I think not; as Paul was reading back through the whole Old Testament in light of his conversion, the teachings of Jesus in Saudi Arabia, what Ananias told him, and what Paul learned from Peter and James. All of the quotes that would later become book of the New Testament were recorded on parchments as he read through the Old Testament.

1-3: Peter recognized and told the Christian world that Paul was writing Scriptures.

"...as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." (II Peter 3:15,16)

1. By the time the Apostle Peter wrote II Peter, approximately 66 A.D., Paul was well established as the "beloved brother".

2. The source of Paul's doctrine and Scriptures is obvious here, it was "according to the wisdom given him".

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It came from outside himself, from God the Father, the Ascended Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. In a few paragraphs we will briefly discuss "inspiration" of all Scriptures as (1) divine in origin, (2) absolute in authority, and (3) sufficient in message.

3. By this time in approximately 66 A.D.--"in all his epistles"--Paul had written many epistles.

4. Paul wrote of these things that Peter had been addressing in II Peter, in particular as mentioned a few verses before, the coming of the day of God when the heavens and the earth shall dissolve; and how the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.

5. Paul writes in his epistles of some things hard to understand.

It would seem that except for the Apostle John near the end of the First Century when he wrote the difficult book of Revelation, that the Apostle Paul was given the task (as a chief editor should have) of writing the most difficult and deep things of salvation. But this was the way it should be as Paul was a lawyer before his conversion, and being a lawyer in Israel in the first century meant based on the law of the Bible as the law of the Bible was the law of the nation. All Paul needed was conversion, a word of encouragement from Ananias, several years in the desert with Christ, a brief visit back at Jerusalem with the Apostles Peter and James, and then seven years at Tarsus to read back through the Old Testament with which he was already very familiar--but in the light on the new experiences and testimonies.

1-4: Peter Verifies that Paul wrote Scripture.

So when Peter mentions Scriptures in I and II Peter, it applies, of course, to the doctrine and Scriptures of the Apostle Paul.

1. Paul was a holy man of God that spoke or wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1:21)

2. Paul was not making an private interpretations of Jesus or the Old Testament when he wrote Scriptures.

The Doctrine of Paul is the doctrine of Christ and of God. It is consistent with the teachings and epistles of the other Apostles. In fact, if proof were needed of the

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Bible as the Word of God, it is the unity of content from the Prophets and the Apostles that convinces us that a common source was necessary, that source being God the Father through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. {It is amazing how some Muslims know so much about Jesus and believe those things at least in their brains, but you speak of Paul and draw a blank. Among believers there are those who think of the Scriptures from Paul as lesser Bible. Well, if you have faith in the Scriptures from Peter, then you must also have from Paul; and in the case of both, as well as all the Apostles and Prophets, it is “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” I am sure that if you don’t treat it as such, in faith and practice and doctrine, you will be held responsible by God Himself.}

It was not recorded yet but I am sure that either the Ascended Christ or Peter or James had told Paul as Jesus said, and later the Apostle John recorded in the Gospel of John that there would be no doubts about “doctrine” if a person were willing to do the will of God.

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” (John 7:17)

Of course, in the context, Jesus was primarily speaking of the group of teachings and of Himself as the reliable source that passed on doctrine from God the Father.

“And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.” (John 7:15,16)

Paul could likewise talk of his doctrine while making it clear, as he often did, that it was really doctrine from God and Christ; and likewise in the title of this volume, THE MINISTRY AND DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL, we can talk of the doctrine of Paul while knowing unmistakably the source.

3. Peter must have known also of the time and effort Paul made at Tarsus when he carefully re-read the Old Testament Scriptures, of the matters of salvation, of the grace that was presently coming to his generation, and what the Spirit of Christ had recorded in the Old Testament of the sufferings of Christ.

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven...” (I Peter 1:10-12)

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(1). Paul would have been on the mind of Peter as one of the Apostles who preached that gospel with the Holy Spirit help.

(2). Paul along with the Old Testament Prophets would among those who "minister the things".

(3). The "Spirit of Christ" was with Paul in Arabia even as it was with the Old Testament Prophets in the writing of Scriptures.

1-5: Paul like Peter championed the doctrine of inspiration of Scriptures.

Certainly it was the Apostle Paul that championed the very inspiration of Scripture itself, as he did on most of the doctrines of the Bible.

1. It was the Apostle Paul as a medium that gave us those great verses on "All scripture is given by inspiration of God..."

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16,17)

You just know that Paul had to be aware of the fact that he like the Prophets and other Apostles was writing Scripture: if he didn't know before Peter told him in the epistle of II Peter. What do we mean by "inspiration of God"? Certainly it is not inspired in the same sense as Robert Browning or any other poet is inspired.

(1). We mean that the Bible is divine in origin

The short meaning of "divine in origin" is like Jesus announced to us: it is "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." The longer is, while over 40 authors over a period of thousands of years did the human penmanship, whatever we believe related to various theories of "inspiration" we must believe that God is the origin. Over at Socorro, New Mexico is the Very Large Array of antennas pointed to pick up some communication from space. Well, in the Bible we have communications from heaven, from the Maker of all in the universe. And somehow the Word of God transcends within the Bible all verbal shortcomings and the limitations of pen and paper to communicate the truth to us.

(2). We mean that the Bible is Absolute in Authority.

When God has spoken as He has in the Bible, what could man possibly have to say that would be in the same category. The Bible is up near as number one in authority while commentaries, statements of faith, church covenants, and preachers are about number ten in authority. Like one teacher of theology said, "Study your

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Bible: it will throw a lot of light on the commentaries." How can you really compare in authority the words that come from God Himself to the words of any human. Those teachers and preachers who do not quote the Bible at all show a lack of recognition of that authority, and those who "take a verse and go everywhere preaching", have about the same amount of authority recognition. **{Granted the Ascended Christ did give some authority to pastors, teachers, and evangelists, an authority which must be recognized, but it is not the revelation authority that God reserved for only Prophets and Apostles--it is called in Ephesians 4 "gifts" instead of authority. Let us not confuse "revelation" which is the giving of truth from the mouth of God through Apostles and Prophets with "illumination" which is the understanding of those revelation, a gift from the Spirit of God. Illumination belongs to pastors, teachers, and evangelists: revelation belongs to Apostles and Prophets. If some false teachers recognized this, they would not say "God told me"; if the Mormons recognized this they would throw away three of their four Bibles and ignore as authoritative the words from their First President; if the Roman Catholics recognized this, they would accept as advice only any papal decrees. Baptists are also not innocent as many put the Scofield Reference Bible notes on the same level of authority as Scripture itself.}** When we confuse authorities between the Apostles and Prophets and others, not only are we denying the authority of the Word of God but also we have abrogated our "priesthood of believers" to another human.

(3). We mean that the Bible is Sufficient in Its Message.

It may not tell us all that we want to know: however, it tells us all that we need to know for salvation, for the worship of God, for faith in Jesus Christ, for the living of the Christian life, and etc. And most often we have not received a solution to a perplexing problem with what God has to say about it, because we have not yet discover under the illumination of the Holy Spirit what has been there ever since the Apostle or Prophet wrote it. Evolution has confused our brain. The Bible has not evolved one iota since the Prophet or Apostle wrote it. What has evolved is our collective and individual understanding of what that Prophet or Apostle wrote.

(4). The Bible is high fidelity in understanding.

I added this fourth meaning of the Bible as the Word of God after listening over 50 years to fundamentalists and others of the same attitude who think that God can not overcome any limitations of language or word choice. We called them "fundamentalists" when I was growing up in the SBC; but now it is like what you call a Texas Aggie at General Dynamics, Fort Worth, "boss". They left the SBC approximately 1900, but now as of 20 years ago with the leadership of W.A. Criswell, Charles Stanley, and Adrian Rogers they took over the SBC. The reason we called them fundamentalists then, and I still do now, is because of their fighting spirit wherein you knew what they were against more than what they were for. It also feeds their ego and that of their congregations as they talk about "verbal inspiration" as something

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they have and no one else has. {It is a straw man to make you think that they are “conservative”. I am conservative on all Scripture as the Word of God and conservative on the spirit of Christ not being a fighting spirit. Fundamentalists are not conservative.} That verbal inspiration, sometimes to the extent of accepting only the King James Version, is generally a disguise for some pet doctrine they have taken from the Scofield Bible Reference notes, like PREMILLENNIALISM.

I wish we could have a counterrevolution in the SBC where real southern baptist, in spirit and doctrine and attitude, take back over control from the fundamentalists. I think it was hardly fair to millions of real southern baptists, when two other denominations was formed. And what I am truly concerned about besides the present “spirit” of the Convention is the books that have replaced those of real Southern Baptists. By and large, except now at the Seminaries where fundamentalists have replaced the professors, the fundamentalists were trained out back of the church in a little building called a seminar with books of lesser quality. What has really happened now in the SBC is as predicted by Dr. R. G. Lee in his sermon “The Menace of Mediocrity”, “Wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch”. Of course, there is the likelihood that we are so deep into The Falling Away, there we are past the point of no return. What I am saying is that the Bible can speak for itself in any version. It is a living and dynamic book through which the Holy Spirit speaks. The problem, most often, is not in the exact word or words; but rather in the willingness of the reader or preacher to really do the will of God. As Jesus said, “If any man will do His will, he will know of the doctrine if it be of God.”

2. The Word or Word of Truth were favorite terms for Bible or Scriptures in the writings, and we will look at those extensively in the chapters of this volume. Two will be briefly mentioned now as examples.

(1). II Timothy 4:2.

This verse as a preliminary to the warning of the time when there will be little tolerance for sound doctrine, tells a possible preventive measure.

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (II Timothy 4:2)

This concludes with a good combination. Even as preaching must include the triad elements of exhortation, comfort, and edification (I Cor 14:3), so here preaching the word ends in exhortation with longsuffering and doctrine. The longsuffering tells of love and patience; and certainly on all doctrine we would dare not be among those that cast the first stone. It is no person or persons that we are aiming at when we talk about what the Bible teaches: it is not personal; it is something that was in the Bible before you and I were born. You know what is right behind this

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verse above, "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine..." And what this means as we dive further into the Falling Away is that less and less churches of the SBC and other churches will put up with reproof, rebuke, and even exhortation with sound doctrine.

1-6: Sufferings and the Ministry of Paul.

Above all Paul was told in his call to the Ministry of the great things he must suffer, and I think somewhere in those scriptures about "suffering" we will find also the great thing that Paul did as Chief Editor of the New Testament. When you stop to consider that second to Christ Himself Paul is the most famous Christian that has ever lived, I frankly am surprised that there are not several Old Testament predictions that foretold of Paul and his work. Perhaps there are, and during this volume study we can seek them out.

1. The call to Paul's Ministry in the vision of Ananias.

Ananias in the vision was told to go to this one Saul of Tarsus who was praying, and to put his hands on him so that he could receive his sight. Ananias objected. He said, "I've heard of this man, of the evil he has done in Jerusalem to Christians, and how he has authority from the chief priests to put all in prison that call on the name of Jesus."

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:15,16)

Here is what we can nail down so far on the Call to the Ministry of the Apostle Paul.

[1]. He was a chosen vessel to Christ.

[2]. Paul's call was to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel

[3]. Later Christ (no doubt in Arabia and subsequently) would show Paul "how great things he must suffer" for Christ.

2. Suffering was always part of the ministry of the Old Testament Prophets, especially the writing prophets, and Paul as a lawyer was very familiar with that.

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Stephen in his famous last words of Acts 7, in a condensed history of the Old Testament, tells us of the sufferings of the prophets.

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers...” (Acts 7:52)

3. The Ministry of Jesus Himself is often referred to as a ministry of suffering.

The famous passage of Isaiah 53 tells of the Ministry of Jesus in terms of the “Suffering Servant”.

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” (Isaiah 53:3)

And with many others similar words like--borne our griefs, carried our sorrows, stricken, smitten of God, afflicted, wounded, bruised, chastisement, stripes, oppressed, as a lamb to the slaughter--Isaiah 53 tells of the suffering ministry of Christ.

4. Paul testified that the ultimate in the Ministry and in being a Christian was what could result from suffering, that is the attainment of the Resurrection from the dead.

Let us also not forget that the preparations of Paul before the call to the ministry were also preparations for his ministry. He tells us of some of those educational, training, and experience backgrounds before His call.

“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” (Philippians 3:4-6)

Yet those were not the sufferings that helped Paul fulfill His call to the Ministry.

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss of Christ.” (Philippians 3:7)

There is the obvious motivation in the Ministry of Paul!

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"Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ..." (Philippians 3:8)

There is "sufferings" again, in the loss of all things that were important of the flesh and in the world. Surely in order to fulfill the Ministry of Paul, in preaching, in missionary journeys, and in the writing and editorship of New Testament books the essential foundation was the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Not only knowledge, but to be a leader in these avenues of expression about Jesus, Paul needed "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus..." Somewhere before we finish this volume, we must prove from the Scriptures that EXCELLENCY and SUFFERINGS are closely correlated.

"...and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Philippians 3:9-11)

There it is again: know Him, the power of His resurrection, and "THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS". Ephesians and the Ephesian ministry form a benchmark in the writings of Paul and in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. It was after the three year ministry in Ephesus and in the area of Asia Minor near Ephesus, that he could truly say that he had worked where he was not building on other men's ministry. You can detect that landmark in the way that Paul addressed his letters, boldly calling himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ" with children (I Timothy 1:1 and II Corinthians 1:1). In the writing of I Corinthians he was almost there as he was "called to be an Apostle". A little weaker than that would be the "servant and called to be an Apostle" of Romans and Titus. Begging the issue of Apostleship would be the "an Apostle, not of men but of Jesus" of Galatians. **{Remember like with any other auto, you must distinguished between the time of writing and the time of publication.}** When Paul came to formally write his earliest synagogue address as recorded in the book of Hebrews, it without the salutation of any name at all. Therefore if you continue this trend and sequence the 14 letters written by the Apostle Paul in terms of

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Paul's own concept of his ministry--at least, as he felt accepted in the Church and churches--then it would go as follows.

TABLE 1. Paul's Concept of His Own Ministry in Writing

books from Paul	Name of the epistle	how Paul addressed himself
1.	Galatians	Apostle not of men but of Jesus
2.	Hebrews	no name
3.	I, II Thessalonians	names only (Paul, Silas, Timothy)
4.	Romans, Titus	servant and called to be an Apostle
5.	I Corinthians	called to be an Apostle
6.	I Timothy, II Corinthians	an Apostle with children
7.	Ephesians, Colossians, and II Timothy	an Apostle
8.	Philippians	servant with Timothy
9.	Prisoner	Philemon

1-7: Apostle with Children, I Timothy and II Corinthians.

It is felt that the exact sequencing should not be belabored, and that it should be considered helpful only in that it leads to the spiritual messages of the letters. No doubt Paul digressed back to servant near the end of his ministry in order to identify with the ministry of Timothy, or have the churches identify with the ministry of Timothy, and also out of deference to the friend-servant concept of the final teachings of Jesus on earth. Paul almost called himself an Apostle in the first writing of Galatians; however, it was little or no concern for the acceptance of the churches which came later. Of course this writer is aware of different sequencing and respects especially that of the conservative Bible scholar F.F. Bruce which goes like this: (1) Galatians; (2) Thessalonians; (3) I Corinthians; (4) Philippians; (5) II Corinthians; (6) Romans; (7) Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians; and (8) Pastoral epistles. It is obvious that Bruce has not attempted to sequence the pastoral epistles of Titus, I, and II Timothy. However, enough of this sequencing. Recall that the emphasis in this volume as in all nine volumes of THE LEARN CHRIST COMMENTARIES is to be on the internal content. That is interpreted to mean that the 14 New Testament books themselves and their context, rather than information about them, will be the focus in this volume while working on any sequence.

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1-8: An Outline of I Timothy.

{Grow accustomed to these periodic outlines of single books of the Bible. By the completion of the 9 volumes we will have outlined all 66 books.}

I. Historical Background of Ephesus, Timothy there, Paul's Apostleship, and his charge to Timothy. I Timothy 1:1-2:15

II. Elders and Deacons. I Timothy 3:1-13

III. The Church and the Mystery of Godliness. I Timothy 3:14-6:21

1. The Church is the pillar and ground of truth. 3:15

2. From the God manifested in the flesh in the Christ through the received into heaven, the Ascension of Christ. 3:16

3. The work of a minister during the last days. 4:1-6:21.

a. Some will depart from the faith, getting into seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

b. Be an example of believers.

c. How to treat certain groups of people in the church, 5:1-6:4.

d. Godliness with contentment is great gain: follow after godliness, I Timothy 6:6-19.

e. Keep what has been committed to your trust, not as those who have erred from the faith, 6:20,21.

1-9. "Believe" in the letters of the Apostle Paul.

'Believe' as you would expect is a big word in the Bible, much larger in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. If you listened to some preachers you would think that the noun "faith" has no verb equivalent, some trying to invent the word "faithing" as a verb equivalent of faith; but let us look at what is really in the NT in the King James Version. The Greek word for "believe" is "pisteou", and it literally means "to adhere to, rely on, trust." I like that, don't you. We adhere to Christ, God, the Bible, and God's plan of the one baptism for salvation; we rely on Christ; and we trust Christ, God, the Bible, and the one baptism by the power of God. The word "believe" itself independent of verb forms like believeth and believer is found approximately 330 times in the New Testament, approximately 53 times of those in the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul. We will start at the end of this chapter with the 53 times from the Apostle Paul since this is a commentary on the letters of Paul. {Granted the Apostle John is the most frequent user of the word "believe", indeed the Gospel of John has the stated purpose that readers may "believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God"; but you can read about that in volume 2 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries, "Christ for Individuals", a commentary on Revelation, the Gospel of John, and the three little epistles.}

Volume 3: Believe and Be Baptized

1. "Believe" in Romans 1:16. Here Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it represents the power of God into salvation for everyone who "believes".
2. "Believe" in Romans 3:22. If you desire to know the very beginning of the way to put the righteousness of God first along with God and His kingdom; well, the beginning of righteousness in an individual is through faith {the noun equivalent of believe} in Jesus Christ. It is "to all and on all" who believe.
3. "Believe" in Romans 4:3 and 4:5. Abraham believed God, and that faith was accounted to by God as righteousness. If you work for righteousness, then there is no grace; the righteousness would be a debt from God. He has no provision for that, and never has! The way God does it is the opposite of work, only "believe" on the God who justifies the ungodly, and that faith is counted for righteousness in the sight of God.
4. Romans 4:11. Even though Abraham received circumcision as a sign that he already had the seal of righteousness by faith in his life--just like we receive water baptism as a sign that we have received in the one baptism the seal of the righteousness by faith in our lives; of course, Abraham thus became the "father of all who believe", circumcised or uncircumcised. Righteousness is "imputed" by God! It is important in the case of circumcision and baptism not to confuse the seal and the sign, circumcision and baptism are signs and the seal in both cases is righteousness by faith.
5. Romans 4:17. This verse tells about the One in whom Abraham "believed": the God who calls things into existence that did not exist before; the same God who gives life to the dead; and the God the Father that was present when these promises were made to Abraham through a messenger from that God.
6. Romans 4:18. It did not look good for Abraham many times that the promise of God to be the father of many nations would be fulfilled--little or no hope--but with hope he believed in the promise of God.
7. Romans 4:24. Righteousness is likewise imputed to us "who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead". Of course, that is a lot of beliefs: Believe in the God the Father who sent, was in Christ, and Who raised Christ from the dead; believe in the Crucifixion of Jesus; and believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the grave on the third day; and believe around this gospel is centered the salvation of God.

{These references to "believe" in Paul and the other Scriptures will be continued at the end of other chapters to follow.}