

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XVII : PAUL'S PARENTHETICAL THOUGHT: THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN (2: 1-3)

God Makes Alive / Raises Up Dead Sinners by Grace (2:1-10)

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (KJV)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (NIV)

Also you — being dead in the trespasses and the sins, in which once ye did walk according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all did walk once in the desires of our flesh, doing the wishes of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath — as also the others, and God, being rich in kindness, because of His great love with which He loved us, even being dead in the trespasses, did make us to live together with the Christ, (by grace ye are having been saved,) and did raise [us] up together, and did seat [us] together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus, that He might show, in the ages that are coming, the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, for by grace ye are having been saved, through faith, and this not of you — of God the gift, not of works, that no one may boast; for of Him we are workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God did before prepare, that in them we may walk. (Young's Literal Translation)

“Before God had made them alive with Christ they were deeply affected by evil, determining influences. These included their environment (the ways of this world, v. 2), an inner inclination towards evil (the cravings of our sinful nature, v. 3), and a supernaturally powerful opponent (the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient, v. 2).” [O'Brien, 155f]

STRUCTURE —

¹ And you — [being] dead in trespasses and sins,

² in which you once walked

according to the course of this world,

according to the prince of the power of the air,

the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

³ among whom also we all

once conducted ourselves

in the lusts of our flesh,

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,

and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph 2:1-3 NKJV)

“The World” – According to this Present World-Age

V. 2 — Wherein in time past ye walked — ἐν αἷς ποτε περιπατήσατε [en hais pote periepatēsate] *‘Wherein’ refers back to ‘trespasses and sins.’ “Trespasses and sins were the domain in which they had their habitual course of life in their former heathen days.”* [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 283] *“They walked in sin. They were daily conversant with it, and devoted to it. They were surrounded by it, and clothed with it.”* [Hodge, 97]

walk = literally “to walk around”. The verb occurs 95x in the NT; 46x in the Gospels where it is used literally with the exception of four times; 49x outside the Gospels where it is used as a metaphor except for two times (Rev 2:1; 21:24). Metaphorically it refers to one’s lifestyle or conduct, both positively (Eph 4:1; 5:2) and negatively (Eph 2:2; 4:17). **The word is used in Ephesians 8x, thus one’s conduct is a very important issue in this book.** “Believers do not now walk under the control of the devil though they once did. In the Pauline corpus Christians are regularly reminded of their pre-Christian condition (cf. Rom 5.7-11; 6.19-21; 7.5; 11.30; 1 Cor 6.9-11; Gal 4.3, 8; Eph 5.8; Col 1.21; 2.13; 3.7; Tit 3.3). **‘Once’ they lived in such and such a way; ‘now’ they live differently. The verb is aorist here rather than imperfect, presumably because the past life of believers is regarded as a unified whole which is over and done with.**” [Best, 202f] “The transgressions were the road, or region, of the moral ‘walk,’ i.e. the successive acts and practices of life... **The Gr. verb is aorist. The whole past experience, however long, is gathered up in memory into a point.**” [Moule, 66] “The Jews called their laws of conduct *Halachah*, which means ‘Walking.’” [Foulkes, 69]

LIFE IS EITHER A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE MOVEMENT BUT NEVER STAGNANT — Many practical lessons may be derived from the Scriptural use of the word ‘walk’ to describe our everyday life. One such lesson is that **walking implies motion and movement; no one standing still is ever described as ‘walking.’** Since the Lord describes our life as a ‘walk’ then practically speaking we may say **we are always either spiritually progressing or regressing but we are never just remaining in one place. For believers ‘walking’ with the Lord, our ‘walk’ is upwards; unfortunately never perfect and never just a constant upward trend but the motion as a whole is upwards. But more-so unfortunately are those who falls into a state of rebellion towards a particular matter in their life and deceive themselves into thinking their spiritual life will remain at the same level — impossible! When we refuse to ‘walk’ with the Lord, our life begins a negative motion which at first may be unperceivable but eventually leads us to do things that at one time we would have never imagined being capable of doing! Life is always in motion — which direction are we moving?**

according to the course (age) of this world — κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου [kata ton aiōna tou kosmou toutou] *“after the leading of, conformably to, in accordance with this world-age.”* [Lincoln, Alford] “As the [‘in’] of the former clause gave the stated sphere within which their pre-Christian life moved, so the [‘according to’] of this clause and the next gives the standard to which it conformed and the spirit by which it was ruled.” [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 283] “The phrase ‘world-age’ thus becomes a way of talking about both spatial and temporal aspects of fallen human existence. **Instead of being oriented to the life of the age to come and the heavenly realm, the past lives of readers had been dominated by this present evil age and this world. Their sinful activities were simply in line with the norms and values of a spatio-temporal complex wholly hostile to God.**” [Lincoln, 95]

age, course = αἰῶνα [aiōna] normally denotes “time, age” and is used in this manner in the LXX 417x. In the NT it is used mostly to denote time, either a specific limited period of time or an unlimited time. In a few cases it may refer to the world. Normally it is translated ‘course’ (AV, RV, ASV, RSV, NASB, NRSV) but it could be translated ‘age’ or ‘era,’ depicting a span of time. Using the form as Paul does, **‘course’ is a proper translation and conveys three things:**

- (1) the course of thought or meaning that runs through the world system,**
- (2) the development of the evil world system, and**
- (3) the limitation of continuance, the eventual destruction of this world system.**

“This course of a world which is evil is itself evil, and to live in accordance with it is to live in trespasses and sins.” [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 283] “‘Course’ is aiōn, which Trench defines as ‘All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale, — all this is included in aiōn, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, **“the subtle informing spirit of the kosmos, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God.”**” [Wuest, 61]

world = κόσμου [kosmou] could refer to the material world as in 1:4 but in this context most likely refers to the ethical world; i.e., the satanically organized system that hates and opposes all that is godly (cf. John 15:18, 23; 18:36; 1 Cor 3:19).

‘AGE’ AND ‘WORLD’ ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS — Paul could have just said ‘according to this age’ but he expresses it with both words ‘age’ and ‘world’ to be more expressive. “Curious combinations of [aiōn] (**a period of time**), [kosmos] (**the world in that period**).” [Robertson, Word Pictures] The usage is probably descriptive, *the age of this world*, “...meaning **the era characterized by this ungodly world in contrast to the age to come, which will be of a different character. Wink labels the present age as ‘the era of the Fall.’ In other words the unregenerate are found ‘conforming to the standards of the present world order.’ They go along with what is fashionable and acceptable and are not out of step with the rest of the world, hence, they embrace temporal values. They are concerned only with activities and values of the present age and are not concerned with God and eternal values or with the judgement to come.**” [Hoehner, 310f]

NOT JUST ‘THE WORLD’ BUT ‘THIS WORLD’ — Note Paul does not just say ‘of the world’ but ‘of this world’, especially *designating the present system of things as alien from God and lying in the evil one*. [Alford’s Greek Testament: Ephesians, 89] “[The] *present system of this world* (1Co 2:6, 12; 3:18, 19, as opposed to ‘the world to come’): *alien from God, and lying in the wicked one* (1Jo 5:19).” [JFB, Ephesians]

“‘AION’ OF THIS WORLD” UNDERSTOOD BY SOME TO BE PERSONAL BEING — Thought to have Gnostic undertones by some because “Aion” (translated “age”) is the name of a person deity or power in Gnosticism. This is mentioned by several of the commentators. F. F. Bruce, while denying the strict Gnostic interpretation, does take this in a non-temporal sense: “The two following phrases, ‘according to the *aion* of this world’ and ‘according to the *archōn* of the domain of the air,’ are naturally taken as parallel to each other. Since, then, *archōn* unquestionably means ‘ruler,’ it is natural to conclude that *aion*, which normally means ‘age,’ is personified here. It is certainly difficult to take it in its usual sense: what would ‘the age of this world’ mean? [Bruce does comment in his footnote at this point: ‘*the age of this world*’ might be understood to mean ‘*the age characterized by this godless world in contrast to the age to come, which will bear a different character*’] The traditional rendering, ‘the course of this world,’ makes good sense, but it assigns an unnatural meaning to *aion*. Paul sometimes uses ‘this world (*kosmos*)’ as a synonym for ‘this age (*aion*),’ the present age dominated by the force of evil (cf. ‘the present evil age’ in Gal 1:4). This force is personified in 2 Cor 4:4, where the minds of unbelievers are said to be blinded by ‘the god of this age.’ The suggestion that ‘the *aion* of this world’ in our present text is identical with ‘the god of this age’ is attractive, but if so, this is by far the earliest certain Christian instance of *aion* in a personal sense.... In the second century *aion* occurs in Valentinian and other gnostic systems to denote a divine entity or emanation.” [Bruce, 280f] Note that those who places a Gnostic emphasis upon this word usually places a later date on the book of Ephesians than we would accept.

“The Devil” — According to the Prince, Ruler of the Power of the Air

according to the prince of the power of the air — *κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος* [*kata ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeros*] This is the second prepositional phrase that begins with *kata*, “according to.” **Not only is the standard of the unsaved the temporary values of this world’s ethics but is also in accordance with or under the control of the ruler of the realm of the air.** “*Their lives were under the control of a ruler.* Supernatural powers hostile to human welfare and to God’s redemptive purposes have already figured in 1:21 and will do so again in 3:10 and 6:11, 12. **In Ephesians, however, not only do such principalities and powers appear, but equally prominent is an ultimate personal power of evil behind them, designated here as the ruler of the realm of the air, but in 4:27 and 6:11 as the devil, and in 6:16 as the evil one.**” [Lincoln, 95]

Satan is called **the ruler of demons**:

But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. (Matt 9:34; cp Luke 11:15)

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. (Matt 12:24; cp Mark 3:22)

Satan is called **the prince of this world**:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John 12:31)

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16:11)

Satan is called **the god of this world**:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Cor 4:3,4)

“RULER” HAS BOTH GREEK AND JEWISH CONNOTATIONS — **ruler** = ἄρχοντα [*archonta*] is used in classical literature to mean ‘ruler, commander, captain’ or ‘chief, king, lord.’ Many of our translations have ‘prince’ or ‘ruler’ but note Tyndale’s NT has ‘governor.’ It is used in the LXX 544x to refer to leaders of nations, armies, and infrequently of angelic beings. It is used 37x in the NT, only five of which is outside the Gospels. It is used of Roman and Jewish officials, of Jesus as the leader of the kings of the earth, and of Satan who is the prince of demons and ruler of this world whose power has been broken by Christ.

“While it is clear the second ... phrase refers to the devil, it is not obvious why [Paul] chose this particular phrase or what is its peculiar flavour. [The ruler, ho *archōn*] is used elsewhere in the NT and early Christianity of a personal power of evil (Jn 12.31; 14.30; 16.11; Ign *Eph* 17.1; 19.1; *Magn* 1.2; *Trall* 4.2; *Rom* 7.1; *Philad* 6.2); the plural is also used widely of supernatural evil powers. **It was thus perfectly natural for [Paul] to choose the word to designate the devil rather than a Jewish name like Satan; he knows it will be understood in the Greek world.**” [Best, 204]

THE UNSAVED ARE SLAVES / SERVANTS OF SATAN — While men may boast of being “free moral agents”, having a “free will” or being “my own boss”, they actually are devoted subjects to the devil himself — Jesus: “*ye are of your father the devil.*” “**A more severe condemnation of mankind could not have been pronounced. What does he leave to us, when he declares us to be the slaves of Satan, and subject to his will, so long as we live out of the kingdom of Christ? Our condition, therefore, though many treat it with ridicule, or, at least, with little disapprobation, may well excite our horror.** Where is now the freewill, the guidance of reason, the moral virtue, about which Papists babble so much? What will they find that is pure or holy under the tyranny of the devil? On this subject, indeed, they are extremely cautious, and denounce this doctrine of Paul as a

grievous heresy. I maintain, on the contrary, that *there is no obscurity in the apostle's language; and that all men who live according to the world, that is, according to the inclinations of their flesh, are here declared to fight under the reign of Satan.... We may now draw from it also this inference, that ungodly men have no excuse in being driven by Satan to commit all sorts of crimes. Whence comes it that they are subject to his tyranny, but because they are rebels against God? If none are the slaves of Satan, but those who have renounced the service, and refuse to yield to the authority, of God, let them blame themselves, for having so cruel a master.*" [Calvin, Ephesians]

SATAN IS NOT EQUAL WITH GOD — "In accordance with the practice of the inspired writers, the Devil is mentioned in the singular number. As the children of God have one head, so have the wicked; for each of the classes forms a distinct body. By assigning to him the dominion over all wicked beings, un-godliness is represented as an unbroken mass..... *At present, we shall merely advert to the strange absurdity of the Manicheans, in endeavoring to prove from this passage the existence of two principles, as if Satan could do anything without the Divine permission. Paul does not allow him the highest authority, which belongs to the will of God alone, but merely a tyranny which God permits him to exercise. What is Satan but God's executioner to punish man's ingratitude? This is implied in Paul's language, when he represents the success of Satan as confined to unbelievers; for the children of God are thus exempted from his power. If this be true, it follows that Satan does nothing but under the control of a superior: and that he is not an unlimited monarch.*" [Calvin, Ephesians]

power, realm, kingdom — ἐξουσία [exousias] was discussed in 1:21 where it has the sense of "right to act" and could therefore be translated "authority, government, power" or "domain, realm, kingdom." Most of the translations follow the KJV as 'power' (the ASV has 'powers' instead of 'power'). Lincoln translates as 'in accordance with the ruler of the realm of the air;' Young's Literal Translation says 'according to the ruler of the authority of the air;' the NIV says '[followed] the ruler of the kingdom of the air.' The word for 'power' here may be understood in different manners; most understand it in the sense of 'authority in the collective sense, the totality of evil powers, all that is known as evil authority.' "The idea thus becomes 'the prince who rules over all that is called authority.'" [Salmond, Expositor's GK Testament, 284] Illustration: the 'power' of the USA refers to the jurisdiction of USA, the area over which USA has authority.

the air — τοῦ ἀέρος [tou aeros] 'Air' was thought in the ancient world to be that which filled the space between earth and the moon. The Greeks used it to refer to the lower atmosphere, the air mortals breathe, the impure air which was the home of the spirits, in contrast with the higher, more pure air they called *ether* (*aithēr*). The word is used only 2x in the LXX (2 Sam 22:12; Ps 18:11) and 7x in the NT. It is used of that place above the earth where Christ will meet his saints (1 Thess 4:17) and as an idiom "to beat the air" (1 Cor 9:26) and "to speak into the air" (1 Cor 14:9). It was considered in Paul's day as the dwelling place of evil spirits. "In all its other NT occurrences (Acts xxii. 23; 1 Cor ix. 26; xiv. 9; 1 Thess iv. 17; Rev ix. 2; xvi. 17) it has the literal sense. It has it here, and it describes these demonic powers as between earth and heaven, in that 'supra-terrestrial but sub-celestial region which seems to be, if not the abode, yet the haunt of evil spirits.' Thus the prince of evil is described as the Lord-Paramount over all the demonic powers; and these demonic powers, as having their seat in the air, are distinguished from the angels whose abode is in heaven.... We have no definite knowledge ... of the origin of this idea [of demonic activity in the air]. But it seems to have been familiar enough to the readers to require no explanation." [Salmond, Expositor's GK Testament, 284] "The 'air' is the region, or part of the region, between heaven where God dwells and the earth and is peopled with evil beings; alternatively it is the sphere in which the evil powers are active.... Before their conversion believers therefore lived lives controlled by the ruler of the demonic spirits or evil angelic beings who inhabit or control the space above the earth and below heaven. As spirits 'of the air' they are near to man and can easily lead him into evil." [Best, 204f]

'HEAVENLY REALMS' AND 'AIR' SPEAKING OF THE SAME LOCATION — "The 'domain of the air,' in fact, is another way of indicating the 'heavenly realm' which, according to Eph 6:12, is the abode of those principalities and powers, 'world-rulers of darkness' and 'spiritual forces of wickedness' against which the people of Christ wage war." [Bruce, 282] "Here the realm of the ruler's authority is said to be the air. Elsewhere in Ephesians, hostile powers inhabit the heavenly realms (cf. 3:10; 6:12). This notion has its background in OT and Jewish thought where angels and spirit powers were often represented as in heaven (e.g., Job 1:6; Dan 10:13, 21); it was also developed in Philo. What is the relationship of 'the air' to 'the heavenly realms'? It may be that [Paul] is using terminology from different cosmological schemes, but it is fairly certain that he intends the two terms to indicate the same realm inhabited by malevolent agencies. If there is any distinct connotation, it could be that the 'air' indicates the lower reaches of that realm and therefore emphasizes the proximity of this evil power and his influence over the world." [Lincoln, 95f] This supports what we postulated in an earlier lesson that the 'heavenly realms' or 'heavenlies' in Ephesians is not to be taken as an equivalent to heaven. As we saw then, the 'heavenlies' includes heaven but it also includes much more than the sinless, tranquil, glorious abode of God. One example given was chapter 6 verse 12:

'For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.' (Eph 6:12 NKJV)

We concluded that the 'heavenlies' in Ephesians is 'used in the New Testament to represent the spirit realm, which is the location of God's throne and the place where all spiritual beings and forces (whether good or evil) exist.' John MacArthur was quoted as teaching the 'heavenlies' to 'encompass the entire supernatural realm of God, His complete domain, the full extent of His divine operation' and is thus more than just heaven itself. I believe the verses we are studying today supports our earlier conclusion.

THE DEMONIC REALMS INFLUENCE MANKIND — "The fact asserted in this clause, viz., that Satan and evil Spirits work in men, or influence their opinions, feelings, and conduct, is often elsewhere taught in Scripture. Matt. 13, 38. John 12, 31; 8,

44. Acts 26,18. 2 Cor 4, 4. *The fact is all that concerns us, we need not understand how they exert this influence. We do not know how the intercourse of disembodied spirits is conducted, and therefore cannot tell how such spirits have access to our minds to control their operations. The influence, whatever it is, and however effectual it may be, does not destroy our freedom of action, any more than the influence of one man over his fellows. Still it is an influence greatly to be dreaded. These spirits of wickedness are represented as far more formidable adversaries than those who are clothed in flesh and blood. Blessed are those for whom Christ prays, as he did for Peter, when he sees them surrounded by the wiles of the devil.” [Hodge, 102f]*
“We are tempted by evil spirits, who have access to us, and suggest thoughts and desires to our minds. We are surrounded by the air, which is the vehicle of speech and of all suggestions to our senses. Tried continually as we are by these temptations, what so natural, as to assign to their ministers a dwelling in, and power over that element which is the vehicle of them to us? And thus our Lord, in the parable of the sower, when He would represent the devil coming and taking away the seed out of the heart, figures him by [‘the birds of the air’].” [Alford’s Greek Testament: Ephesians, 89]

the spirit who now works — τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος [tou pneumatos tou nun energountos] Hoehner lists four possible meanings for the word ‘spirit’, the first two of which are not likely:

- *an attitude* — This is unlikely here because whenever it is used in this manner, there is a word following to describe the “spirit,” e.g., the “spirit of gentleness” or “spirit of meekness.”
- *a mixture of a personal spirit and a spirit of influence* — found mainly in the Qumran mss / teaching, it was thought God appointed equally to all people two spirits, the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit or injustice. In an Arminian fashion, it was then upon the individual to choose which of those two spirits they would follow. This is not likely here because in no place does Paul use such terminology to describe mankind.

The other two possible meanings are equally likely, both of which have good men in support of its teaching. How one understands this term also influences in how the rest of the verse is understood.

- *an evil spirit* — certainly the NT (especially the Gospels) mention evil or unclean spirits. Although Paul never uses those terms himself, he does speak of “*deceitful spirits*” (1 Tim 4:1), “*different spirits*,” and five times of “*demons*.” Many good expositors accept this interpretation (e.g., Aquinas, Hendriksen, Best, O’Brien). The meaning would therefore be “*the ruler (the devil) himself is the one who now works in the sons or daughters of disobedience.*” O’Brien agrees with this view and interprets it as follows: “*the devil, that ruler that now works...*”. Salmond says the ‘spirit’ is not a reference to the spirit or mind of man nor is it a collective term referring back to ‘the power or authorities of the air.’ It is either (a) the evil principles or power that comes into men from Satan (cp. ‘the spirit of this age / world’, 1 Cor 2:12; the ‘anti-Christ’, 1 Jn 4:3); or (b) the personal Spirit – that particular Spirit whose domain and work are in evil men. The latter is preferred. [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 284]
- *the inward or immaterial part of a person* — in this sense taken to refer to the human spirit, the seat of insight, emotion and will, in contrast with that which is material, the flesh of man. Hoehner argues this position as being the area of human beings which is now being influenced by Satan, the ruler of the realm of the air. Others agree (e.g., Abbott, Meyer, Lincoln, Robinson, Wallace). Taken in this manner, the phrases would be parallel, “*the ruler over the realm of the air, [the ruler over] the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience.*” “[I]f ‘spirit’ refers to immaterial or inward part of a person, then Paul is saying that the devil rules over the inward person, a function he now performs in the sons or daughters of disobedience.” [Hoehner, 315] Lincoln agrees and goes through the theories of interpreting who the “spirit that now rules” is, going into detail of the Greek grammar and how the phrases relate to each other, etc. He concludes with the following: “[T]he personal power of evil is the ruler of the realm of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient.” [Lincoln, 96]

THE ‘NOW’ CONTRASTS WITH THE ‘IN TIMES PAST, AT ONE TIME’ — The evil spirit once worked in them while they were part of his domain, and he still is working in those who are still under his rule, those who’s lives are characterized by disobedience. [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 285] “*The mention that this spirit is now at work makes clear that although the writer has attributed bondage to the ruler of this world to his Christian readers’ past, this does not mean that the ruler’s power no longer exists. It is at work in the present in those who have not benefitted from God’s deliverance in Christ. In fact, the later paraenesis will remind believers that it still poses a threat to them (cf. 4:27; 6:10-20). Here we see something of the ‘already / not yet’ tension so characteristic of Paul’s eschatological thought. Although the ruler of this world has been defeated (cf. 1:20-22), he is not surrendering without a struggle and without still making his powerful influence felt.*” [Lincoln, 97]

in the sons of disobedience — ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας [en tois huiois tēs apeitheias] This locates where this spirit is working, namely, in the sons of disobedience. “*‘Sons of disobedience’ are those whom disobedience is their very nature and essential character, who belong wholly to it.* It is a well-known Hebrew idiom, occurring often in the NT, especially in the case of Hebraisms of translation.” [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 284] “The expression ‘sons of disobedience’ for those in whom that influence is operative is a Hebraism denoting men and women whose lives are characterized by disobedience. The rebellion against God’s will which this term implies includes rejection of the Christian gospel, since the writer states that it is occurring in the present. But the disobedience is not to be limited to this and involves general disregard for God’s will.” [Lincoln, 97] Phrases of this type are regularly found in the NT:

‘having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in

covetous practices, and are accursed children' (2 Pet 2:14 NKJV). Note YLT: 'having eyes full of adultery, and unable to cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having an heart exercised in covetousnesses, children of a curse'

'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light' (Eph 5:8 NKJV)

'So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.' (Luke 16:8 NKJV)

'You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.' (1 Thes 5:5 NKJV)

'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' (John 17:12 NKJV)

'James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"' (Mark 3:17 NKJV)

'And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you' (Luke 10:6 NKJV)

'Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.'" (Luke 20:34 NKJV)

'And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus' (Acts 4:36 NKJV)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNBELIEF AND DISOBEDIENCE — **disobedience** = ἀπειθείας [apeitheias], *the negative of a word meaning 'that which is persuasive or convincing.'* "Its stated sense in the NT is that of 'obstinate opposition to the Divine Will.' [Salmond, Expositor's GK Testament, 284] It is not used in the LXX although a different form of the word is found in the LXX 8x to mean "disobedient, rebellious." It is used in the NT only 7x with the idea of "disobedience" or "unbelief." "**Disobedience comes from unbelief, for the person is not persuaded or convinced to trust what has been stated.... So, the unregenerate are characterized as disobedient because they do not believe in what God has provided. It shows that unbelief is more than the absence of trust — it is a defiance against God.**" [Hoehner, 316] (cp. 'He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.' – 1 John 5:10 NKJV) "[The Greek word used here, apeitheias,] can refer either to unbelief (cf. the contrast in Jn 3.36; Acts 14.1, 2) or disobedience (cf Rom 10.21; 2 Tim 3.2). It is often difficult to determine which meaning is primary in the NT for the two senses are closely related; disobedience is not just disobedience to a set of moral rules, but disobedience to God in the rejection of the salvation offered in Christ and is therefore unbelief... [O]bedience cannot be far from faith and disobedience from unbelief." [Best, 206] Some separate the distinction between 'disobedience' and 'unbelief' in this word: "Doubtless unbelief is the root of disobedience: but it is not here expressed, only implied." [Alford's Greek Testament: Ephesians, 90] H. G. C. Moule agrees and clarifies as follows: "[T]he proper meaning of the word is resistance of the will. This is deeply connected with spiritual unbelief, but not identical." [Moule, 68] Calvin combines the two senses: "Unbelief is always accompanied by disobedience; so that it is the source — the *mother* of all stubbornness." [Calvin, Ephesians]

PAUL IS NOT TEACHING ALL UNSAVED ARE DEMON POSSESSED — "This is not to suggest, as some contemporary Christians do, that those who live in disobedience to God are necessarily 'possessed' by an evil spirit. *All who are outside of Christ live in a kingdom called 'the tyranny of darkness' (cf. Col 1:13) in which the evil one holds sway. But not all 'sons of disobedience' are demon-possessed.*" [O'Brien, 161]